

## Nipple Preparation Before Breastfeeding

Many women, breast feeding for the first time, experience unneeded discomfort as they begin to feed their newborn infant. Some women experience cracking and even bleeding when they begin to nurse their babies. However, there is a better way! Nipple preparation is an excellent way to avoid the pain when nursing for the first time.

This very simple plan can prepare mom's nipples for nursing and save the hardship of a painful experience. Successful breastfeeding depends on two things: a cooperative baby and a non-painful experience for mom. I have found that women who follow this plan are more successful in their feeding and are able to breastfeed longer.

Begin preparation approximately 5-6 weeks before the baby's due date.

Step 1: While in the shower, use a soapy wash cloth on each nipple. Begin rubbing for about 15 seconds and SLOWLY work up to 3 minutes on each nipple. Do not push this too far or too fast! If nipples start to feel irritated – it's time to stop. Once you have worked up to 3 minutes on each nipple, continue for two days. If there is no further irritation continue to step 2.

Step 2: While in the shower rub nipples with a wet (not soapy) washcloth. Once again, begin with about 15 seconds and slowly work up to 3 minutes on each nipple.

Step 3: Use a dry washcloth out of the shower. Same rules apply: 15 seconds, up to 3 minutes on each nipple.

Step 4: Now use a soft bristle BABY toothbrush and slowly work from 15 seconds up to 3 minutes on each nipple.

If you follow these instructions nursing will be much easier on mom and baby. Whether you are delivering at home, in a birthing center, or in the hospital if you are planning to nurse this will save you much heartache (and nipple ache!).

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