



How to Breastfeed: Latching On

Follow these 10 steps

This handout offers step-by-step guidelines to follow when helping your baby latch on to your breast for breastfeeding. To help you avoid sore nipples and help your baby get more milk, position your baby carefully and make sure he is well-attached to your breast.

1. First, make yourself comfortable. (Refer to our handout, “Position and Latch for Breastfeeding.”)

2. Use one hand to hold the nape of your baby’s neck, and your other hand to support your breast. Make a “sandwich” around your breast with your thumb and index finger. Make sure your fingers are lined up across from your baby’s lips.



“Sandwiching” the breast.

3. Aim your nipple towards your baby’s nose. This makes your baby stretch slightly upward and encourages a better latch.

4. Touch your baby’s lips with your nipple until your baby’s mouth opens very wide.

5. As soon as your baby opens wide, **quickly** move your baby onto your breast.

6. At first, it may take quite a few tries to get your baby latched. Repeat steps 3 to 5 until your baby is latched onto your breast. Be patient with this – it takes time.

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Questions?

Your questions are important. Call your doctor or health care provider if you have questions or concerns. UWMC clinic staff are also available to help.

Maternity and Infant Center: 206-598-4070

Lactation Services: 206-598-4628

7. Make sure more than just your nipple is in your baby's mouth. If your baby's mouth is around a lot of your areola, it helps reduce pain and prevents damage to your nipples.
8. Watch for rhythmic movement of your baby's jaw as your baby begins to suck. If needed, encourage your baby to suck by massaging your breast or stimulating your baby.
9. It's best to let your baby take himself off your breast. If you need to end the feeding, break the suction by placing your finger between your breast and your baby's lips. Slide your finger into your baby's mouth, between his gums. This helps prevent damage to your breast that can occur when breaking the suction with too much force.
10. If you need help with breastfeeding while you are in the hospital, press your nurse call-light. When you are at home, call the Lactation Services at 206-598-4628, or the Postpartum Unit at 206-598-5600.

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