

PLUGGED DUCTS AND MASTITIS

A plugged duct is actually a plug of milk that sits in the milk ducts. You may feel a firm or lumpy area in your breast. It may be most noticeable when you are ready to nurse. It usually decreases in size after a nursing in which your breast is drained well.

If you notice that you have a firm, lumpy area in your breast that does not come and go, or decrease in size with a feeding, please contact your lactation consultant or your physician.

Otherwise, apply heat to the area before nursing, stroke the area downward during nursing and vary nursing positions.

If you should feel a hard area in your breast, you see a red area on your breast, you feel achy and run down (like the flu) and you have a low-grade fever (less than 38.4 C or 101 F),

- Continue to nurse your baby frequently** (8-12 plus x's / 24 hours) from both breasts.
- Rest (go to bed!) and** drink plenty of fluids.
- Apply heat** to your breast prior to nursing to promote drainage.
- Massage and compress** the hard area on your breast while nursing.
- Pump** the affected breast if your baby does not thoroughly drain that breast after nursing, if that breast is painful, or if baby refuses that breast.
- Apply a castor oil pack** in between nursings: apply castor oil liberally to a warm, wet washcloth – apply it to firm, red area on breast – cover with plastic wrap – apply a heating pad so area feels warm (but not hot) and leave in place for 20 minutes. Be sure to rinse breast with water before the next nursing to avoid baby ingesting the castor oil while nursing.
- Take ibuprofen** to reduce inflammation (up to 400mg every 4 hours).
- For recurring mastitis or plugged ducts**, consider taking lecithin – 2400 mg 3-4x/day.

IF ANY OF THE FOLLOWING OCCUR:

- You see no change in 8-24 hours (you feel no better),
- Your fever continues, or goes higher than 101 F,
- The red area increases in size and your breast becomes red, hot, and swollen,
- You see blood or pus in your milk,
- You see red streaks on your breast that run from the areola to the underarm,
- You have a cracked nipple that appears infected,
- You have chills and continue to feel worse rather than better.

Adapted from Miklworks