Mastitis

You may see these signs
- hot, red, painful area on the breast
- muscle aches
- headache
- fever or chills
- fatigue

How to prevent
- wash your hands before feeding
- ensure your baby has a good latch
- feed one breast until soft before offering the other breast
- gently massage any plugged ducts or breast lumps (see Plugged Ducts handout)
- try not to miss breastfeedings
- get help if you have sore or cracked nipples
- take care of yourself; rest, drink and eat well
- wear a comfortable, well fitting nursing bra
- if weaning, do it slowly

What to do
If you have signs of mastitis see your health care provider within 24 hours. Your health care provider may prescribe antibiotic medicine.
You can continue breastfeeding
• place a moist, warm cloth on the breast for a few minutes, or take a warm shower before feeding your baby
• feed on the sore breast first
• let your baby feed often or pump to soften the breast
• breastfeed in different positions. Try to point your baby’s chin towards the painful area or lump when breastfeeding
• while your baby is feeding, gently massage the breast, using your fingers to massage from the outside of the breast towards the nipple

To relieve pain
• ibuprofen or acetaminophen is safe. Read product directions before using
• cold packs may be soothing. Try applying a cold cloth or ice pack
• wear loose clothing and try not to put pressure on your breasts

Take care of yourself
• rest, eat and drink well

How long before this gets better?
• you should feel better within 48 hours of starting antibiotic medicine. If not, return to your health care provider

Vancouver Coastal Health is committed to helping women successfully breastfeed. Please call your local Public Health Unit for additional information.

Other information on parenting are available at your local Community Health Office/Centre or online at http://vch.eduhealth.ca

You can get further information about breastfeeding from:
Public Health Nurse or Community Dietitian
at Vancouver Coastal Health .................................................... www.vch.ca
Baby’s Best Chance.......................................................... www.healthyfamiliesbc.ca/parenting
VCH Parenting Website .................................................... http://parenting.vch.ca/
HealthLinkBC ............................................................................. 8-1-1
Translation services are available in 130 languages............. www.healthlinkbc.ca