



Care Plan for Plugged Milk Ducts and Mastitis

Mastitis is an inflammation in your breast. There are two kinds of mastitis: inflammatory and infectious (breast infection). Inflammatory mastitis can lead to infectious mastitis—which is also called a breast infection—if not treated early. It is very important to remove milk from your breasts frequently and effectively in order to prevent and relieve mastitis. If you stop pumping, your infection may get worse and the mastitis may lead to a breast abscess.

Symptoms of Inflammatory Mastitis—Plugged Duct

If you have a tender spot, redness, or a sore lump in your breast or nipple, you may have a plugged duct. Milk backed up behind the plug causes the inflammation in your breast. It usually affects one breast. You may have a slight fever or none at all.

Symptoms of Infectious Mastitis—Breast Infection

If part of your breast or your entire breast becomes red and hard, you have a fever of 101 degrees or higher, and you feel flu-like and achy, you may have a breast infection. Breast infections may begin as a plugged duct, engorgement, or a cracked nipple. It can develop gradually or suddenly. Breast infections can affect one breast or both breasts.

Care Plan Goals for Inflammatory Mastitis—Plugged Duct

- Decrease breast inflammation and eliminate plug
- Identify the cause of the mastitis
- Prevent mastitis becoming breast infection or abscess

Suggestions for Relieving Inflammatory Mastitis—Plugged Duct

- Pump affected breast every 2 to 2.5 hours during the day and 3 hours at night until your symptoms subside.
- Begin each breastfeeding session on the affected breast then switch to unaffected side.
- Massage your breast while you breastfeed or pump, starting above affected area and stroking toward your nipple.

- Use ice packs to relieve swelling and discomfort; rest as much as possible.
- Drink plenty of fluids and eat healthy foods.
- Do not wear a tight-fitting bra or clothing that presses against the breast tissue.
- Ask your doctor about using non-steroidal anti-inflammatory medications, such as ibuprofen, to reduce inflammation and discomfort.
- If you have any questions, call the TriHealth Breastfeeding Care Center (513 862 7867 option 3).

Suggestions for Relieving Infectious Mastitis—Breast Infection

If you have been following the above steps for treating inflammatory mastitis, and see no improvement or are feeling worse after 24 hours you may have a breast infection.

Treat symptoms of a breast infection immediately:

- Follow the suggestions for inflammatory mastitis listed above.
- Call your doctor right away
- Take the entire course of the antibiotic if prescribed (typically 10 to 14 days)
- Use an effective breast pump to remove milk.
- If you have any questions, call the TriHealth Breastfeeding Care Center (513 862 7867 option 3).