

PHYSIOTHERAPY FOR THE INFLAMED LACTATING BREAST

Important Points:

- Beg, buy, borrow or steal the help you need to get REST and SLEEP
- Take non-steroidal anti-inflammatory medication (NSAIDS) if safe to do so. (*See Medication Handout*)
- Avoid over stimulating the sore breast tissue. If baby won't comfortably feed from the affected breast, start feeding from the non-affected side then transfer across to your affected side when baby is quietly alert – not ravenously hungry or distressed.
- Ensure duration between feeds is short enough so breasts don't feel uncomfortably full. Feed your baby or express (if separated from baby) when your breasts feel full. Expressing MUST be comfortable or relieving. Take care that the flange does not compress the breast - remember the flange is mimicking the baby's lips and the pumping action is mimicking the baby's suckling action. (*See Expressing Handout*)
- Remove all garments, bras and pads that leave an indentation or mark on your skin. Avoid wearing a bra to bed. Wearing a crop top or "boobitubi" (prescribed by the physio can be a comfortable supportive alternative





- Ensure good attachment at the breast. Aim baby's nose to the nipple and wait for them to open wide then bring baby to breast. You can stimulate opening of mouth by hand expressing some milk. Do not let a feed continue if it is persistently painful. Ensure you try different positions and try to avoid relying on pillows especially as the baby gets older. *(See Positioning and Attachment Handout)*
- Ensure you're in a comfortable supported position to feed – recumbent/'laid back' breastfeeding or side lying are biologically natural and allow the breast to empty better while being more comfortable for you and baby. *(See Positioning and Attachment Handout)*
- Get into the habit of feeling each breast after each feed. Make note of any areas that do not feel adequately emptied. Offer that breast again in a different position now or at the next feed alternatively you can pump or hand express to try to empty this breast.
- Pay attention to hand hygiene – use an alcohol-based hand rub prior to feeding, after nappy changes, toileting and regularly throughout the day
- Ensure that you are drinking around 2 litres of fluid per day
- Manually handling your breast **MUST BE GENTLE**. Respect your pain.
- Buy a loofah or sponge and every shower massage the following areas:
 - a. Neck x 10 circles
 - b. Collar Bone x 10 circles
 - c. Armpit x 10 circles
 - d. Breast circles x10
 - e. Breast strokes towards the collarbone and armpit x 10 each



BREAST MASSAGE SEQUENCE

When to massage?

- Breast massage can be done prior to a feed to improve the emptying of the breast.
- Otherwise it can be done afterwards to clear whatever is left and then you can hand express or pump to empty entirely.

Breast Massage Sequence:

1. Lie down comfortably
2. Take a slow deep inhalation, hold the breath at the top then slowly exhale letting your body sink into the bed and relax. Repeat 5 times. (This stimulates the respiratory pump that assists lymphatic flow)
3. Lymphatic drainage on your affected side
 - a. 'OPEN THE GATES' Soft semi circles (Opens lymph nodes that will pump excessive fluid away)
 - i. Side of neck x 10
 - ii. Collar bone x 10
 - iii. Armpit x 10
 - b. 'CLEAR THE PIPES' Soft strokes
 - i. Breast to armpit x 10
 - ii. Breast to collar bone x 10
 - c. 'CLEAR THE GATES' Soft semi circles
 - i. Armpit x 10
 - ii. Collar bone x 10
 - iii. Side of neck x 10
4. Muscle Pump – bring palms together in front of chest and press together firmly, holding for 3 seconds, rest for 3 seconds. Repeat 10 times. (This activated the muscular pump that will facilitate lymphatic flow)
5. Breast massage
 - a. 'Madonna cones'. Cup breast above and below. Gently twist the breast so that the areola and breast tissue softly form a cone shape in between your hands. Release. Repeat x10.



A L C H E M Y
I N M O T I O N



- b. Clock face lift and stretch. Cup breast from either side. Gently lift and relax the breast from 9 o'clock to 3 o'clock. Lift, relax, lift, relax etc. Repeat cycle from 9-3 o'clock x5.

