



Mastitis is a condition that causes your breast to become inflamed. It can occur at any time from pregnancy through to weaning. The inflammation can quickly progress to an infection. Mastitis will not affect your baby even though you may be feeling unwell and uncomfortable. Your milk is perfectly safe for your baby to drink.

How do I know if I have mastitis?

You may notice that you have:

- A reddened area on your breast which may be hot, swollen and painful.

You may also experience one or more flu-like symptoms, such as:

- Chills
- A headache
- A high temperature (more than 38.5 degrees C)
- Aching joints
- Feeling tired.

How do I get mastitis?

The most common cause of mastitis is poor drainage of milk from your breast. This may be due to:

- The way your baby is positioned or latched to your breast
- Blocked ducts
- Engorgement and oversupply
- Feeding to a schedule, rather than feeding when your baby demands
- Missing or delaying breast feeds
- Weaning too quickly
- Cracked or damaged nipples
- Wearing a tight, constricting bra
- Breast implants, breast surgery/piercings
- Offering a bottle instead of a breast feed

What do I do if I think I have mastitis?

The most important thing you can do is to keep breastfeeding because it drains the breast and reduces pain.

- Continue to breastfeed regularly.
- Position infant to drain affected lobe or area by pointing the infant's chin or nose toward the affected lobe.
- Express milk if you are unable to feed.
- Gently massage your breast and any lumps while feeding.
- Pain relief can be taken if necessary e.g. paracetamol or ibuprofen.
- It is important to rest.
- Drink water regularly.
- Apply warmth to the affected area for a few minutes before feeding to aid milk flow.
- After a feed apply cold packs to reduce discomfort.
- Seek professional advice.
- Ultrasound treatment may be beneficial. This can be provided by a Women's Health physiotherapist.

What happens if this doesn't help?

- Continue to breastfeed regularly and/or express.
- If you have a fever, feel unwell, or the pain or inflammation is not improving see your doctor or Walk-In Centre as soon as possible. You may need antibiotics to treat mastitis.

How can I find out more information

1. PHONE

Maternal and Child Health service by calling Community Health Intake (CHI) 6207 9977

Pregnancy Birth & Baby 1800 882 436

Australian Breastfeeding Association
1800 Mum 2 Mum or 1800 686 268

2. ATTEND

'Early Days' Group

(infants up to 3 months of age) for assessment and ongoing breastfeeding information and support.

Contact Community Health Intake (CHI) for locations and times.

3. VISIT

ACT Government Health Directorate website:
www.health.act.gov.au/breastfeeding

4. SEE YOUR GP



REFERENCES

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