

Mastitis

Mastitis is a condition that causes your breast to become inflamed. It can occur at any time from pregnancy through to weaning. The inflammation can quickly progress to an infection. Mastitis will not affect your baby even though you may be feeling unwell and uncomfortable. Your milk is perfectly safe for your baby to drink.

How do I get mastitis?

The most common cause of mastitis is poor drainage of milk from your breast. This may be due to:

- The way your baby is positioned or latched to your breast
- Blocked ducts and / or milk blister (bleb)
- Engorgement of your breasts and oversupply of milk
- Feeding to a schedule, rather than feeding when your baby demands
- Missing or delaying breast feeds
- Weaning your baby from breast feeding too quickly
- Cracked or damaged nipples
- Wearing a tight, constricting bra
- Breast implants, breast surgery/piercings
- Offering a bottle instead of a breast feed.



How do I know if I have mastitis?

You may notice that you have:

- A reddened area on your breast which may be hot, swollen, and painful.

You may also experience one or more flu-like symptoms, such as:

- Chills
- A high temperature (more than 38.5 degrees C)
- A headache
- Aching joints
- Feeling tired and exhausted.

If I think I have mastitis what can I do?

The most important thing you can do is to keep breastfeeding because it drains the breast and reduces pain. You can:

- Continue to breastfeed regularly

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- Position infant to drain affected area by pointing the infant's chin or nose toward the affected lobe
- Express milk if you are unable to feed
- Gently massage your breast and any lumps while feeding
- Take pain relief if necessary, e.g., paracetamol or ibuprofen
- Rest and regularly drink water
- Apply warmth to the affected area for a few minutes before feeding to aid milk flow
- Apply cold packs after a feed to reduce discomfort
- Seek professional advice
- Receive ultrasound treatment. This can be provided by a Women's Health physiotherapist.

What happens if this doesn't help?

- Continue to breastfeed regularly and/or express.
- If you have a fever, feel unwell, or the pain or inflammation is not improving see your doctor or Walk-In Centre (WiC) as soon as possible. You may need antibiotics to treat mastitis.



How can I find more information?

PHONE	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Maternal and Child Health - Early Pregnancy and Parenting support line (02) 5124 1775, or• Central Health Intake (CHI) on (02) 5124 9977
GO TO	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Australian Breastfeeding Association - 1800 686 268 www.breastfeeding.asn.au• Pregnancy Birth and Baby - 1800 882 436 www.pregnancybirthbaby.org.au• www.health.act.gov.au/breastfeeding
VISIT	YOUR GP

Breastfeeding and your baby



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Acknowledgement of Country




Canberra Health Services acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the land, the Ngunnawal people. Canberra Health Services respects their continuing culture and connections to the land and the unique contributions they make to the life of this area. Canberra Health Services also acknowledges and welcomes Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples who are part of the community we serve.



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 in larger print

 or hear it in audio

please telephone (02) 5124 0000.

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 National Relay Service phone 133 677 then ask for 133 427.

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