

Bringing Your Baby to Breast: Positioning and Latch

Getting Started:

New babies have a stepping-crawling reflex that helps them seek out the breast. Right after birth, baby will be placed skin to skin on mom's chest or belly. Babies may be interested in latching immediately after birth, or they may rest for a few moments first, but almost all will be interested within the first hour. Keep your baby on your chest skin-to-skin as much as you are able for the first few days and weeks. This allows baby's instinct to encourage frequent and build a strong milk supply. Babies often nurse at least 10 to 12 times in 24 hours, though the feedings may not be evenly spaced.

Choose A Time When Your Baby Is Ready To Feed. Watch For These Signs of Readiness:

- Rooting (turning the head with searching movements of the mouth)
- Increased alertness (especially rapid eye movement, the wiggling of the eyes under closed eyelids)
- Bringing a hand toward the mouth, sticking out tongue
- Sucking on a fist or finger
- Mouthing motions of the lips and tongue
- Crying is a late feeding cue. If the baby is crying, calm the baby and attempt to feed

Sit in a Position Where You Feel Comfortable

Semi-reclined with your shoulders and feet supported (think about how you would sit to read/watch TV/relax)

This can be done in any bed, chair, or couch

Once mom is comfortable, bring baby to breast, do not try to take breast to baby. Baby will lay across mom's body, belly to belly. Support the baby's posture with your arm, but allow your body to hold the weight of the baby. Let gravity help! Below are some positions that work for some women, but as long as baby's ear, shoulder, and hip are aligned and his/her body is supported, many variations are possible.

- Cradle/Madonna hold: baby is supported by the arm on the same side as the breast you are offering, baby is rested on your forearm, with the baby's head near your elbow and your hand near the baby's bottom)
- Cross cradle: baby is supported by the opposite arm of the breast you are offering, baby is resting on your forearm, with your elbow near the baby's bottom and your hand supporting the base of the baby's neck (be careful not to grab/palm the back of baby's head)
- Football/clutch hold: baby is supported by the arm on the same side as the breast being offered, next to your body, with baby's legs toward your back and your hand supporting the base of the baby's neck (be careful not to grab/palm the back of baby's head).
- Side lying: this position is done lying down, rather than semi-reclined: you are lying on your side, the baby is in front of you on his/her side, the arm that is higher can support the back of the baby as needed.

Getting A Good Latch

- Loosen, or remove, your baby's blanket so your baby can move his/her arms. Breastfeeding will work better for both of you if your baby's arms are free to move and touch your breast. If you are having trouble, remove baby's blanket and clothing and resume skin to skin contact.

- When your baby begins showing hunger cues, settle into a comfortable position and hold the baby with your baby's face near your nipple. In a semi-reclined position, gravity will encourage baby to continue to touch your nipple with his/her mouth/nose.
- Be patient and wait until your baby opens her mouth very wide. As your baby opens her mouth wide, gravity will continue to cause her mouth to make contact with your nipple, which will cause her to latch. You may also move the arm supporting your baby slightly towards your breast to help, do not move your breast to your baby.
- The nose and chin should be close to the breast but not pushed into the breast. More of the top of the areola will be showing and less of the bottom. The baby's lips should make a seal around the breast with the lips rolled outward and visible.
- The baby's head should be tipped far enough back for the jaw to open wide. If baby's chin is very close to her chest, reposition her head or shoulders to allow the chin to come away from the chest.
- Avoid placing your hand on the back of baby's head, this encourages tucking the chin to the chest, and instinctively causes baby to pull her head back to resist your hand.
- In the early days, hand expression following feeding is recommended to insure that colostrum is being removed, which protects mom's milk supply.

What if it Hurts?

Continued or increasing pain is a sign that you need help. You may feel an initial discomfort with each latch, especially as your nipples get use to the normal stretching that happens during breastfeeding, but if the pain continues throughout the feeding baby's latch may be incorrect. Break the seal by inserting a finger into the corner of the baby's mouth. You will feel the release of the suction and *then* move the baby back away from the nipple. Make sure you and baby are in a comfortable, supported position and try latching again.

For More Information

WSNM Lactation Services: 505.843.6168 x 7859

Voice mails can be left 24 hours/day. Checked Monday-Friday during business hours.

Presbyterian Breastfeeding Support Services: 505-841-1773

Certified Lactation Consultants will be happy to help you. Help is available by phone or by a scheduled appointment. Clinic services can be billed to your insurance. Lactation support group is also available.

Women's Hospital Lactation Support Services: 505-727-6797

Certified Lactation Consultants will be happy to help you. Help is available by phone or by a scheduled appointment. Clinic services can be billed to your insurance. New parents support group is also available.

La Leche League:

Great information and resources for starting and continuing breastfeeding. Call 505-821-2511 for information about breastfeeding and meetings. Asistencia en español: Cindy 505-507-5264, 9am-7pm. Closed facebook group: <https://www.facebook.com/LLLABq/?fref=ts>

Albuquerque Birth Network: List of some breastfeeding support/lactation services:

<http://www.albuquerquebirthnetwork.org/index.html>

Kellymom.com

Becomingmamas.com

Breastfeeding Supplies

- Breastfeeding Resources: 505-293-5215 – www.abqbr.com Weekly, monthly and long term Medela Symphony hospital grade breast pump rental rates.
- Babies ‘R’ Us: 45 Hotel Circle: 505-292-9909
- BuyBuy Baby: 2451 San Mateo Blvd NE 505.881.2179
- Target: nipple shields, basic pumps
- The Herb Store: 107 Carlisle Blvd. SE : 505-255-8878
- La Montanita Food Co-op, Sprouts, Whole Foods: teas, tinctures