

Breastfeeding: Getting Your Baby to Latch

With breastfeeding, getting a good latch from your baby is important.

But it may not be easy at first, and a partial latch can even be painful.

It's common to struggle with this.

Try to be patient, and take it step by step.

Ask for help if you need it.

You and your baby can learn together.

Here's how to get started.

First, get set up.

Find a position that is comfortable for both you and your baby.

Have a glass of water nearby.

Sit up with your back supported, and use one or more pillows to provide extra support for your arms and for the baby.

Using a footstool will help you keep a good position.

Next, make sure the baby's head and body are lined up straight.

For this position, you and your baby should be tummy to tummy.

Your baby's nose should be right in front of your nipple.

Now, support and narrow your breast with one hand using a U hold.

You put your thumb on the outer side of your breast and your fingers on the inner side.

You can also use a C hold, with all your fingers below the nipple and your thumb above it.

Try the different holds to get the deepest latch for whichever breastfeeding position you use.

Breastfeeding: Getting Your Baby to Latch

Your other arm should be behind your baby's back, with your hand supporting the base of your baby's head.

Position your fingers and thumb to point toward your baby's ears.

You can touch your baby's lower lip with your nipple to get your baby to open their mouth.

Wait until your baby opens up really wide, like a big yawn.

Then be sure to bring the baby quickly to your breast—not your breast to the baby.

As you bring your baby toward your breast, use your other hand to support your breast and guide it into your baby's mouth.

Both the nipple and a large portion of the darker area around the nipple should be in the baby's mouth.

The baby's lips should be flared outward, not folded in.

Now, listen for a regular sucking and swallowing pattern while your baby is feeding.

If you cannot see or hear a swallowing pattern, watch the baby's ears, which will wiggle slightly when the baby swallows.

If the baby's nose appears to be blocked by your breast, bring your baby's body closer to you.

After your baby has latched, you can usually remove your hand from supporting your breast so you can use it to cradle your baby.

Now just relax and breastfeed your baby.

Let your baby decide how long to nurse.

If you need to take your baby off your breast (for example, to reposition), you will need to break the baby's latch on your nipple.

You can break the latch by using your pinky finger.

This program is for informational purposes only. Publisher disclaims all guarantees regarding the accuracy, completeness, or suitability of this video for medical decision making. For all health related issues please contact your healthcare provider.



Breastfeeding: Getting Your Baby to Latch

Place your pinky finger into the corner of your baby's mouth.

This will gently break the seal.

And then you can start again.

Breastfeeding is good for you and your baby.

But if you're nervous right now, it's okay.

Many people feel that way.

It can help to remember that learning to breastfeed can take time and practice.

Be kind to yourself and your baby.

You're in this together.