

Blocked Milk Duct

A blocked milk duct is a tender or painful hard lump in the breast of a breastfeeding mother. A blocked milk duct is not the same as an infection. You will not have a high fever or feel flu-like symptoms with a blocked milk duct. With good care a blocked milk duct should go away in 24-48 hours.

Causes:

- Skipping or being late feeding or pumping
- Breastfeeding only on one side and not relieving the opposite breast
- Wearing a tight bra or clothing
- A sleeping position that puts pressure on one area of the breast
- Weaning or changing your baby's breastfeeding pattern
- Not fully emptying your breasts during feeding or pumping
- Having a large milk supply

What you can do:

- Apply moist heat to the affected breast with the lump
- Breastfeed on the breast with the lump first
- Make sure your baby is properly latched onto your breast
- Make sure breast flanges are the correct size
- Gently massage/press the blocked duct during feeding or pumping
- Change baby's feeding position at each feeding
- Breastfeed or pump every 2 to 3 hours
- If baby only nurses on one side, pump the other side for a few minutes to comfort
- Wean your baby slowly when you and your baby are ready to stop breastfeeding

Other helpful tips:

- Acetaminophen or ibuprofen can be used as needed for pain
- Take care of yourself by getting enough rest, eating nutritious foods, drinking enough fluids, and getting help with your baby and household responsibilities

A Blocked milk duct can worsen into mastitis (an inflammation or infection in the breast) if not treated.

Call your doctor if you develop a fever or flu-like symptoms. If you have questions, please call the Breastfeeding and Pumping Help Line (816)346-1309

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