Breast Feeding – Mastitis

Mastitis is an inflammation or infection of the breast tissue around the milk ducts. Symptoms may include a tender or painful, reddened, warm or hardened area on your breast (usually on only one breast). You may also have a fever (101° or above) and chills, feel very tired, have a headache, and experience overall achiness. If you continue to have symptoms, contact your health care provider. You may need additional treatment, such as antibiotics.

If your baby is able to breast feed:

- Feed your baby in a quiet relaxing place.
- Apply moist heat to the involved breast before each feeding.
- Nurse on the involved side first. This helps empty the breast better. Gently massage and stroke the breast toward the nipple to help the milk flow.
- Change your baby’s position with each feeding (cradle, side-sitting, lying down, football) to empty the ducts better.
- If it is taking longer than 20-30 minutes to latch the baby on and for the baby to be effective, consider pumping the breast instead. It is safe for this milk to be given to the baby.

If your baby is currently not breast feeding and you are pumping:

- Apply moist heat to the involved breast or take a warm shower before each pumping.
- Gently massage and stroke the breast toward the nipple to help the milk flow.
- Pump in a quiet, relaxing place.
- Pump with a high quality double set-up electric breast pump. Pump every 3 hours for 10-15 minutes.

Other helpful tips:

- If you are prescribed antibiotics, take them as prescribed.
- Rest every time your baby rests, at least for the next 24 hours. Rest is important!
- Drink enough fluids to satisfy your thirst. Your body needs more fluids when you have a fever.
- You may use acetaminophen (Tylenol®) or ibuprofen (Advil®) for discomfort as needed (if you are not allergic to these medications). Check with your primary care provider.
- Take care of yourself by getting enough rest, eating nutritious foods, drinking enough fluids, and asking for help with your baby and household responsibilities.
Call the Lactation Management Program Help Line at (816) 346-1309 if you have questions or concerns about:

- Your symptoms
- Treatment
- Medications and mastitis