

SECOND NATURE LACTATION

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RESOLVING A MILK BLEB

(DEFINED AS A TINY AREA THAT MAY LOOK LIKE A SMALL WHITE BLISTER OR A LARGE DIFFUSE WHITE SCAB COVERING MUCH OF THE NIPPLE) THERE ARE TWO REASONS THESE CAN DEVELOP. IT CAN BE THE RESULT OF FRICTION, IN WHICH CASE A LAYER OF SKIN, LIKE A CALLUS, COVERS AND BLOCKS ONE OR MORE NIPPLE PORES, OR IT CAN BE FROM A PLUGGED DUCT DEEPER IN THE BREAST, RESULTING IN A WHITE DOT ON YOUR NIPPLE. THIS DRIED MILK SECRETION BLOCKING THE FREE-FLOWING MILK IN A PARTICULAR DUCT IS LIKE GLUE THAT DRIES AND BLOCKS THE TIP OF THE BOTTLE. EITHER WAY, THE PAIN IS SHARP AND CAN MAKE BREASTFEEDING VERY UNCOMFORTABLE. IT IS LIKE A SPLINTER IN YOUR FINGER.

YOUR GOAL IS TO CLEAR THE NIPPLE PORE SO THAT THE MILK CAN FLOW..

SUGGESTIONS:

MANUAL MILK REMOVAL & CLEARING: THE PATHWAY: IF IT LOOKS LIKE A SMALL PIN-HEAD SIZED BLISTER, FIRST TRY TO GET MILK EJECTING OUT OF IT. USING YOUR FRESHLY WASHED HANDS EXPRESS MILK VERY NEAR THE NIPPLE. AS IF TRYING TO UNSCREW THE CAP OFF OF A TUBE OF TOOTHPASTE, GENTLY TWIST AT THE BASE OF THE NIPPLE TO TRY TO GET SOME MILK BULGING OUT OF THE BLEB. IF IT BULGES, IT IS LIKELY A BLOCKED NIPPLE PORE. EXPRESS MILK VERY NEAR TO THE NIPPLE AND INCH YOUR WAY BACK TOWARDS THE BACK OF THE BREAST WHERE IT MEETS THE CHEST WALL. FOR EXAMPLE, MASSAGE 1/2" UP FROM THE NIPPLE THEN DOWN TOWARDS THE NIPPLE, THEN 1" AWAY AND BACK TOWARDS THE NIPPLE, THEN 2", THEN 3" AND SO ON. FOLLOW THIS WITH HAND EXPRESSING, BREASTFEEDING OR PUMPING UNTIL THAT PORE IS UNBLOCKED. YOU MIGHT FIND YOU WILL EXPRESS SOME STRINGY DRIED MILK.

OIL AND VINEGAR COMPRESSES: FIRST, TRY WEARING ALTERNATING COMPRESSES OF OLIVE OIL AND APPLE CIDER VINEGAR. (SATURATE A COTTON COSMETIC PAD AND PLACE OVER THE NIPPLE UNDER BRA. YOU MAY NEED A BREAST PAD TO PROTECT YOUR CLOTHING.) THIS SERVES TO SOFTEN THE SKIN OF THE NIPPLE. SOMETIMES THIS STEP ALONE SOLVES THE ISSUE IN 12-24 HOURS.

GENTLE EXFOLIATION: USING A SOFT WASHCLOTH WITH MILD SOAP AND WATER, RUB OVER THE SURFACE OF THE NIPPLE FOR A MOMENT OR TWO TO REMOVE ANY LOOSE SKIN. DO THIS TWICE A DAY. IF THE TISSUE ENDS UP LOOKING RED, RAW OR ABRADED, FOLLOW WITH A TOPICAL ANTIBIOTIC OINTMENT, SUCH AS MUPIROCIN 2% OR AN OTC ONE SUCH AS BACITRACIN (NOT NEOSPORIN).

MASSAGE: THOUGH THE PAIN IS FOCUSED IN THE NIPPLE, GENTLE MASSAGING OF THE BREAST OVER THE SKIN TOWARDS THE ARMPITS MAY BE HELPFUL IN MILK REMOVAL. YOUR TOUCH IS SIMILAR TO BRUSHING CRUMBS OFF THE COUNTER VS. A DEEP MASSAGING TECHNIQUE. PLEASE SEE VIDEO.

MEDICATION: IF YOU DO NOT GET RELIEF WITHIN 5-7 DAYS, DISCUSS A MILD TOPICAL STEROID CREAM SUCH AS TRIAMCINOLONE 0.1% OINTMENT OR BETAMETHASONE VALERATE 0.1% OINTMENT WITH YOUR PHYSICIAN. THIS STEROID OINTMENT WORKS BY REDUCING INFLAMMATION AND THINNING THE TOP LAYER OF SKIN, WHICH ALLOWS THE PLUGGED PORE TO BE FREED. THE RECOMMENDATION IS TO APPLY A THIN SHEEN TO YOUR NIPPLE 1X PER DAY, COVER WITH PLASTIC WRAP DURING THE LONGEST PERIOD OF SLEEP. TRY TO MAKE THE APPLICATION TIMED WHEN THE BABY HAS THE LONGEST BREAK FROM LATCHING SO IT CAN REMAIN ON THE NIPPLE THE LONGEST. IT MIGHT TAKE SEVERAL WEEKS FOR THIS SCAB-LIKE COVERING TO RESOLVE.

UNROOFING, IF ALL ELSE FAILS, SEEK OUT THE HELP OF AN EXPERIENCED PROVIDER TO "UNROOF" THE BLEB. ONLY DO THIS IF YOU KNOW OF A LOCAL DERMATOLOGIST WHO IS EXPERIENCED WITH BREASTFEEDING.