

Should breastfeeding be painful?

There are many misconceptions on this topic.

The first answer is yes. Breastfeeding should at least cause some pain, certainly in the early days - especially if there is any breakdown to the nipples.

If any part of your body was rubbed by someone's hand for eight hours a day, you would likely ask them to stop after a few days in, as that portion of your body would likely become sore and/or sensitive to the touch. However, now we are talking about your nipples, a part of your body that does not even see sunlight, much less suction, pressure and friction.

Since most moms are told that breastfeeding should not be painful, many believe that they are doing something wrong and will often quit because of this reason.

However, the second answer is no, and definitely not long term.

The pain that was mentioned early on should not be excruciating, and most moms report that it subsides a few seconds into the feed. Extended pain throughout a feed is typically a result of a bad latch, which may be an effect of breast engorgement and the baby's inability to get deeper into the breast, or even a structural barrier, such as a tongue tie or high palate.

To summarize, if you are having discomfort but it subsides quickly into the feed, it sounds like you are doing everything correct! Hang in there momma!

However, if you are able to latch, but never relax throughout the feed due to excessive pain, it is likely that you have a "bad latch" and you would be a great candidate for a visit with a lactation consultant.