



Latching and Nipple Care

There is nothing you need to do to “prepare your nipples”. There is no need for nipple stimulation or “toughening up” of your nipples during your pregnancy. A slight discomfort or “pinching” sensation immediately upon latching is normal during the early days of breastfeeding. This discomfort should resolve quickly during the feeding and will lessen with time. Significant pain upon latching or discomfort that lasts during the entire feeding is NOT normal and is most likely caused by a poor latch. To ensure the best latch possible, take the following steps when beginning a feeding:

- Ensure that you are in a comfortable position. It will be more difficult to position your baby if you are uncomfortable. Some mothers find that a breastfeeding pillow is helpful.
- Position your baby so that she is “tummy to tummy” with you. Her ear, neck, and shoulder should be in a straight line.
- Hold the underside of your breast between your thumb and fingers (behind the dark areola)
- Align your nipple with your baby’s nose. You can brush your nipple against your baby’s upper lip to help encourage him to open his mouth. Wait until your baby opens his mouth wide before helping him onto the breast. Attempting to latch when your baby doesn’t have a wide mouth will result in a “shallow” latch. This will result in pain for you and an inability to get enough milk for your baby.
- Once your baby opens her mouth wide, help her onto your breast by gently guiding her with your hand placed on her shoulders and just behind her ear.
- Once latched, take a close look at your baby. He should have some (but usually not all) of the areola in his mouth and his lips should flange out at about 140 degrees.
- If you feel that your baby is latched incorrectly, break suction (by placing your clean pinky finger in the corner of his mouth) and unlatch him. Continue this process until your baby feels deeply latched and you do not feel pain.

Between feedings, you can express some milk onto the nipple and areola for natural lubrication. Lanolin ointment can also be used for lubrication. Lanolin is safe for nursing and does not need to be washed off before the next feeding. You can find Lanolin at most stores in the nursing supply aisle.

If your nipples become cracked or very painful, please call the office as we might want to prescribe a “triple nipple cream” that contains antifungal, antibacterial and anti-inflammatory medication.