

The FIRST LATCH

Though breastfeeding is natural, it's not always easy. It's common for breastfeeding to take some practice for both mom and baby. When the baby is suckling at your breast, we call this a "latch." Getting an effective latch from the beginning will ease many of the problems that mothers can experience when learning how to breastfeed. Your nurses in the hospital will help you learn to latch your baby onto your breast very soon after birth. Learning about breastfeeding before your baby is born will help you know what to do when the time comes.

The Basics:

- Hug your baby close to you and place your nipple near the baby's nose.
- Make sure your baby's tummy is touching you and the head is not twisted to the side.
- Bring your baby to your breast, not your breast to the baby.
- Wait for your baby to open his or her mouth wide then quickly pull them closer aiming your nipple toward the roof of their mouth.

Your baby needs a big mouthful of your nipple and much of your areola with their lips flared out wide.

You should feel pulling as the baby sucks, but it should not be painful. If it hurts, use your finger to break the suction by gently inserting it in the corner of the baby's mouth and try again. If needed, please ask your nurse for help.

If your baby's nose seems to be buried in your breast, tilt the baby's chin closer to the breast by scooting them across your body away from the breast a little bit, and/or applying gentle pressure between your baby's shoulder blades so they're is

in the "sniffing" position. This will tip the nose up and make it easier for your baby to swallow and breathe. Just like us, it's hard for babies to swallow with their chins down on their chest. Picture how you would drink a big glass of water. Help your baby into a similar "nose in the air" position.

It's normal for brand new babies to take frequent pauses when they suck. You can tickle their cheeks or feet to encourage them to suck again if they have paused for more than five seconds. Your nurses will help you learn to know when your baby is done eating.

Watch and listen for swallowing. Your nurses will show you how to tell if your baby is swallowing. If your baby isn't swallowing, your baby isn't eating.

All of our Family Birthing Center nurses have had extra breastfeeding training and we want to help you be successful in your plan to breastfeed your baby. Please be sure to ask your nurse for assistance and let us know how we can help you be successful.