Nursing Strike Causes and Cures

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When your baby abruptly refuses to nurse for days – or weeks – at a time, it's referred to as a nursing strike. Whatever it may be called, a nursing strike can be a frustrating, scary time for a nursing mother.
Most experts agree that babies don't self-wean during their first year and that weaning is a gradual, rather than sudden, process.

When Babies Go on Strike

So what causes a baby to suddenly stop nursing? As it turns out, there are many possible culprits:

- Major disruptions in baby's routine, such a moving or your going to work
- Illness (ear infections can cause pressure and pain while nursing and a stuffy nose can make breathing difficult or impossible)
- Mouth pain (teething, a cut, a cold sore, or a yeast infection [aka thrush])
- Milk that tastes different or a perfumed product applied on or near your breasts or a new pregnancy
- A very strong let-down, which may be too much milk too fast for baby's liking
- Fear following a biting (and screaming) incident
- Excessive heat from a fever or the temperature of the air where you're nursing
- Prolonged separation, such as a return to work
- Frequent use of a bottle or pacifier
- Low milk supply due to stress, illness, or decreased nursing (talk about a vicious cycle!)
- A presage of a new developmental skill (e.g., crawling, standing, or walking)
- Preference for one breast over another, perhaps because of the way he's being held
- Your stress or anxiety
- Absolutely no reason at all

Negotiating Techniques

Fortunately, you have a number of tools at your disposal. Give one, some, or all of the following tools a try.

- Rule out medical causes, such as a stuffy nose, an ear infection, or thrush by visiting your pediatrician.
- Pump before nursing so that the milk is ready to go as soon as baby latches on (in any event, you should pump or hand-express your milk about as often as your baby was nursing before the strike; this will help prevent engorgement and plugged ducts).
- Feed your baby expressed milk in a spoon, eyedropper, feeding syringe, or a sippy cup (avoid using a bottle, because that can make things even worse).
- Nurse frequently and before he gets too hungry.
- Nurse your baby while she's drowsy.
- Try nursing in different positions.
- Avoid distractions for your baby by nursing her in a dark, quiet room. It's not uncommon for babies between 6 and 9 months of age to be easily distracted by sights, and sounds.
- Move while nursing (walk, sway, bounce, etc.).
- Take a warm bath together.
- Spend more time skin to skin.
- Experiment with your diet by eliminating some of the ingredients that may be turning baby off. Examples of these are spicy or greasy foods, caffeine (sad to say, but chocolate has caffeine, and if you're a chocoholic, you may want to try cutting back to see if that helps), and cruciferous vegetables (like broccoli and Brussels sprouts).

Is My Baby Dehydrated?

As always, keep track of wet diapers. As long as your baby is wetting at least five to six disposable diapers or six to eight cloth diapers every day, then he's taking in enough fluid. If you're worried, call your doctor or a lactation consultant.

Take a Deep Breath …

You'll need to be patient while you work through your baby's nursing strike. It can seem impossible, but try your best to relax and make being together as pleasant as possible.Repeat to yourself, "This, too, shall pass." Sooner or later the two of you will reach an agreement and settle the nursing strike … and both of you should be pretty happy with the terms.

Laurel Haring is a writer. She lives with her family in Wilmington, Delaware, and posts semi-regularly to her blog, Let [Me Say This About That](). Laurel faced an inverted nursing strike (i.e., she was the one who went on strike), when one of her sons decided it was

great fun to bite mom. Skillful mediation by her husband was eventually able to bring the two sides back together.

http://www.typeamom.net/nursing-strike-causes-and-cures.html