



SKIN & BEAUTY CENTER
Cosmetic, Medical and Surgical Dermatology

DermlA.com

BURBANK

191 S. Buena Vista St. Suite 475
Burbank, CA 91505
T: (818) 842-8000
F: (818) 842-3208

SANTA CLARITA

27879 Smyth Drive
Valencia, CA 91355
T: (877) 822-2223
F: (323) 935-8804



NORTHRIDGE

9535 Reseda Blvd. Suite 304
Northridge, CA 91324
T: (818) 886-3884
F: (818) 886-5418

William Coleman, MD
David Friedman, MD
Ava Khosraviani, MD
Payam Saadat, MD
Manjunath Vadmal, MD
Kristen Ochsner, PA-C
Jenna Trubschenck, M.S. PA-C

Post-partum sore nipples while Breast Feeding

There are several causes of sore nipples in the new mother. Most cases are resolved by visiting a lactation consultant or discussing the problem with the OB/GYN doctor. Occasionally a dermatologist is consulted.

Most often nursing mothers' nipples become sore when the baby latches on incorrectly. This makes them hurt during nursing. Rotating the position of the baby relative to the breast alters the area of pressure and allows the most irritated areas to heal. Rather than holding the baby's body on her lap, the mother can nurse lying down, with the baby's body laying along side her, for example when the baby's head is nursing at the left breast, the baby's feet are pointing toward the mother's left shoulder. Follow each feeding with an emollient cream to the eroded cracked area right after nursing.

Mastitis is a painful bacterial infection of one breast. The skin is hot, red and tender. Small bumps around the nipple that may be tender may be a milk plug or a milk blister. These resemble white heads and can be exquisitely painful. Candidiasis (also known as or yeast infection or thrush) of the nipples is another cause. Unlike mastitis or milk plugs it almost always affects both breasts. The nipples are bright red, inflamed, almost sunburned in look and feeling. Moms feel like their nipples are "on fire."

Unlike a cut or abrasion this hurts in between feedings and even clothing brushing against the nipples is very painful. The baby can pick up yeast infection from the mother on its way through the birth canal or get it from taking antibiotics. This can later pass from the infant's mouth to the nipples. Unfortunately trying to prove yeast infection as the cause of sore nipple is difficult. Taking routine cultures is close to pointless as will not get a pure culture, but will most likely be contaminated. Both baby and mom will need to be treated.

Ductal spasm is a deep pain below the nipples at the tail end of the feeding and for about an hour after the feeding. There is no nipple pain, irritation or inflammation. Sometimes this pain will respond to hot wet compresses. Often this will resolve after several weeks, but it may go on longer.

Moms with a history of Raynauds phenomenon experience nipple blanching. Immediately after breast-feeding the nipples turn white. It is worse if the mom has an oversupply of milk leading to the infant biting down to stem the flow. Nipple blanching is often relieved by hot compresses immediately following the breast-feeding. Medications such as Procardia and Nitropaste have also been used for this.