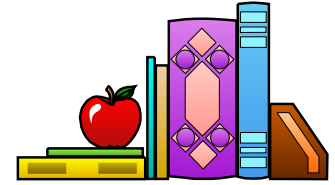


Care Plan for Treating Plugged Ducts



A plugged duct can occur when something has caused the milk to remain in the breast. This may result from pressure being applied to the breast which restricts the flow of milk, or from a change in the breastfeeding or pumping routine. Sometimes a small white “milk blister” can be found on the end of a nipple pore, indicating a plug in that milk duct. By using the following suggestions you should be able to relieve the swelling within 24 hours. If after 48 hours of treatment there is no improvement, see your peer counselor, IBCLC or physician.

SUGGESTIONS

- Start each feeding on the breast with the plugged duct for the next _____ feedings.
- Try positioning the baby so that his chin is pointed toward the plug. Stroke from above the plug down toward your baby’s mouth to help move the plug down.
- Try nursing with the baby lying on his back while you lean over him with your breasts hanging down. In this position, gravity may help get the plug out. Many mothers have found this to be the most effective treatment.
- Nurse more frequently than you usually do.
- Apply moist heat for 10 to 15 minutes just before nursing to help with the release of the milk. Hot water run over a disposable diaper makes a quick and easy moist compress.
- Between feedings, apply green cabbage leaves to the area of the plug. Change the cabbage leaves if they become limp and wilted. Continue using cabbage leaves as long as you can feel the lump or have any discomfort.
- Use your breast pump after nursing if the plug is still present. Use hands on pumping for 5 to 10 minutes, paying particular attention to the area above the plug. Apply a small amount of olive oil to the nipple and breast to reduce skin friction and make hand expression easier.
- With your physician’s permission you may want to use acetaminophen for pain and/or a non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug (NSAID) such as ibuprofen (Motrin/Advil) to reduce the swelling. A typical regime would be:
 - Acetaminophen: 650-1000 mg at 12 – 6 – 12 – 6
 - NSAID: 400 mg at 9 – 3 – 9 – 3 (remember to take this one with food so it doesn’t irritate your stomach.
- Check the end of your nipple for a small white “milk blister” which can indicate a plug in that milk duct. If you find such a blister you can apply moist heat to the nipple area and then rub or scrape the area to remove the thin layer of skin covering it. Afterwards, gently massage from all around the base of your breast in toward your nipple to help force out the trapped milk and plug. Many women find it easiest to do this while taking a warm shower. Check with your physician about applying an over-the-counter antibiotic ointment, like Polysporin, to your nipple after you remove the thin skin over the “milk blister” to prevent an infection from occurring.
- Special instructions: