



MELBOURNE

**Pregnancy &
Pelvic Physio**



Mastitis and blocked ducts

What is a blocked duct or Mastitis?

When you are breastfeeding, your milk ducts carry the milk from deep within the breast tissue to the nipple opening. At times, these ducts can become blocked causing milk to continue to build up behind the blockage. This is referred to as a blocked duct. Mastitis commonly arises due to a blocked duct that hasn't cleared. The built-up milk behind the blocked duct can be pushed into nearby breast tissue, which can lead to inflammation of the affected area (Mastitis). Mastitis is always an inflammatory condition which may or may not have an infection present

What can cause a blocked duct or mastitis to occur?

- Wearing tight and compressive bras
- Poor attachment to the breast when feeding
- Recent changes to feeding patterns
- Inconsistent feeding
- Breasts that are too full
- Nipple damage

What signs should I look for?

- Redness in the breast
- Swollen breasts
- Tenderness in the breast
- Hot to touch
- Flu like symptoms

How to I treat a blocked duct or Mastitis?

Therapeutic Ultrasound transmits heat into the deep tissues of your breast which helps to break up blockages in your milk ducts into smaller parts. It can also help with pain relief.

It is very important to feed or express 30 mins after the treatment as it can unclog your ducts and then continue to feed frequently from the affected side. Generally, three sessions of ultrasound treatments is advised over the course of three days for the most relief.

What can I do at home?

- Feed within 30 minutes of the Ultrasound treatment
- Aim to feed or express every 3 - 4 hours
- Avoid missing or putting off a feed
- Offer your baby the affected breast first
- Speak to your pharmacist about taking an anti-inflammatory (such as voltaren)
- Use a hot pack for a few minutes prior to feeding
- Use a cold pack after a feed
- Gentle massage (pressure of stroking a cat) toward the nipple or armpit
- Avoid wearing tight clothing over your breast
- Keep your fluids up
- Make sure to rest your body
- Hand express to 'Empty' your breast if your baby won't suck
- Try different feeding positions to drain the breast (e.g. cradle hold, football hold, side lying and laid back position)