

Prenatal Education: Topic #3: Breastfeeding – Latch and Positioning

Breastfeeding is the gift of a lifetime, a gift that only a mother can give.

Learn about breastfeeding and have support.

Consider taking a breastfeeding class. Prepare a list of people you can call or talk to that have breastfeeding experience. This can be family, friends, the La Leche League, or your clinic. The hospital will provide a list of contacts, including lactation consultants, that you can call.

Ask for help from the hospital staff.

The nurses are specially trained to assist you and your baby in learning to breastfeed. You and your baby learn to breastfeed together!

The first few days:

- **Day of birth:** Place your baby on your chest right after birth, with his skin next to yours. Baby may crawl to your breast and attach with very little assistance! After the first few hours, the baby may be sleepy. Take this time to sleep yourself!
- **Day one:** Baby will be more alert and want to nurse often. This time of frequent feeding gives you lots of practice with nursing. Frequent feeding also stimulates your body to produce hormones, which trigger milk production.
- **Day two:** Baby may want to be at the breast very frequently. Simply feed as often as he wants.
- **Day three:** You may notice your breasts getting fuller and the milk changing to be more fluid in nature. Let your baby end the feeding by falling asleep or detaching himself. Let baby finish the first breast first, then offer the second breast.

How do I latch my baby to my breast?



Hold your baby close, next to your skin, tummy to tummy. Press his chin into your breast with your nipple just opposite his nose. Tickle the baby's upper lip with your nipple to make his mouth open wide, like a yawn. Hold your hand behind the baby's neck and shoulders. This will allow the baby to tip his head back so he can open his mouth wider. Use your other hand to support the breast and compress it slightly in the same direction as his lips. This will help him to get more of a mouthful. When your baby's mouth is wide open, bring him to your breast quickly to help baby get more breast into his mouth. Baby should latch on to the areola, not just the nipple. This

will enable baby to get more milk. If you feel discomfort with nursing, baby may not have enough breast in his mouth. Insert your finger between his jaws to break suction, then relatch.

Breastfeeding positions:

- **Cross-cradle:** Hold baby tummy to tummy. Hold your forearm along baby's back, with your hand supporting baby's neck and shoulders. Your other hand supports the breast like a U.
- **Football:** Baby's body is under your arm and your hand supports his neck and shoulders. Baby's head is under the breast, looking up at you. Your other hand supports the breast like a C.
- **Side-lying:** You can rest while your baby feeds! Lay on your side, baby tummy to tummy with you. Use your upper arm to support your breast in a C hold. When baby's mouth opens wide, press baby onto breast with your lower hand between baby's shoulder blades. Another way is to hold your body up on one elbow. Place baby on her back, under your breast. Use your upper hand to support the breast in C hold. Tickle the baby's lip to get a wide gape then lower your breast into baby's mouth. Once baby is latched and sucking, pull out your lower arm and lay down. Turn baby in toward you.

Making milk

The first milk is colostrum. Colostrum is produced since mid-pregnancy. The small quantity matches your baby's stomach size. It is thick and sticky. While your baby is learning to coordinate sucking, swallowing, and breathing, the properties of colostrum protect your baby from overfilling or accidentally breathing it in. Colostrum also protects baby from disease. The extra water weight babies are born with provides them fluids while your colostrum meets all their nutritional needs. Baby will lose this extra water weight over the next few days.

- **Milk production begins as soon as the baby is born.** It increases daily in amounts to match the baby's increasing stomach size. The baby's stomach is very small at birth, about the size of a marble, and your milk is produced in that amount! On the 2nd day, the baby's stomach is about the size of a thimble, then the next day a walnut. By the time your baby's stomach has expanded, the milk has changed so that it has more water and volume. This occurs about the third day after your baby is born.