

Hydrogel Pads: How do they ease nipple pain?

It is common for women to experience sore and cracked nipples, especially during the early days of breastfeeding. This can be painful and stressful to experience. Hydrogel Pads can be an effective treatment option that provides relief and supports recovery for mothers with sore or cracked nipples, to help them continue their breastfeeding journey.

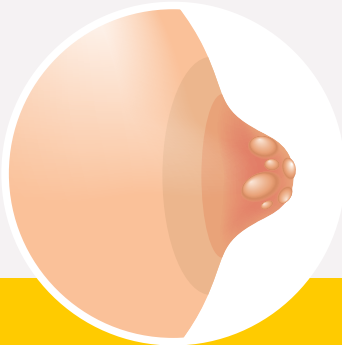
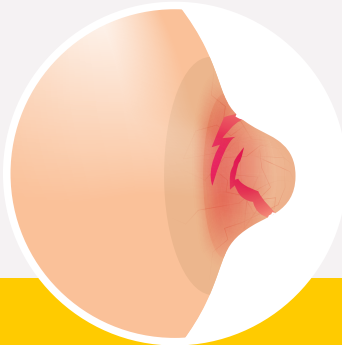
- The World Health Organization recommends exclusive breastfeeding for the first 6 months of life, with continued breastfeeding along with introducing appropriate complementary foods for up to 2 years of age or longer.¹
- Cracked and painful nipples are common reasons why mothers stop breastfeeding earlier than they intended or before the recommended time.^{2,3}
- >85% of breastfeeding mothers experience some degree of nipple pain or trauma in the early days of breastfeeding.⁴

Did you know?

It is well established that pain and discomfort inhibit milk ejection and reduce milk removal.⁵

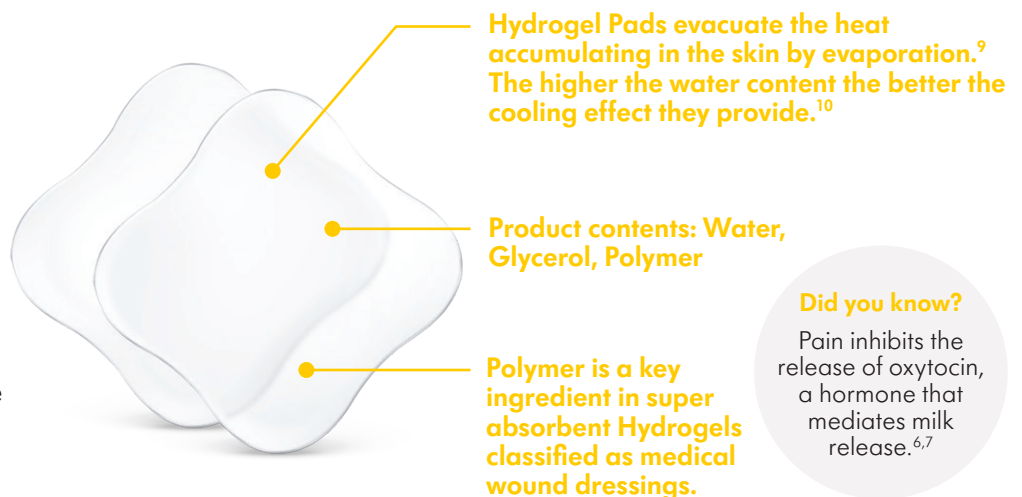
How to treat nipple pain?

Characteristics of nipple pain are usually reported as sore, cracked, bleeding or blistered nipples.² Assessment of the breast and skin to identify the level of damage and provide the most appropriate treatment is required.

Symptom	Sore	Blistered	Cracked
	Skin intact but inflamed (red & hot) 	Fluid-filled bubbles covering irritated skin 	Skin broken to epidermis or dermis level. Dry, itchy with bleeding and scabbing 
Treatment	• Soothing • Cooling • Protection from friction • Pain relief	• Soothing • Cooling • Protection from friction • Prevention of sticking to fabric	• Optimal (moist) healing environment • Pain relief • Protection from friction

What is a Hydrogel Pad?

Hydrogels are water-based, gel-like materials that can retain a significant amount of moisture. They are composed of a network of polymer chains that provide a soft, cushiony texture. When applied to the skin, Hydrogels can help to create a moist healing environment, which is beneficial for the repair of damaged tissues.⁸



Did you know?

Pain inhibits the release of oxytocin, a hormone that mediates milk release.^{6,7}

5 Ways Hydrogel Pads can help

1

Soothing and cooling

The high water content in Hydrogel Pads can help soothe the skin by creating a cooling, moist environment. This effect not only provides pain relief but also reduces discomfort, especially for inflamed or sensitive areas, such as the skin around the nipple. The soothing effect achieved by maintaining consistent hydration can help alleviate pain.^{11, 12}

Moist wound environment

Hydrogel Pads support the body's natural healing process by promoting autolytic debridement. This process involves the body's own mechanisms to break down and eliminate dead tissue, helping to keep the wound clean and encouraging the growth of healthy tissue. Additionally, maintaining a moist environment has multiple benefits, including faster healing and improved tissue quality, as it enhances cell migration (cells move to the wound site to contribute to tissue repair) and reduced scarring.¹³

2

3

Barrier protection

When applied to sore nipples, Hydrogel Pads serve as a protective barrier against friction, which is a common cause of skin irritation and breakdown. By reducing contact with external irritants, such as clothing or fabric, not only do they help prevent further damage by minimizing additional stress on the skin but also provide a more comfortable environment for healing.^{14, 15}

Ease of use

Hydrogel Pads are simple to apply and can be removed without causing pain or discomfort, even on sensitive, sore skin. They are easy to place and reposition on the breast. Additionally, Hydrogel Pads are reusable for 24 hours, after gentle washing, offering a convenient solution for mothers. Besides protecting the skin from trauma, they are also aesthetically pleasing and discreet, ensuring comfort and ease of use throughout the healing process.¹³

4

5

Protection from infection

The polyurethane (PU) film used in Hydrogel Pads is designed to be permeable to water vapour while remaining impermeable to bacteria. This feature is essential for maintaining a clean and safe healing environment, reducing the risk of bacterial contamination. By acting as a protective barrier, the PU film prevents bacteria from entering skin that is sore, cracked, or vulnerable.¹⁶

Did you know?

The most common cause of sore nipples during breastfeeding is often due to improper positioning and latch of the baby at the breast. Correcting the underlying issue can help alleviate discomfort and the risk of further damage.¹⁷ Sore nipples can also occur during breast pumping due to the use of incorrectly sized breast shields.¹⁸ **It is important not to stop breastfeeding and seek help from a lactation specialist.**

Remember: Your amazing milk is nourishing and protecting your baby. Alleviating nipple pain is important to prevent early cessation of breastfeeding.²

References

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