



Sore or grazed nipples

It's very common to have sore nipples in the early days feeding. Up to 90% of us experience anything from mild discomfort to pain, but the good news is, it passes and usually resolves on its own. However, if it's persistent, it can interfere with your confidence and enjoyment of breastfeeding.

What causes the discomfort/pain?

- Your pregnancy hormones cause swelling around the nipple. This, combined with about 8 hours a day of feeding, it's no wonder that nipples get sore. This soon passes and there's no lasting damage.
- Stretch pain – As baby suckles, they create a vacuum with your nipple, stretching out the nipple tissue. This lasts for the first 20–30 seconds.
- Hold and latch not being as good as it could be – it takes time and practise to get it right.

What to do?

Keep your nipples clean and dry, apply a little bit of breast milk, or a thin layer of cream eg *purified lanolin* or *kawa kawa balm*. A daily wash with soap and water helps keep bugs away too.

How to stop the 'ouch':

- Unwrap baby
- Scoop baby under the breast more
- Tilt baby's head back



Looking at the nipple at the end of a feed often tells a story

If your midwife can't visit during a feed, take a photo of your nipples to show her later

Problem:	Solution:
Misshapen nipple – flattened, slanting (like a lipstick) or pinched at the end. These things are usually due to latching and positioning.	This is often fixed by having baby's chin lower on your breast as you latch. 
Grazed nipples – this is where the front of the nipple has grazed skin. Usually caused by a shallow latch. Particularly common if you have 'flattish' or swollen nipples.	Try tilting your nipple up more as baby latches. 
Nipple cracks – this is where there is a crack in the skin around the base of the nipple. Usually due to the baby and breast being at different angles to each other.	Review latching, paying attention to the angles (like in this photo). Tuck your baby under your breasts more. 

Grazes, broken skin and cracked nipples can be caused by:

1. Technique of hold and latch
2. Short or inverted nipples
3. Baby unable to latch well (e.g. tongue tie)
4. An infection
5. Skin condition, e.g. eczema

Most sore nipples can be fixed. **If you find the cause, you can find the solution.**

Problem

Misshapen nipple: flattened, slanting or lipstick shaped, or pinched at the end. Usually due to latching and positioning

Solution

This is often fixed by having baby's chin lower on your breast as you latch

Chin very low

Problem

Grazed nipples: this is where the front of the nipple has grazed skin. Usually caused by a shallow latch. Particularly common if you have flattish or swollen nipples

Solution

Try tilting your nipple up more as baby latches.



Nipple tilted upwards

Problem

Nipple cracks: this is where there is a crack in the skin around the base of the nipple. Usually due to the baby and breast being at different angles to each other

Solution

Review latching, paying attention to lining baby up with the breast, rolling baby in and under the breast, and making sure that both of baby's cheeks, the nose and the chin are all touching the breast.



Head at same angle as breast and nipple