



Breastfeeding Coalition  
of Delaware

# Sore Nipples

Nipples may get tender during the first few days or weeks as your body adjusts to nursing. However, severe pain is NOT normal. Nipples can get very painful if the baby has a poor latch. Call WIC, a local breastfeeding support group, or lactation consultant for advice on good positioning and latch. Although a web search may provide the advice you need, getting help from a breastfeeding counselor is best.

The following comfort measures will help relieve soreness as you seek help.

- Apply a warm compress on the breast for a few minutes before feeding.
- Hand express some milk to soften breast and stimulate let-down before putting the baby to the breast. This prevents baby from sucking vigorously.
- Breastfeed often (every 1 ½ - 2 hours), as soon as baby shows signs of hunger.
- Offer the least sore breast first. Alternate the nursing position.
- Change nursing pads often.
- Use a lanolin breast cream product. Avoid soaps and hand creams on the nipple, which can be irritating. You can also try breast shells or hydrogel/glycerin dressings for comfort.
- Avoid bottles and pacifiers because they require different sucking actions.
- If latch is uncomfortable, break the suction, remove baby from breast and try again. Make sure baby opens mouth wide to get a deeper latch.
- After feeding, express some breast milk on the nipple and allow to air dry.
- If your nipples are cracked, a thin layer of over-the-counter antibiotic cream after feeds twice a day may help prevent infection. Discuss with your doctor. You do not need to clean it off before feeding.

*Breastfeeding isn't always an easy choice. You made the best choice.  
Nipple soreness can be fixed quickly!*