Sore Nipples During Breastfeeding

Sore, painful nipples are not normal during breastfeeding. Slight discomfort in first feedings is normal. Cracked or bleeding nipples put the mother at risk for a breast infection. It is also not normal for the nipples to be creased, wedged, oddly shaped, or white after nursing.

TIPS TO PREVENT SORE NIPPLES:

♦ Use correct positioning and latch on. Make sure the position doesn’t change as the baby goes to sleep.

♦ Bring the baby to the breast. Can use a pillow so that the baby is at breast level.

♦ Release the baby from the breast by gently inserting a finger in the corner of the baby’s mouth.

♦ Use warm wash cloths on upper part of breast and/or express a little milk before latch on to help with letdown so baby does not have to suck hard.

♦ Don’t use soaps or alcohol on your nipples. Splashing with clean water is clean enough.

♦ Nurse frequently as a very hungry baby can cause nipple trauma through vigorous sucking.

♦ Air dry nipples.

♦ Avoid wet bra pads or plastic backed pads. Change them frequently so that the pads stay dry.

SORE NIPPLE HINTS

♦ Cover the nipple with a warm, wet washcloth immediately after nursing.

♦ Apply olive oil, breastmilk or lanolin after nursing. There’s no need to wash off before nursing.

♦ If lanolin does not help, contact a lactation consultant or your doctor.

♦ Pump or hand express if nursing is too painful.

♦ Give the expressed milk by spoon, cup or bottle.

♦ Use a different nursing position each time to avoid reinjuring the same spot.

♦ Get help from a breastfeeding counselor if the problem is severe.

♦ See a doctor for a temperature of 100.8 degrees or more.

For more information call:

Adapted from the Arkansas Department of Health WIC Program.

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