

NIPPLE VASOSPASM

Nipple vasospasm, or Raynaud's phenomenon of the nipple, is a condition that sometimes affects breastfeeding or pumping mothers. It involves a sudden, painful constriction of the blood vessels in the nipples, leading to sensations of coldness, numbness, or a whitish color. Though uncomfortable and sometimes distressing, it is typically not a serious health issue.

HOW TO SPOT IT

- **Symptoms:** Key symptoms of nipple vasospasm include sudden, sharp pain in the nipples, which may radiate into the breast, as well as cold, numb, or white nipples and tingling or burning sensations.
- **Triggers:** Nipple vasospasm can be triggered by several factors, such as exposure to cold temperatures, stress, fatigue, certain medications, hormonal changes, and an improper latch.
- **Risk Factors:** Women with a history of Raynaud's disease or other circulatory issues may have an increased risk of experiencing nipple vasospasm.
- **Latch:** The most common cause of nipple vasospasm is a shallow or incorrect latch when the baby attaches to the breast.

TREATMENT AND MANAGEMENT

Ensuring a Good Latch: A proper latch is essential for preventing nipple vasospasm. An incorrect latch puts pressure on the nipple, causing blood vessel constriction. Your baby should cover a large portion of the areola, not just the nipple. If you're unsure about your baby's latch, consider consulting a lactation consultant for guidance and support.

Warmth: Applying warmth to the affected area can help dilate blood vessels and alleviate pain. Use a heating pad or warm compress, as dry heat is preferable to avoid triggering vasospasm.

Massage: Gently massaging the nipples can enhance blood flow and reduce discomfort.

Pumping: If pumping, adjust the suction level and ensure you're using the correct flange size to prevent irritation.

Medication: Over-the-counter pain relievers like ibuprofen or acetaminophen may help relieve discomfort.

Supplements: Consult your healthcare provider about magnesium (500 mg twice daily) and vitamin B6 (150–200 mg for 4 days, then 25–50 mg daily) to help alleviate vasospasms.

Lifestyle Modifications: To reduce the frequency and severity of nipple vasospasm, consider avoiding cold environments, wearing warm clothing in chilly weather, and limiting caffeine and alcohol intake.

NOTE: Although nipple vasospasm is usually not serious, consult a healthcare provider if:

- The pain is severe or persistent
- The nipples show discoloration or signs of infection
- You experience numbness or tingling elsewhere in your body
- Symptoms interfere with breastfeeding or pumping



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With 13 years of experience as an IBCLC-certified lactation consultant, Maya Dubinsky began her journey after overcoming breastfeeding challenges with her own daughter. She has since supported countless families in both hospital and home settings, empowering them with compassionate guidance. Adding to her expertise, she trained in holistic sleep coaching at OCN London under Lyndsey Hookway. This attachment-focused approach allows her to provide gentle, no-cry sleep strategies, prioritizing each child's emotional needs and developmental readiness. Her mission is to support families with respect, empathy, and tailored solutions for a nurturing start.

