



MASTITIS DURING BREASTFEEDING

Mastitis is a breast infection. It begins suddenly and if not treated, gets worse quickly.

Germs may enter through a break in the skin or through the nipple. Once treatment starts, the mother usually feels better in a day or two. **The milk will not harm the baby and breastfeeding can continue.** The mother usually has:

- Flu like symptoms – fever of 100.8° or more, chills, body aches.
- A painful, hot, reddened breast

What To Do:

- Call the doctor and describe the symptoms.
- Antibiotics may be needed – take all of the prescription, even after starting to feel better. Most antibiotics are safe to use while breastfeeding.
- Wrap the breast with a wet, very warm towel or cloth; or soak the breast in a basin of very warm water. Repeat several times a day until the redness is gone.
- Take acetaminophen (Tylenol™) or ibuprofen (Advil™, Motrin™) for pain.
- Drink more fluids to replace what's lost with a fever.
- Keep the breasts soft by continuing to nurse frequently. Add gentle massage to help the breasts empty.
- Get more rest and nap when the baby naps.

MORE INFORMATION . . .

Contact a doctor if the symptoms haven't gone away after finishing the antibiotic.

To Avoid Mastitis:

- Don't allow the breasts to become overly full. Try not to miss or put off a feeding. Talk to a breastfeeding counselor about ways to manage if making more milk than the baby can take.
- Treat sore nipples quickly. See the Sore Nipples information sheet.
- Avoid tight bras or clothing that binds.

For more help, call the county health department or the Arkansas WIC Breastfeeding Help-line at 1-800-445-6175.

