

DEALING WITH ENGORGEMENT | COMPRESSED DUCTS | MASTITIS

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IS THIS MASTITIS?

Maybe not. Engorgement, blocked ducts, and mastitis are issues that are all connected. They can cause similar problems but there are things you can do to help.

These issues are caused by swelling or inflammation in your breast tissue. Milk is not plugging your milk ducts but the swelling can cause back ups. Think of the flow of your milk like the flow of traffic: the cars are milk and the road is a duct. The swelling acts like a construction zone, narrowing lanes. Your job is to clear up that construction zone so the milk can flow freely again.

HOW CAN I GET BETTER?

1. Express milk as you normally would
Do not do more or less latching and/or pumping than your usual routine right now.
2. Feed by latching to your body (if you can.)
3. Bring down inflammation
 - Cold Compress - on the breast, not nipples
 - Lymphatic Drainage - See guide below
 - NSAIDs - (like ibuprofen) help swelling & pain
 - Lecithin - Sunflower or soy, up to 5-10g/day
4. See a lactation consultant (IBCLC®) for help

WHAT SHOULD I AVOID?

1. Do not use heat often
Heat makes the swelling worse. If you want to use warmth, limit it to a few minutes before latching.
2. Do not soak your nipples in salty water
3. Do not use strong massage
Remember, your milk is not plugged or clogged. Rubbing or pushing on the area will make swelling worse. Use gentle lymphatic drainage (see below).
4. Avoid making more milk than you need
Try not to pump extra milk just for freezing or suction on "milk catchers", which can cause problems.

DO I NEED ANTIBIOTICS?

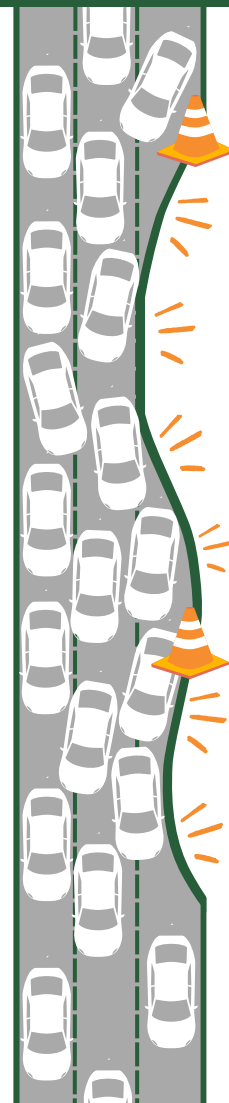
If you don't start feeling better in 24-48 hours, or if you notice other symptoms like fever, chills, or a racing heart, see a doctor. They will see if you need antibiotics.

IS MY MILK STILL SAFE?

No need to pump & dump.

Your milk is still safe for your baby. The antibiotics normally used for mastitis are safe but you can confirm this with the person who prescribed them.

Yes
Yes



LYMPHATIC DRAINAGE

Do this before latching or pumping, or any time you feel swelling.



Images: Kelly Rosso MD

Use gentle pressure, like petting a cat.

1. Make 10 small circles in the dip of your collarbone, close to your neck.
2. Do another set of 10 small circles in your armpit, by your breast tissue.
3. Use soft, gentle strokes away from the nipple toward those areas.

Nipple area **HARD** or **SWOLLEN** ?

Do not pump to make this area softer before latching. Over time, this makes the problem worse. Instead, try:

Reverse Pressure Softening



Images: © K. Jean Cotterman

- Using 1 or 2 hands, put clean fingers close to the base of your nipple. Don't block your nipple.
- Slowly press your areola in toward your chest.
- Hold for 1 minute or longer, until soft.