

Plugged Ducts & Mastitis

PLUGGED DUCTS

Hand expression is a handy skill to have whenever you need to empty your breasts and you are not with your baby or your baby is temporarily unable to breastfeed. In the first few days after birth, hand expression can be more effective at removing colostrum than using a breast pump. If your baby needs a supplement in the first week or so, use hand expression to provide the milk needed!

Remedy:

- Hold the breast with both hands. Gently stretch the breast up and down, side to side, rotate in a circle, one way then the other. A video on “Breast gymnastics” can be found on mayabolman.com.
- Avoid firm and deep pressure to the breast. Use only gentle massage towards the armpit area.
- Discuss strategies for effective milk removal with your lactation consultant.
- Position your baby’s chin or nose towards the area of the lump.
- Apply a cold compress to the area of the plug to reduce the inflammation.
- It may take 2-3 feedings for the breast to feel more comfortable.

PLUGGED NIPPLE PORE (BLEB)

This appears as a small white dot on the tip of the nipple and is usually very painful. It is one milk duct that has become plugged.

Remedy:

- Warm soaks and gentle rubbing with a warm towel may be effective to release the milk.
- In persistent cases, discuss with your health care provider about the possibility of a topical steroid cream, oral lecithin, or further evaluation and intervention.



MASTITIS

This occurs most frequently in mothers/lactating persons who have had a cracked or blistered nipple or who are undergoing a period of stress such as returning to work, participating in holiday activities, or experiencing a change in normal daily routine.



Symptoms may include:

- High fever, starting suddenly
- Hot area
- Pain and a lump in the breast
- Hard, wedge-shaped area
- Flu like symptoms and chills
- Extreme tiredness
- Discoloration of skin, may appear red in lighter skin tones

Remedy:

- Continue with direct breastfeeding and/or effective milk removal.
- Ensure correct positioning and alignment of the baby to achieve more effective milk removal.
- Hold the breast with both hands. Gently stretch the breast up and down, side to side, rotate in a circle, one way then the other. A video on “Breast gymnastics” can be found on mayabolman.com.
- Apply a cold compress to the area between feedings to reduce inflammation.
- Avoid firm and deep pressure to the breast. Use only gentle massage towards the armpit area.



Your healthcare provider may prescribe antibiotics if symptoms are not improved. You may feel better after a few days, yet it is important to take all of the medication prescribed.