

Plugged Duct Treatment

Lecithin is a food supplement that seems to help some mothers prevent plugged ducts. It works by breaking up fat globules into smaller globules, which decreases the viscosity (stickiness) of the milk. It is safe and effective. It comes in two forms - soy and sunflower.

The dose is 1200-1600mg up to 4 times a day.

Plugged ducts are painful due to inflammation so the main treatment should be to reduce inflammation. Cold compresses after feeds can be helpful, taking anti-inflammatory medication like ibuprofen (advil) regularly until the pain subsides, and NO MASSAGE or very gentle massage as outlined below. DO NOT do extra emptying of your breasts, instead feed or pump regularly in the amount the baby needs, extra pumping or feeding can make plugs worse because it signals your brain to make more milk.

Submerging your breasts in warm water with epsom salts prior to breastfeeding or pumping can also help. If you have a Haakaa pump you can fill it with warm water and epsom salts and suction it onto the breast for a few minutes, this can often get plugs out:

<https://haakaausa.com/blogs/everything-about-the-4th-trimester/how-the-haakaa-breast-pump-can-help-clear-plugged-milk-ducts>

Gently massaging the breast towards the armpit can also help with plugged ducts. This is often called therapeutic breast massage. This link is to a video that explains this technique:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h1E3eYbT9UY>

If the plugged ducts are persistent you may require therapeutic ultrasound which is available at some physical therapy clinics. In Calgary it is available at Interactive Health (403-547-2099) and Vida Health and Wellness (403-237-0211).

If you develop a persistent hard red area on your breast and fevers/chills you may have an infection (mastitis). Contact your physician to discuss if you need antibiotics and continue to breastfeed and/or pump to extract the milk.