

The Breast Sandwich Latch

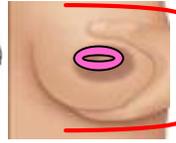
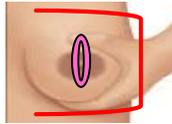
Pretend the breast is a sandwich. Squeeze it skinny and "line it up" to present a "bite" to baby's mouth.

This  represents the position of baby's mouth in the **CROSS CRADLE** position, with baby on her side.



In this position, cup the breast with your hand in a **U** shape, with your index finger and thumb pointing up and your elbow stays down at your side.

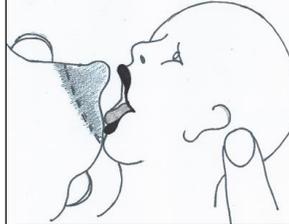
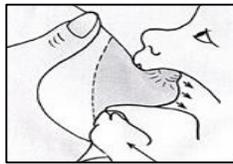
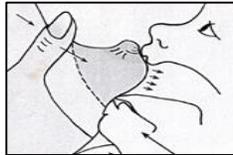
Below is **incorrect** because the sandwich is squeezed in the opposite direction as baby's lips.



In the **FOOTBALL HOLD**, support the breast with your hand in a C shape. This  represents the position of baby's mouth in the football hold.

Another picture to describe the latch:

Lay the bubble of breast tissue on the lower lip and slip the nipple in under the top lip.



Left hand holding right breast in football hold.

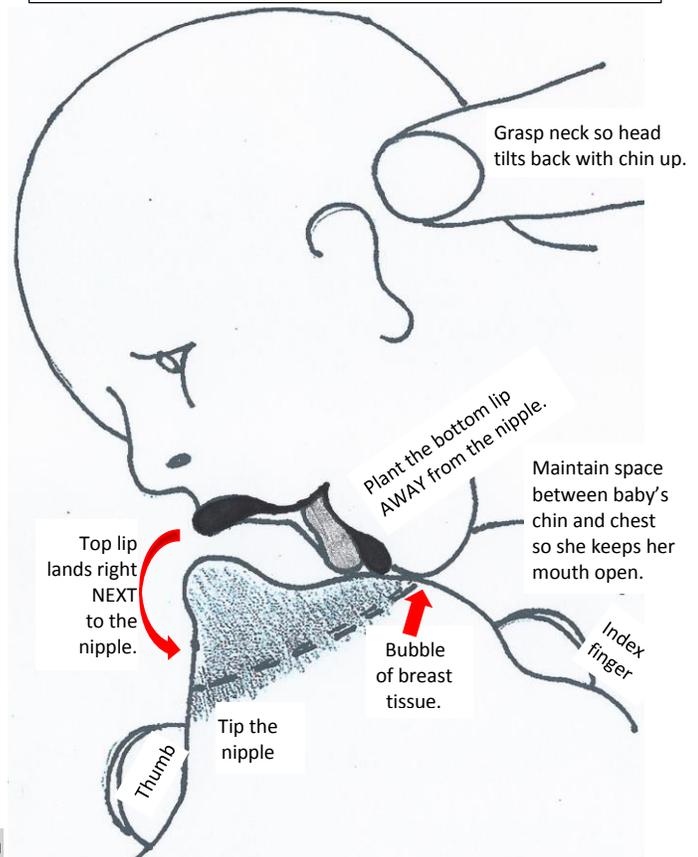


Right hand holding right breast in cross cradle hold.

Step by step latch instructions -- It's all about the bottom lip!

- Keep your hand, **thumb** and **index finger** back from the nipple so they don't touch baby's face or end up in her mouth.
- While shaping the breast, use your **thumb** to gently pull the skin to **tip the nipple** away from the lower lip and towards the top lip.
- This creates a **bubble of breast tissue** on the other side of the nipple which helps with latching.
- If the breast is small, it may not work to hold the breast, but simply **tip the nipple** with your thumb to create the **bubble of breast tissue**.
- **Latching – it's all about the lower lip!**
- Squeeze milk onto your nipple to interest the baby.
- The mouth should not approach the nipple like a "target," but rather guide baby in from the side with her head tilted back and **bottom lip** jutting out, leading the way.
- Tickle the **upper lip** with the nipple.
- **Plant the lower lip on the bubble of breast tissue, far away from the nipple.** Dry things off if milk makes it slippery.
- Wait for a **WIDE** open mouth and then quickly guide the **upper lip** over the nipple and land it right next to the nipple. Or said another way, slip the nipple in under the top lip.
- The **bottom lip** should **stay where it was planted** (rolls out a bit), as the mouth opens. Don't let the **bottom lip** slide to the base of the nipple.
- Don't push on the back of her head, but rather maneuver baby up and over the nipple by guiding with the grasp around the back of her neck.
- The nipple will rest at the suck reflex on the roof of the mouth (unless the nipple is flat).
- After a couple reflexive sucks, the mouth fills with milk and triggers the swallow reflex (when milk comes in).
- If the latch is correct, the tongue will stroke in the empty space between the nipple and **lower lip**.
- If the **lower lip** lands at the base of the nipple, the tongue rubs the nipple and it will appear pinched with a white crease across the top of the nipple. This causes pain and trauma and the latch must be corrected.

