



Positioning and Latching

Good positioning and latching is important for building and maintaining your milk supply. **When your baby latches deeply, taking a big mouthful of breast, your baby is able to remove milk effectively.** When your breasts are well drained, your body gets the message to make more milk. If you are concerned about how much milk you are making, improving positioning and latching is an important first step.

Setting the Stage

- Hold your baby skin to skin.
- Watch for early hunger cues: sucking on hands, smacking lips, turning the head.
- Offer your breast before your baby starts to cry.

Positioning Your Baby

There are many different breastfeeding positions. One of the best positions for the early days and weeks (and longer!) is called the **laid-back** position. It uses gravity to hold your baby close.

Get comfortable

Lean back with your feet, arms and elbows supported.

Ensure full body contact

Place your baby on your chest with your baby's chin, tummy and legs against your body. Your baby's feet should be supported, not dangling. Your baby's head should not be turned to the side.

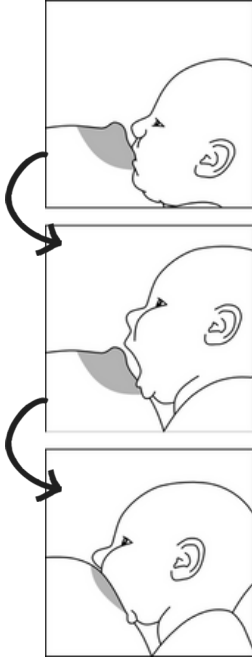
Bring baby to breast

Bring your baby to your breast, rather than moving your breast to your baby. It may be helpful to hold your breast until your baby is latched well and sucking steadily. Then you can let go. You may need to support your baby's head with your arm (see photo).

Other positions

side lying, cradle, football, and cross-cradle. See *Positioning and Latching* for more information.





Getting a good latch

Nipple opposite nose - Your baby's nose should be opposite your nipple.

Chin touching breast - Allow your baby's chin to touch the breast, well away from the base of the nipple. This triggers him to open his mouth wide, reaching up for a big mouthful of breast (like when you take a big bite of a burger). Your nipple stretches to the back of your baby's mouth. With a deep latch, you will usually experience no nipple pain.

Head tipped back slightly - Position your baby so that his head can tip back as he approaches your breast.

Support your baby's head and body, if necessary - Support your baby's head with your thumb and fingers at your baby's neck and your palm at the upper back. Gently press between your baby's shoulder blades as he reaches up to latch.



Signs of a good, deep latch and effective suck

- Baby's chin is pressed deeply into the breast (see photo right).
- Baby's mouth is wide open with both lips uncurled. (Usually you cannot see the bottom lip because it is buried in the breast.)
- Baby's head is tipped back slightly (like yours is when you are drinking something).
- Both cheeks are touching the breast.
- Baby's nose may touch the breast but it shouldn't be poking into the breast.
- Baby's neck is straight, not turned to the side. (It is difficult to swallow if your head is turned.)
- You are having no nipple pain. If it hurts, seek help.
- There is good suction. Your baby doesn't fall off easily.
- You notice a steady suck-swallow-breathe pattern. Your baby's chin drops with a slight "pause" during a swallow. You may hear a "kah" sound when she breathes after a swallow.
- Your baby is gaining weight, as expected.

Adjust the latch, if necessary

Babies often creep upwards or forwards while feeding. If the latch is painful, or you hear a "clicking" or "smacking" sound or see dimples in your baby's cheeks, she may be slipping. Slide your baby downwards or backwards. Pull your baby closer. Bring your baby's chin deeper into the breast, tipping the head back. Gently pull down on your baby's chin, if necessary, to uncurl the lower lip.

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