



Solutions when feeding feels hard

Breastfeeding Troubleshooting Guide

Common challenges and evidence-based solutions for your nursing journey

Breastfeeding is natural but not always easy. Most challenges are temporary and solvable with the right support. This guide covers common issues, but always reach out to a lactation consultant for personalized help.

Common Challenges & Solutions

Painful Latch

Signs: Toe-curling pain, cracked/bleeding nipples, pinched nipple shape after feeding

Try:

- Break suction and re-latch (insert finger to break seal)
- Aim nipple toward baby's nose, wait for wide mouth
- Ensure baby takes full areola, not just nipple
- Check for tongue/lip ties with IBCLC

Low Milk Supply (Perceived or Actual)

Signs: Baby unsatisfied after feeds, not enough wet/dirty diapers, poor weight gain

Try:

- Feed on demand (8-12x per day for newborns)
- Offer both breasts each feeding
- Skin-to-skin contact to boost hormones
- Power pumping (20 min on, 10 off, repeat)

Engorgement

Signs: Breasts feel hard, hot, swollen; baby can't latch onto tight breast

Try:

- Reverse pressure softening before latching
- Warm compress before, cold after feeding
- Hand express just enough to soften
- Cabbage leaves in bra (seriously, it works!)

Clogged Ducts

Signs: Tender lump in breast, red spot, pain during letdown

Try:

- Nurse frequently, starting on affected side
- Massage toward nipple while feeding
- Warm compress + vibration on lump
- Dangle feeding (baby below breast)

Mastitis

Signs: Flu-like symptoms, fever, red streaks on breast, intense pain

Try:

- Continue nursing (it's safe and helps!)
- Rest, hydrate, fever reducers
- Call provider if fever persists 24+ hours
- Antibiotics may be needed - don't delay

Thrush (Yeast Infection)

Signs: Burning/itching nipples, shiny pink skin, white patches in baby's mouth

Try:

- Both mom and baby need treatment
- Air dry nipples, change breast pads often
- Wash bras in hot water daily
- Probiotics for you, sterilize pacifiers

Perfect Latch Checklist

1

Position

Baby's ear, shoulder, hip aligned. Tummy to tummy.

2

Aim

Nipple to nose. Wait for wide, gaping mouth.

3

Latch

Bring baby to breast (not breast to baby). Chin touches first.

4

Check

Lips flanged out, no clicking, rhythmic suck-swallow.

! When to Seek Help Immediately

! Baby not gaining weight or losing after day 4

! Fewer than 6 wet diapers after day 5

! Baby too sleepy to feed, hard to wake

! Fever over 101°F with breast symptoms

! Severe pain that doesn't improve

! Signs of dehydration in baby (dry mouth, no tears)

Feeding Positions to Try

Cradle Hold

Classic position - baby's head in crook of arm

Cross-Cradle

More control - opposite hand supports head

Football/Clutch

Support Resources

Find an IBCLC

International Board Certified Lactation Consultant
ilca.org/find-a-lactation-consultant

La Leche League

Free peer support and local groups
llusa.org

Great for C-section recovery, large breasts

Side-Lying

Perfect for night feeds and recovery

Laid-Back

Reclined position, baby on chest - instinctive

Breastfeeding Hotline

24/7 support line

1-800-994-9662

Your Doula

Audrey's Nest lactation support

audreysnest.com/contact



audrey's nest

hello@audreysnest.com

For personalized lactation support

audreysnest.com/contact