



Breastfeeding
Committee
for Saskatchewan

www.thebcs.ca

**For further information
contact:**

Local Public Health Nurse

International Board Certified
Lactation Consultant (IBCLC)

Local breastfeeding support
Group

Saskatchewan HealthLine 811

References:

1. International Lactation Consultant Association (2014). Clinical Guidelines for the Establishment of Exclusive Breastfeeding. Raleigh: International Lactation Consultant Association
2. Leclerc, C., & Stockham, J. (2015). Sore Nipples: 7 Causes and the Solutions You Need To Know. Retrieved from <http://www.cindyandjana.com/breast-feeding-should-not-hurt/>
3. Riordan, J. & Wambach, K. (2010). Breastfeeding and Human Lactation 4th ed. Sudbury, MA: Jones and Bartlett Publishers, LLC.

BREASTFEEDING

SORE NIPPLES

What may cause sore nipples?

- Baby is not latching or sucking on the breast correctly
- Baby is not held in a good position at the breast
- Tongue-tie
- Candida (yeast infection)
- Milk bleb or blister
- Incorrect use of a breast pump
- Vasospasm

How can sore nipples be prevented?

- If breastfeeding hurts, break the latch and try again. Make sure baby's mouth is open wide when you re-latch. Baby's chin should be touching the breast and the lips should be curled outwards. If the latch is not deep enough, the nipple can be compressed.
- Try different positions. It may take a bit of practice to find a position that is comfortable for you and your baby.
- If you are pumping, check the size of the flange. Your nipple should not be rubbing on the inside of the flange while you are pumping. Adjust the suction level of your pump if needed.
- If sore nipples continue, ask for help from someone skilled in assessing breastfeeding. Start by having the latch assessed, as this is often the cause.

Once the source of the problem is identified, the following may help with the healing of sore or damaged nipples:

- Breastfeed on the least sore side first. Baby will nurse more gently on the second side. If both nipples are sore, hand express some milk before a feeding to stimulate the letdown reflex.
- Breast milk has healing properties; rub a few drops on your nipples after feeds. If nipple skin is cracked, abraded, or wounded or if you have a yeast infection, use plain water instead.
- Consider wearing breast shells if the pressure from your bra or clothing is painful.
- For nipples that are severely damaged or infected, see your physician, as you may need a prescription ointment.