



CLINICAL PRACTICE GUIDELINE

# Breastfeeding challenge: Breast abscess

This document should be read in conjunction with this [Disclaimer](#)

## Definition

An abscess is a walled-off, localised collection of pus that lacks an outlet for the pus from the affected area. Once encapsulated, it requires aspiration or surgical drainage.

## Key points

- A breast abscess is a complication of mastitis and often occurs as the result of untreated, inadequate, incorrect or delayed treatment of mastitis or abrupt weaning.
- Usually, the woman presents feeling unwell, feverish, with a localised painful, red swollen area on her breast. The symptoms of fever and redness may have resolved but the woman presents with an unresolved breast lump and breast pain

## Management

1. Review by a Consultant Obstetrician or Senior Registrar and referral to the SCGH Breast Clinic/Surgical Team for a Diagnostic Ultrasound.
2. Review by a Lactation Consultant and referral to the Breastfeeding Centre.
3. Nipple swabs and an expressed breast milk sample for micro culture and sensitivity (MC&S).
4. Commence appropriate antibiotic therapy based on MC&S results. See also KEMH Clinical Guidelines, Obstetrics & Gynaecology: [Infections: Postpartum Infections: Treatment and Management](#); Mastitis and Newborn Feeding: Breastfeeding Challenge: [Mastitis, Management of](#).
5. Provide comfort measures e.g. Analgesia, anti-inflammatory and cool therapy.
6. Continue breastfeeding on the affected and unaffected side with corrective positioning and attachment if comfortable.
7. Express both breasts after each feed to protect the mother's milk supply and resolve the infection.
8. Ensure the mother has adequate rest, fluids, and mother-crafting support.

## Discharge planning

1. Provide a breastfeeding plan or the 'MR 261.17 Breast abscess variance' to guide management in the home.
2. Breast pump loan arranged to continue expressing
3. Follow-up appointment at the Breastfeeding Centre offered to the woman.

## Bibliography

1. Berens, P. Breast Pain: Engorgement, Nipple Pain and Mastitis. Clinical Obstetrics and Gynecology. 2015. Volume 58, number 4, 902-14. 2015.
2. Walker, M. Breastfeeding Management for the Clinician- Using the Evidence. 4th ed. 2017.
3. Core Curriculum for Interdisciplinary Lactation Care. 2019.

## Related WNHS policies, procedures and guidelines

KEMH Clinical Guideline, Obstetrics & Gynaecology:

- [Infections: Postpartum Infections: Treatment and Management](#): Mastitis
- Newborn Feeding: Breastfeeding Challenge: [Mastitis, Management of](#)

## Useful resources and related forms

### Related forms:

- MR 261.17 Breast abscess variance

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