

breastfeeding



While breastfeeding is an incredibly rewarding and nurturing experience when everything is going 'right', it can also be a time of disappointment, frustration and despair if we experience difficulties establishing feeding patterns. Problems can be the result of incomplete recovery from a traumatic delivery, emotional issues or even physical problems such as cracked nipples, colic, exhaustion, loss of fluids etc. Homoeopathy can offer support, nurture & healing at this time.

To maintain an adequate and nutritious milk supply it is important to pay attention to your own diet, nutrition and adequate intake of fluids. It can be of great value to use remedies such as **Calc carb**, **Calc phos** and **Silica** depending on your constitution to support lactation. **China** should be considered if there is weakness after the birthing process or from loss of body fluids due to haemorrhage, profuse sweating, diarrhoea or simply a very hungry baby.

Blocked Duct: Try massaging the breasts gently, and applying hot and cold compresses. Also increase fluids, ensure adequate rest and allow time at feeds for the breasts to be drained completely. Seek help if the indicated remedies don't act quickly. For threatened mastitis where there is heat, fever, congestion and possibly throbbing use **Belladonna** frequently. For symptoms much worse from movement and heat, where the breast is hard, hot and usually the symptoms are right sided consider **Bryonia**. Symptoms of lumpy breasts, often the left breast, with cutting, stitching pains that are worse while feeding match the **Silica** remedy picture. When the breast is hard, nodular, lumpy and painful consider **Phytolacca**. Other possible suggestions include **Hepar sulph** or **Mercurius**.

Engorgement: When the milk "comes in" the breasts may become red, hard, painful and throb with a flow that is too copious. A copious supply with heat, throbbing and possibly red streaks radiating out from the nipple indicate **Belladonna**, especially if right sided. Breasts that are pale, hard, full and painful on movement and worse from heat consider **Bryonia**. If the supply is copious but changeable in mild, weepy women **Pulsatilla** is suggested. **Calc carb** symptoms include extreme sensitivity to cold, cold sweats and tendency to be overweight; the breasts are large and uncomfortable, with a copious supply that may be poor in quality. If the breasts are inflamed and lumpy, with pain while nursing consider **Phytolacca**.

Low Milk Supply: Where the supply is low or the milk is watery and thin in mild, weepy women **Pulsatilla** is suggested. **Calc carb**



is indicated when the breast is full and sore but not producing much milk in women who generally feel anxious and sluggish. When supply is low or overabundant, with no obvious cause and there is little desire to express milk and store it, **Urtica urens**.

Sore & Cracked Nipples: Beware of creams, soaps and detergents that may be creating an allergic reaction. Apply Calendula or Rescue Remedy cream topically and expose nipples to the sun or warm air. Nipples that are sore, cracked and very tender and quickly becoming raw and itchy if left untreated often respond well to **Castor equi**. For inflamed, extremely tender and sensitive nipples **Chamomilla** is indicated especially if you feel irritable, angry and hard to please. **Sepia** symptoms include cracks that are deep, very sore that often appear across the crown. The mental, emotional picture of **Sepia** would usually be present as well with feelings of irritability and wanting to be left alone. Inverted nipples, which are cracked, sore and bleeding indicate **Silica**. For chapped nipples with smarting, burning pain consider **Sulphur**. **Phytolacca** for lumpy breasts and nipples that are cracked & sore with pains that radiate. During breast-feeding, a yeast infection or thrush can be passed back and forth between the mother's breasts and the baby's mouth; consider the homoeopathic remedies **Borax**, **Phytolacca** or **Rhus tox**.

Weaning: Ideally weaning is best done gradually, however this is not always possible. **Lac caninum** and **Pulsatilla** may be useful to help reduce the milk supply when weaning especially if the breasts are swollen and sore. You may also consider **Bryonia** if the picture fits. Mothers and/or babies often become upset when feeding stops, especially if this was sudden, consider **Ignatia** or **Pulsatilla**.