



Vasospasm

What is vasospasm?

Based on your symptoms and physical exam, we have diagnosed you with vasospasm. This happens when your blood vessels spasm, and there isn't enough blood flow to the breast. Some mothers notice their nipples turn pale, purple and/or very bright red. Others notice sharp, shooting pain deep in the breast. It often starts when the baby comes off the breast and the nipple gets cooler.

Treatment for vasospasm

The treatment for vasospasm is to keep the breast warm. This relaxes blood vessels, stopping the spasms that cause pain. We recommend setting a heating pad on low when you start feeding your baby or pumping. When you are done feeding, cover both breasts and hold the heating pad over both breasts for at least five minutes. You can also put a warm gel pack in your bra – let it cool gradually, so you don't experience rebound pain when you remove the gel pack.

It's also important to cut back on Caffeine, because this can cause blood vessels to spasm. Stop using decongestants like Sudafed, because they can also make vasospasm worse. You can also reduce vasospasm by keeping warm and raising the temperature around you.



Nifedipine for vasospasm

Nifedipine (Procardia) is a medicine that keeps your blood vessels from contracting. This can help reduce pain for mothers who aren't getting full relief with heat. This medicine is used to treat high blood pressure, and some mothers feel dizzy or lightheaded if they stand up quickly when they are taking this medicine. Other women report headaches with Nifedipine. Call your health provider if you notice these symptoms.

What pain medications are safe during breastfeeding?

To help relieve your pain, it's safe to take Acetaminophen (Tylenol) 650-1000 mg every 4 to 6 hours (but no more than 4000 mg – or 8 extra-strength pills – per day) or Ibuprofen (Motrin) 400-600 mg every 6 hours.

When you should start to feel better

Call the Lactation Warmline at 984-974-8078 or 866-428-5608 if you have any additional concerns or if you are not starting to feel better in 4-5 days.