

Nipple Vasospasm

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Vasospasm occurs when the blood vessels constrict (tighten).

Vasospasm may occur in any blood vessel in the body. Most commonly affected areas are the fingers and toes. Some people may experience white, blue or red fingers in cold situations also known as Raynaud's Phenomenon. In some women during pregnancy and when breastfeeding the nipples are affected and this can cause intense nipple pain.

Support is available from

- Lactation consultant
- Australian Breastfeeding Association Helpline (1800 686 268)
<http://www.breastfeeding.asn.au>
- Child & family health Nurse
- GP



Who is Vasospasm likely to affect?

- Women with a history Raynaud's Phenomenon.
- Women who have an auto-immune disorder
- Women who tend to have cold hands or feet

Signs and Symptoms

- Most women describe an intense pain/burning or throbbing in the nipple that can last a few seconds or much longer.
- This pain can occur during pregnancy, during a breastfeed, immediately after a breastfeed or between breastfeeds.
- During these episodes you may also notice your nipples turning white, blue and or red.
- The pain is usually worse when you are cold.

Management of Nipple Vasospasm

1. Keep your body warm
 - Wearing extra layers of clothing, using hot packs on your back when breastfeeding.
 - Breastfeeding in a warm room.
 - Drinking warm non caffeinated drinks.
2. Keep nipples warm
 - Applying warm packs to the nipples.
 - Breast warmers may be helpful.
 - Leaving your nipples covered as much as possible.
3. Ensure baby is latched well to the breast to avoid nipple damage and/or nipple infections.
4. Avoid cold situations such as cold rooms in supermarkets.
5. Analgesia such as Panadol can be helpful.
6. Try relaxation techniques when breastfeeding.
7. Avoid substances that can constrict the blood vessels such as caffeine or nicotine.
8. There are supplements and prescription medications that may be helpful –consult GP



