



## REDUCING BREAST PAIN

Tender and sensitive nipples are normal as you begin breastfeeding your new baby. However, very sore, cracked or bleeding nipples are not. Usually this problem is related to the way your baby latches-on to the breast. It is important that your baby get a big "mouthful" of the nipple and areola. Whether you hold your baby across your chest in a cross-cradle hold or at your side in a football hold, turn your baby onto his side and hold him so his mouth is directly in front of the breast near the nipple.

**POSITIONING:** Position your baby with pillows so he is breast height. This reduces strain on your nipple and prevents soreness. Roll the baby completely on his side so he is "belly to belly" with you. This also reduces nipple strain and soreness. A cross-cradle hold or football hold works best to achieve a good latch-on with a newborn. Position your baby with his nose to your nipple so he has to reach "up" slightly to reach the nipple.

**CHECK THE LATCH:** To improve latch-on, stimulate nipple and use it to stroke baby's lips. **Wait for a wide-open mouth**, and then quickly latch the baby to the breast in an asymmetrical pattern (baby's chin should touch your breast first). Make sure the baby's lips are turned out and nose and chin are touching your breast. Make sure you feel a pulling sensation when the baby suckles. If pain occurs, break latch and start over. Maintain a deep latch during BF and alternate position of baby in order to help heal breast crack/fissure. Use lanolin or expressed milk on nipple after feedings.

**BREAK THE SUCTION:** Always break the suction before taking baby off the breast. "Popping" baby off the breast hurts--and leaves your nipples hurting for a surprisingly long time. Slip a clean finger into the corner of baby's mouth to release the suction before taking baby off the breast. Or, try pressing down gently on the breast near baby's mouth.

**HEAL YOUR NIPPLES:** Vary the position you hold your baby in at each feeding. Try cross-cradle hold one time and football hold the next time. Use a light application of purified lanolin. A little of your own breast milk works well too. Massage it into the nipple and areola. If your breasts are very full and engorged, try to hand express a little milk or use a breast pump before the baby latches-on. This will make the nipple more graspable. Breast shells may help during the healing process. Shells promote the circulation of air around the nipples and keep and pressure of the bra off the nipples. A combination of lanolin and breast shells is one the fastest ways to promote healing. Hydrogel dressings may be helpful if you have broken skin on the nipple. They help promote moist wound healing which is thought to speed the healing process. Check with a knowledgeable health care professional to determine if these are appropriate for your situation. These measures may help you resolve uncomplicated problems with sore nipples. There are circumstances where sore nipples indicate a more severe problem. Please seek help if your problem does not resolve quickly.