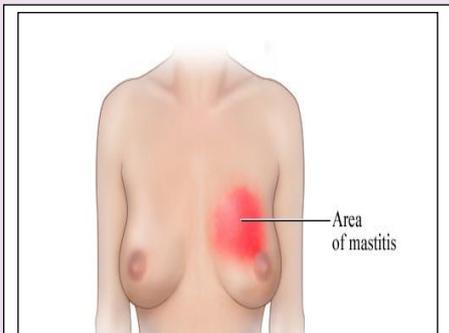


# Mastitis

Revised: April 2017

**Mastitis is an inflammation of the breast that can lead to infection.**

**Mastitis can feel like you have the flu; you may feel hot and have body aches and pains.**



## **Mastitis is commonly it is associated with**

- An oversupply of breastmilk that is not being adequately drained.
- Blocked milk ducts.
- Nipple damage.
- Missed or interrupted breastfeeds.
- Maternal stress and fatigue.
- Tight or restrictive clothing on the breast

## **Signs and Symptoms**

Mothers developing mastitis can experience:

- Breast pain
- Red, tender and hot areas often wedged shaped on the breast
- Breast swelling
- Flu-like symptoms
- Fever
- Chills
- Nausea

## **Suggestions to prevent Mastitis**

- Breastfeed when the baby is displaying feeding cues.
- Ensure baby is correctly latched to the breast to promote good breast drainage and prevent nipple trauma.
- Try not to restrict breast tissue with tight bras or clothing.
- Drink plenty of fluids up to 3 litres a day e.g. Water, juice & herbal tea.
- Check breasts daily for any milk buildup or lumps.
- Very gently massage any breast lumps during the breastfeed towards the nipple.
- Alternate the latch position of the baby during the day to ensure adequate drainage of all milk ducts in the breast

## **Mastitis treatment**

- Consult your *General Practitioner (GP)* as soon as possible.
- Keep breastfeeding.
  - The breastmilk is safe for the baby to drink.
  - The baby is the most efficient means to keep the milk flowing and the breast drained.
- Remove any constrictive clothing such as bras.
- For the next 2-3 feeds commence feeding on the affected breast and then go back to alternate breasts per feed.
- If possible, position the baby so their chin is pointing towards the affected area on the breast.
- Express after the feed if the breast does not feel drained.
- Sometimes the baby won't feed from the affected breast as the milk may taste slightly salty, (but still safe for baby to drink). You will need to drain the breast by expressing.
- Mothers can find warmth applied before feeding the baby helpful in starting the breastmilk to flow.
- Apply ice packs after the feed or expressing to help reduce pain, swelling and inflammation.
- Ibuprofen can help relieve pain and inflammation. Use as directed.
- Antibiotics if needed are generally prescribed for 7-14 days to prevent a recurrence.
- You will need plenty of rest and to maintain a good diet and continue drinking at least 3 litres of water daily.
- If you do not notice an improvement within 48 hours you will need to revisit your GP for further assessment.

## **Where to Get Support**

- Lactation Consultant
- Child and Family Health Service
- Australian Breastfeeding Association Helpline Ph: 1800 686 268
- Local doctor