



# Bringing Your Baby to Breast: Positioning and Latch

## How do I get started with breastfeeding?

Right after your baby is born, put your baby on your chest skin-to-skin (no clothes between you) with your baby's head between your breasts. Your baby should be wearing nothing but a hat and a diaper. Relax and let your baby rest or move around. Doing this will help your baby learn how to find your breasts and start nursing.

## How will I know if my baby is hungry?

Watch for these signs that your baby is ready to eat:

- Turning their head and mouth toward something that touches their face (this is called rooting)
- Awake and moving their head back and forth rather than lying quietly without moving
- Bringing a hand toward their mouth
- Sucking on their fist or finger
- Their lips and tongue move as their mouth opens and closes

A great time to offer your baby breast milk is just as they are waking up. Crying can be a late sign of hunger. If your baby is crying, calm them first and then offer breast milk.

## What are some easy ways to sit while breastfeeding?

You can breastfeed your baby sitting or lying down. Some of the ways you can sit when breastfeeding that will help your baby nurse are:

- **Cradle:** Hold your baby in front of you so the baby is facing you. Your baby's head will rest in your arm at your elbow. Your baby's body will rest on your forearm.
- **Cross cradle:** Hold your baby in front of you so the baby is facing you. Your hand will be at the back of your baby's neck. Your baby's body will rest on your forearm.
- **Football hold:** Hold your baby next to you with their legs toward your back. Your baby will be between your side and your arm with their legs near your elbow. Your hand will be on the back of your baby's neck.



**Figure 1.** Cradle



**Figure 2.** Cross Cradle

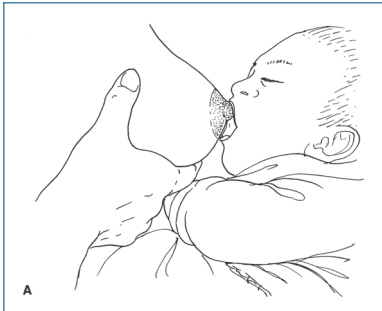


**Figure 3.** Football Hold

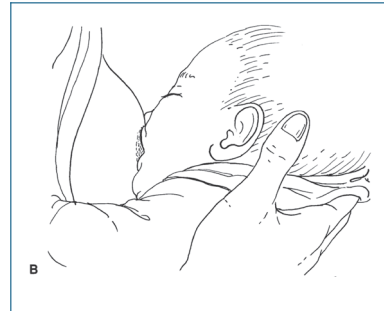


## How do I get my baby to get on my breast well?

- Your baby does not need to be wrapped tightly during breastfeeding. Nursing may be easier for both of you if your baby's arms are free to move and touch your breast.
- Start with your baby's nose facing your nipple so your baby is turned to face your breast. If your baby is lying on their back, they have to turn their neck to get to your breast. That can make nursing harder for a newborn baby.
- Bring your baby to your nipple when their mouth is open. Don't move your breast to your baby.
- Your baby's nose and chin should be close to your breast. It is fine if your baby's nose touches your breast and flattens out a bit. Your baby will breathe better this way.
- Your baby's lips should make a seal around your nipple. Your baby's mouth will look a little like a fish's mouth with the baby's lips rolled outward a bit.



**Figure 4.** Bring Your Baby to Your Nipple When Their Mouth is Open



**Figure 5.** Your Baby's Mouth Should Make a Seal Around Your Nipple

## What if my breasts or nipples hurt while I am breastfeeding?

If you are having pain or any other problems with breastfeeding, get help to check your breasts and how your baby is nursing. Some people who can help are:

- Your health care provider or your baby's health care provider
- A lactation (breastfeeding) specialist. Many hospitals have these specialists on staff.
- Your local chapter of La Leche League. These groups of women help each other with breastfeeding.

### For More Information

#### La Leche League: Positioning

<https://www.llli.org/breastfeeding-info/positioning/>

#### Mayo Clinic: Breastfeeding Tips

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/infant-and-toddler-health/in-depth/breast-feeding/art-20047138>

#### Office of Women's Health: Learning to Breastfeed

<https://www.womenshealth.gov/breastfeeding/learning-breastfeed>

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