



Positioning and Latching

1. When you and your baby are learning to breastfeed using the bed or chair to recline can help with latching. Ensure baby is positioned skin-to-skin and that baby is facing completely toward your chest and abdomen.
2. Your baby should be unwrapped from his/her blankets and preferably showing early feeding cues or signs that he is interested in breastfeeding. These signs include opening his mouth, turning his head and sucking on his hands or fist.
3. The baby should be held around the back of the neck and shoulders with the opposite hand to the breast you are using and the breast is supported/shaped with your other hand. Your body will help to support the baby's lower body if you are in the reclined position which is why this positioning is so helpful. The lower arm of the baby should be wrapped around your ribs under your breast.
4. Your nipple should be aimed towards the baby's nose encouraging a wide open mouth ready to receive the breast. Do not place your hands on the baby's head or you will restrict the baby from adjusting his head position in an attempt to achieve a deep latch.
5. Only when baby's mouth is gaping widely should you attempt to bring the baby to the breast with the nipple aimed towards the roof of the mouth. The chin should come into contact with the breast first, positioning the baby's head in a slightly extended manner. This ensures the baby can suck, swallow and breathe in such a way that is optimal for breastfeeding.
6. When positioning is good there should be more areola evident above the baby's top lip than below the bottom lip. It is not necessary to hold the breast away from the baby's nose if positioning is correct.
7. Initially the baby will suck in fast short bursts in order to stimulate the milk to flow. Once a good flow occurs the rhythm will be slow and even. The baby will pause for breaks and these will become more frequent as the feed progresses.
8. If the cheeks are sucked in during the breastfeed or there is an audible click the baby has not latched correctly.
9. The baby will finish the feed of his own accord by coming off the breast spontaneously. The nipple will appear slightly elongated maintaining a round shape with no evidence of trauma.
10. If the breastfeed is hurting after the initial latch occurs and you can feel a "pinching" sensation you will need to remove the baby from the breast and go through the process of latching once again.

Ensure you call for assistance from the midwife if you are unable to achieve a comfortable and pain free latch.