



SportsMed

Mastitis

Important Information

Mastitis refers to inflammation of the breast. It can be non-infective, caused by a blocked milk duct, or infective caused by a bacterial infection.

Non-infective mastitis may develop into infected mastitis through a cracked nipple, or just because your body is run down and your immunity is lowered when you are tired.

Symptoms

Breast

- Red, hot, swollen firm patch on the breast
- Tender or painful to touch
- The skin may appear tight and shiny and pink

Body

- Tired
- Headaches
- Nausea
- Flu-like symptoms and/or feverish

Ask at reception or call today on **08 9382 9600**

Factors that predispose women to blocked ducts, and may lead to mastitis are:

- Poor drainage of the breast, caused by poor attachment at the breast or limited time at the breast
- Engorgement of the breast due to a missed feed or delayed feed
- A tight or ill-fitting bra, or underwire digging in
- Holding the breast too tightly during feeding
- Trauma such as a kick from a toddler or pressure from a seatbelt
- Nipple trauma caused by poor attachment



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Preventing mastitis

To help prevent mastitis you should:

- Always wash hands thoroughly before touching the breast
- Ensure baby is positioned and attached correctly to the breast
- Avoid long periods between breastfeeds
- Wear loose comfortable clothes and correctly fitted bras without underwire

It is important to treat blocked milk ducts so they do not progress to mastitis.

Options for treating blocked ducts include:

- Keep breastfeeding. Offer the affected breast first to maximise drainage
- Apply a heat pack or hot shower prior to breastfeeding, and follow with an ice pack after feeding and between feeds for comfort
- Gentle self massage towards the nipple may help to release the blockage. The pressure should be light to avoid causing further bruising and swelling around the blocked duct
- Change in feeding position. A good tip is to point the baby's chin towards the blocked duct
- Frequent drainage of the breast through breastfeeding or expressing

If the blockage does not clear within 8-12 hours ultrasound treatment can be useful. If you start to feel any flu-like symptoms see your Doctor immediately.

Your GP may not be able to distinguish between infective and non-infective mastitis, but will usually commence you on a course of antibiotics

You should also

- Continue to breastfeed whilst on antibiotics. Your baby may experience a few runny nappies, but it will not cause them any harm
- Ultrasound treatment can commence after 24 hours antibiotic use
- Rest and adequate fluid intake
- Analgesia (such as Paracetamol) for pain relief as required

If you wish to stop breastfeeding, it is important to continue to feed until the mastitis has cleared.

Rapid weaning may lead to a breast abscess.

Ultrasound for blocked ducts & mastitis

St John of God Physiotherapy offers ultrasound therapy for blocked ducts and mastitis. Ultrasound therapy works by sending sound waves into the tissues to reduce swelling and help to reduce the blockage to resume normal milk flow.

It is not painful and will help to resolve the blockage quickly.

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