What is Gentian Violet?
Gentian Violet is an inexpensive treatment for an infection caused by the fungus *Candida albicans*. It is available as a 0.5% or 1% solution.

What is *Candida albicans*?
*Candida albicans* is a fungus or yeast that can cause an infection of skin and/or mucous membranes (such as inside the mouth). When this infection happens in children or babies, it usually causes white patches in the mouth (called *thrush*) or diaper rash. If breastfeeding, a yeast infection can occur on the nipple, causing severe nipple pain and/or deep breast pain.

What does a “Yeast” infection of the breast/nipple feel like?
The type of pain caused by a yeast infection is not the same as pain from your baby not latching right or poor sucking. You can notice the difference between a yeast infection and other causes of pain by the following signs:
- Radiates to the armpit or back
- Often burning (or itchy) nipple pain and/or shooting pain in the breast which may last throughout the feed and after feeding is over

You may have a yeast infection and your baby may not have thrush, or vice versa, your baby may have thrush, and you may not have an infection. These are indications, however one is not always a sign of the other. Remember that even if only one of you has symptoms, both mom and baby should be treated at the same time.

Using Gentian Violet
- This treatment is *messy* and may get on your clothes.
- Your baby’s lips will turn purple, however it will disappear after a few days.
- Gentian Violet does not need a prescription, but not all pharmacies carry it, so call before you go out to get it.

Once daily:
1. Dip an ear swab (Q-tip) into the Gentian Violet.
2. Put the swab with Gentian Violet into the baby’s mouth and let him suck on it for a few seconds or paint the inside of the baby’s mouth (tongue, cheeks) with the swab as best you can. Another method is to swab their nipple and areola just prior to breastfeeding.
3. Put the baby to the breast so the Gentian Violet spreads to your nipple or from your nipple to your baby’s mouth. This way, both the baby’s mouth and your nipple are treated.
4. If you have a yeast infection on both breasts and your baby feeds on only one side, be sure to use the swab to treat the other breast.
5. Repeat this treatment each day for three to four days; do not exceed a week.
6. You may have relief from pain within hours of the first treatment, and pain should be gone by the third day.

*If pain is not relieved*, the infection may be resistant to the gentian violet, or you may have another cause of breast/nipple pain. Keep using the Gentian Violet, but contact your health care professional.

For more information, please contact the Durham Health Connection Line at:

(905) 666-6241 or 1-800-841-2729

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