

Latch-on Pictures With Description

Your view of latch-on, baby at left breast: cross cradle position



(1)

Baby's nose is near your left nipple. You support him with your right arm, your right hand cradling his neck, so that his front is held snugly against your torso, probably with his lower body wrapped around your waist and held by your elbow. You may be using pillows to support your arm, but it is your arm, not a pillow, that supports and hugs the baby against you.

Hold your left breast with your left hand. Your thumb points toward the ceiling on the outer (left) side of your breast, your fingers point toward the ceiling on the inner (right) side of your breast. This shapes your breast in a U, not a C - it is a sideways "sandwich" for your sideways baby.

If you're small-breasted, your hand is on your ribcage more than on your breast, to make sure your fingers stay well out of his way.

Baby's lower lip touches your breast, farther away from your nipple than it will end up. It's as if the baby's lower lip is about to climb a mountainside, with the nipple at the peak. The nipple is aimed slightly away from the baby.



(2)

When baby gapes wide, you s-t-r-o-k-e his lower lip toward his chin, using the inner part of your breast to pry his mouth open a bit further. This also buys a little extra time and helps ensure that his lower lip is folded back toward his chin. At the end of this motion, his upper lip will go "over the mountain top", and you will snug his shoulders extra close.

You need to be careful that you don't start this motion with his lower lip close to your nipple, or he will overshoot the mountaintop and end up with his upper lip well past your nipple, his lower lip right at the base of the nipple, and his chin tucked so that he can hang on. He should end with his lower lip still far from your nipple and his upper lip just past it.



(3)

Here, the baby has been snugged close at the end of the latch. You can't see his mouth because his cheek is against your breast. If you could see it (don't peek), you'd see that the angle at the corner of his mouth is about 140 degrees - much more than the 90 degrees typical of a "cliff hanging" baby who isn't on the breast far enough.

The baby's nose is probably not touching your breast. This picture shows the baby looking straight into the breast; more likely, he'd have his chin slightly lifted.

Notice that there's more areola (ah-REE-oh-lah), or dark skin around the nipple, showing beyond his upper lip than beyond his (invisible) lower lip. He's off-center, so that his working jaw is stroking your breast, not chewing on your nipple.

Don't relax your left hand until after he starts the long, slow (1 per second) jaw motions of active nursing.