Left hand supporting left breast in cross cradle hold.



Positioning Baby at Breast

- Mom and baby are two pieces of a puzzle which are meant to fit together.
- Because mothers come in all shapes and sizes, different positions work better for some than others.
- Position yourself and baby comfortably.
- If you need extra support to keep baby in position, use pillows or take advantage of your leftover tummy baby bump!
- Sit with breasts in their natural positions.
- If breasts are larger, you may need to support your breast with your hand. Don't move the breast to baby's mouth, but bring baby's mouth to the nipple.
- Position baby such that her face looks straight ahead at your breast without turning her neck left or right to reach the nipple. No twisting at the hips or shoulders.
 - In cradle and cross-cradle holds, baby is on her side at breast level, so you are "tummy-to-tummy."
 - In football hold, baby is turn inward just a bit.
- The goals are to trigger the suck reflex at the roof of baby's mouth and to keep baby's tongue away from the nipple to avoid pain.
- Consider the "breast sandwich" concept to line the breast up with baby's mouth.
- Her mouth will be tilted differently in different holds, so shape the "sandwich" accordingly.
- Firmly grasp baby around the back of her neck, placing your index finger and your thumb on each ear.
- Avoid holding the back of her head, as you will likely push her chin into her chest, which will close her mouth.
- Support the shoulder blades with the heel of your hand so her back is straight and her head tilts back.
- The space between her chin and chest will open up, allowing her mouth to open wide so she can take a deep "bite" of the breast sandwich.
- Keep baby's elbows flexed. That is how she wants them. If her hands block the way to the nipple, trap one hand under the breast with your little finger and just deal with the other hand any way you can.

Laid back breastfeeding



This "natural" position can enhance a newborn's reflexes to promote a latch. The Sacred Hour immediately after birth is all about this latch. Patience is required, as you simply place baby on her tummy near the breast and she will seek the nipple and latch if given enough time to explore.

Cross Cradle Hold

This position allows you to support baby's head and also support and shape your breast. This position is often used to help babies who have trouble latching well.



Cradle Hold

This position is what many moms expect and is relaxing once it is mastered. It works for some babies from the start, but it may be difficult to support the breast and properly position a tiny newborn to get a good latch this way.



Football Hold - baby lying at an incline

This position is an option if you have smaller breasts. Baby is supported with her head higher than her bottom, ie at an incline. In this way, baby's head is lifted to the breast, rather than you leaning forward to get the nipple to baby's mouth.



Football Hold - baby lying flat

This position works well if you have larger breasts that tend to fall to the side. The baby lies flat and the breast hangs down to meet baby's mouth.

For both football holds, place 2 pillows behind your back to support your body forward so your elbow and baby's legs have space to extend behind you. Otherwise baby will push off the back of the chair, which pushes baby's head too far in front of your breast.



Side lying

This position allows mom to rest while nursing.

Check list for a good latch:

1. Is her back straight with shoulder blades supported and head tilted back?
2. Is her face looking straight forward, not turning right or left?
3. Is she twisting her hips or shoulders?
4. Is your grasp firmly around the back of baby's neck?
5. Is there space between her chin and chest, and thus space between her nose and breast?
6. Is the "breast sandwich" appropriately lined up to baby's mouth?
7. Is the mouth open wide with lips curled outward?
8. Is the latch comfortable other than some tugging or pulling?
9. Can you hear swallowing sounds?
10. Are you comfortable in your chair?
11. Upon unlatching, does your nipple appear the same as before the latch? If creased, baby's tongue has been on the nipple.

