

Thrush

Thrush is caused by yeast that grows in moist dark areas such as the mother's nipples and milk ducts and the baby's mouth and diaper area. Even after weeks or months of breastfeeding without pain, symptoms of thrush may begin suddenly.

Mothers may have:

- Red, itchy, tender or burning nipples.
- Nipple soreness that does not improve with a good latch or changing your breastfeeding positions.
- Pain radiating from your nipples into your breasts.

Your baby may have:

- White patches inside his mouth, on the inside of his cheeks, around his gums or on his tongue. These patches can't be easily rubbed off with a cloth.
- Diaper rash on his bottom that is red and patchy and does not get better when you use diaper creams.
- Gassiness or fussiness.
- Some discomfort in his mouth causing him not to latch or pull off the breast repeatedly.



If you and, or your baby have signs and symptoms of thrush call your health care provider or local public health unit. It is important that both you and your baby are treated to prevent passing thrush back and forth.

What to do:

- Continue to breastfeed your baby.
- Wash your hands before breastfeeding and after every diaper change.
- Rinse your nipple area with warm water after each feeding, pat dry, then air dry.
- Change nursing pads as soon as they are wet to keep your nipples dry.
- Air dry your nipples after each feeding.
- Wash any clothing that has become wet with breast milk, e.g., your bras, tops, or reusable breast pads.
- Any toy or other item that goes into baby's mouth needs to be cleaned thoroughly. Clean with hot soapy water and rinse with clear water.
- If you are using a breast pump, clean all parts that come in contact with your milk. Wash in hot soapy water. Rinse well in hot water. Set to air dry on a clean towel.
- It may help to change what you are eating. Eating low amounts of sugar and starch can reduce your risk of getting thrush. For more information about your nutrition you can talk for free with a registered dietitian at 1-877-510-5102 or visit www.eatrightontario.ca.

For more information on thrush talk to someone who has experience helping breastfeeding mothers. The *Bilingual Online Ontario Breastfeeding Services directory* at www.ontariobreastfeeds.ca can help you connect and get help and support from peers, professionals and experts.