



A Good Latch

Remember: if baby is not eating and growing well and/or if mom is in pain, the latch is not good no matter how “good” it looks!

What does it look like?

- Baby’s lips are flanged out at a wide angle on the breast.
- Baby is deeply latched - grasping not just the nipple, but also a good deal of the areola.

What does it feel like?

- It usually feels like strong tugging. This can feel weird or uncomfortable, especially if mom is new to breastfeeding, but it should not be sharply painful.
- Latch-on pain is normal!
 - This is pain lasting the first 30sec to 1min or so after initially latching baby deeply.
 - It can be very intense, but it should quickly subside to the strong tugging feeling.
- Pain that lasts past initial latch-on or throughout a feeding means that something is not quite right – no matter how “good” the latch looks. This is a good time to call an IBCLC!

What does it sound like?

- In the first few days (during the colostrum phase, usually the first 2-5 days postpartum), baby will suck with irregular swallowing throughout the feeding. Swallowing at this point will sound like a soft, quick sigh. Listen for it!
- After mom’s milk is in (usually within the first 2-5 days postpartum), baby’s sucking becomes more rhythmic, and swallows are louder & much more noticeable. There may even be gulping.
- Pauses during feedings are very normal. If mom wants to try to move baby along (which may or may not be possible), she can:
 - use breast compression when baby sucks
 - tickle baby’s feet
 - unwrap or undress baby (partially or fully), if not already doing skin-to-skin
 - talk or sing to baby

How does unlatching work?

- Babies will often unlatch on their own.
- If mom needs to unlatch baby, be sure to break the suction first!
 - Gently insert a finger into baby’s mouth to break the suction, then help baby off the breast.

The information provided is intended for your general knowledge only and is not a substitute for professional medical advice or treatment for specific medical conditions. You should not use this information to diagnose or treat a health problem or disease without consulting with a qualified healthcare provider. If you or your baby is experiencing a medical problem, you should contact a qualified health care provider.