



Annandale OBGYN
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Mastitis

What is mastitis?

Mastitis, in the setting of breastfeeding, also called lactational mastitis is when typically one breast becomes red, swollen, painful, and tender to the touch usually due to stagnant milk. If this issue persists long enough, the milk inside the breast becomes infected and symptoms of fever, chills, body aches, worsened reddening / pain / tenderness of the breast occur. It most commonly occurs in the first 3 months of breastfeeding.

How do we treat mastitis?

- Your provider will recommend breastfeeding-safe antibiotic medications to treat if infection is suspected
- Motrin 400-600mg plus Tylenol 625-1000mg taken in combination every 8 hours can help with pain relief, fever and swelling. These are safe in breast feeding
- Continue to breastfeed every 2 hours starting on the affected side first
- Use warm packs (or a hot shower) for about 15-20 minutes prior to feeding, while massaging the affected breasts to help with milk flow
- Use cold packs for about 20 minutes after feeding and completely emptying the breast to decrease inflammation
- If baby is not completely emptying the breast, you may need to express or pump after feeds to fully empty all the milk
- Stay hydrated
- Rest and relax

How can I prevent mastitis?

The best way to prevent mastitis is to prevent stagnant milk and therefore to prevent engorgement. You can do this by feeding frequently, at the most every 3 hours. Warm compresses and massage before feeds. Also make sure breasts are being fully emptied after each feed, which may require pumping after feeds or in between them.

What are concerning signs to look out for?

- If symptoms are not better within 72 hours of starting antibiotic treatment, call the office
- If the area of redness is spreading despite being on antibiotic treatment, call the office
- If you have a fever $\geq 102^{\circ}\text{F}$ that is not improving at all with Tylenol use, go to the ER

If you are struggling with breastfeeding, having pain with breastfeeding, or experiencing repeated engorgement issues, please call the Lactation Consultants at Inova Fairfax Hospital at 703-776-4402