

How to Latch Your Baby After Treatment

There are many ways to latch your baby onto your breast. Because your baby had a releasing procedure, his/her gape is much wider. However, he/she still may not have the oral muscular strength to maintain an adequate amount of breast tissue in his/her mouth to keep a deep latch. Therefore, this method of latching is recommended for at least the first few days after the procedure to maximize your baby's ability to transfer milk.

Using this method, your baby should nurse for 10 minutes on each side every 2-3 hours. If you are concerned that he/she is not transferring enough milk, you can pump each breast for 5 minutes on each side to make sure there is NO milk left in the breasts after nursing. If you have a large supply, there may still be some milk. You can also supplement with pumped milk or formula based on your supply and your baby's needs.

First, your breast should be primed:

1. Position the fingers of one hand 180° from each other on either side of your areola.
2. Press the fingers back toward your chest wall.
3. Squeeze toward the center and forward toward your nipple to express the milk sitting in the superficial ducts.

Now, latch your baby onto your breast:

1. Regrasp your breast, as if it is a sandwich, grabbing it with the same side hand. It is easiest to make your hand into the shape of a "U". Make sure your entire areola is exposed.
2. Bring your baby to your breast, not your breast to your baby.
3. With your baby's lower lip aligned to the lower edge of your areola and your baby's chin against your breast skin, your baby should open his/her mouth very wide, to reach his/her upper lip over the top of your nipple.
4. Push your baby onto the breast, trying to get as much breast tissue into your baby's mouth as possible. Your nipple should sit all the way at the back of your baby's throat and open directly over the esophagus. There should be NO PAIN (or minimal if you have damaged breasts that are still healing).
5. While your baby is latched, continue holding your breast, especially from underneath, so your baby can maintain the weight of your breast in his/her mouth.
6. Continue holding your baby's head onto your breast. You can use a blanket to prop his/her head up.
7. Your baby's neck should be at a 90 degree angle, not flexed or extended, to give his/her jaw enough room to pull down and extract milk from your breast.