

Your important health information

Breast and nipple thrush

What is thrush?

Thrush is a fungal infection that can occur in the nipple and/or breast or in a baby's mouth.

Sometimes it may occur on other places on the body. Thrush may be linked to recent antibiotic use or a history of vaginal thrush. Sometimes the cause is unknown.

Symptoms

Mother

- Nipple pain even with good positioning and attachment.
- Burning, itching or stinging of the nipple.
- Nipples may be sore to light touch.
- Breast pain may be:
 - stabbing or shooting
 - a deep ache
 - a burning feeling that goes into the breast
 - in one or both breasts, during or after feeds.

Signs

Mother

- The nipple/s may look bright pink.
- The areola (the darker area around the nipple) may be red, dry or flaky.
- A white rash may be seen.
- Slow healing nipple damage.
- The nipple may look normal.

Baby

- Pulls off the breast often, is fussy and unsettled.
- White patches can be on the insides of the cheeks, lips, tongue and the roof of the mouth which cannot be removed when touched/scraped by your finger.
- Has a red nappy rash, with spots around the edges.

Treatment

Mother and baby must be treated at the same time to prevent re-infection

- Breastfeed or express regularly to prevent breast engorgement or blocked ducts/mastitis.
- Put on a thin layer of antifungal cream, for example, (miconazole 2% cream) to nipples and areola:
 - after each breastfeed or every three to four hours during the daytime for one to two weeks
 - you do not need to wash the cream from the nipples before the next breastfeed
 - any excess cream can be gently wiped away with a tissue.
- If nipple pain is not getting better a prescription for oral antifungal tablets may be needed from your doctor.
- Air dry the nipples, leave the bra off at night.
- Change breast pads after each feed.

Treatment for baby

Nystatin oral drops or Daktarin® oral gel can be used.

Both medicines can be bought over-the-counter from your local pharmacy.

Do not use both medicines at the same time.

Nystatin oral drops are suitable for babies of all ages.

- Use the dropper supplied.
- Dose:
 - drip one millilitre (ml) into your baby's mouth, four times a day after feeds for one to two weeks.

Daktarin® oral gel is suitable for infants older than 6 months of age (due to choking concerns about how it is given to a baby).

- Must be used properly by using a clean finger to rub small amounts onto each area inside baby's mouth, cheeks and tongue.
- Dose:
 - $\frac{1}{4}$ of a teaspoon (equals 1.25 ml), four times a day after feeds for one to two weeks.
- **Do not use the spoon supplied to give your baby the gel.**

Hygiene

- Treat any of the family who may have a fungal infection, for example vagina, nappy rash and feet.
- Wash hands well before and after breastfeeding, after nappy changes, applying creams or ointments, or going to the toilet.
- Clean breast pump parts, bottle teats, dummies or nipple shields with hot soapy water and boil for five minutes after each use.
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- Replace bottle teats and dummies each week.
- Change bra daily or more often if needed.
- Wash towels, bras, cloth breast pads and nappies in hot soapy water, add ½ cup of vinegar to the rinse cycle and air-dry outside.
- Avoid sharing towels with other family members.
- Use separate towels to dry upper and lower body.
- Wipe the baby's bath using a weak mixture of 1 teaspoon of household bleach to 200ml of water.

Further Information

If you have any questions regarding this information, please contact:

**Mercy Hospital for Women
Breastfeeding Support Service**

Phone: 03 8458 4677

Pharmacy

Phone: 03 8458 4666

**Werribee Mercy Hospital
Breastfeeding Support Service**

Phone: 03 8754 3407

Pharmacy

Phone: 03 8754 3541

Other services

Australian Breastfeeding Association Helpline

Phone: 1800 686 268

www.breastfeeding.asn.au

Maternal & Child Health Line

Phone: 13 22 29

Private Lactation Consultant

www.lcanz.org

Acknowledgements

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This document provides general information only and is not intended to replace advice about your health from a qualified practitioner. If you are concerned about your health, you should seek advice from a qualified practitioner.