Plugged ( Blocked) Ducts

A plugged duct is a build up of milk in a milk duct. It may come on suddenly or gradually.

You may see these signs
• a tender lump in your breast or armpit area
• red areas or red streaking on the breast
• your breast may feel warm
• you may see a white spot on the end of your nipple
• milk flow may be slow and baby may be fussy or tug and pull at the breast

How to prevent
Make sure breastfeeding is comfortable
• if you need help or have questions about your baby’s latch call your public health nurse
• if your breasts are heavy use a small rolled towel underneath for support

Feed often
• feed on one breast until soft before offering the other breast
• massage breast during the feed
• avoid missing breastfeedings and abrupt weaning

Take care of yourself
• rest, drink and eat well

What to do
Keep breastfeeding your baby
• place a warm cloth or hot water bottle on your breast, or take a warm shower before feeding your baby
• start the feed on the affected breast. Let your baby feed for as long as he wants. You can also pump or hand express after breastfeeding for 5-10 minutes to help the plug to move
• breastfeed in different positions. Try to point your baby’s chin towards the lump when breastfeeding
• massage your breast while your baby is feeding. Start from behind the lump and massage toward your nipple
• lecithin may help. Lecithin is a food supplement that may make the milk less “sticky”. The usual dose is 1200mg four times a day. Ask your pharmacist for more information

To relieve pain
• ibuprofen or acetaminophen is safe. Read product directions before using
• cold packs may be soothing. Try applying cold cloths or ice packs
• wear loose clothing, a comfortable nursing bra, and avoid putting pressure on your breasts

How long before this gets better?
• the lump usually gets better in 1–2 days
• call your health care provider if the lump persists or your symptoms worsen

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 Nutritionist at Vancouver Coastal Health..........................www.vch.ca
Baby's Best Chance........http://www.health.gov.bc.ca/children/initiatives/bbc.html
VCH Parenting Website .........................................................http://parenting.vch.ca/
HealthLinkBC............................................................................................................8-1-1
Translation services are available in 130 languages..................www.healthlinkbc.ca

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