



## Sore Nipples

*Breastfeeding should not hurt and sore nipples are not normal. However, nipple pain is one of the most common reasons mothers seek breastfeeding help.*

### **What can cause nipple pain?**

- A shallow latch (when baby takes only the nipple in his or her mouth). This is more common with a small, early or sleepy baby, or moms with large or flat nipples or engorged breasts. Nipples may just hurt, or they may also break down, bleed and become scabbed.
- A tongue tie. Some babies are born with a piece of skin connecting their tongue to the floor of their mouth. It may be noticeable and cause the tongue to appear heart shaped. It may restrict tongue movement and keep a baby from latching comfortably or removing milk well. It can be hereditary (many members of a family may have it).
- Yeast overgrowth. Yeast is normal on our bodies. However, it likes warm, wet places and may grow excessively due to hormonal changes. Yeast is more common if a mom's nipples were cracked at one time. Symptoms include irritated, red, flakey nipples. It is often suspected when a mother has been nursing comfortably and all of a sudden her nipples hurt.
- A nipple bleb or a plugged nipple duct. This includes a plugged duct deep in the breast.
- Eczema, psoriasis or an allergic reaction to a nipple cream or ointment.
- A nipple infection which may occur with a cracked nipple that did not heal.
- Pumping with excess pressure or a pump shield that is too small.
- A baby who exerts excessively high pressure while suckling.

*It is important to seek help in determining the cause and treatment of sore nipples. If left untreated, it is possible to develop chronic nipple pain, making breastfeeding extremely difficult.*