

# Suck Training

## Suck Training

Suck training may be used to help your baby latch more easily.

When your baby comes to your breast, he needs to open his mouth widely (like a yawn) and use his tongue to latch onto your breast.

When babies don't use their tongues correctly, they may not latch well while breastfeeding.

Some babies:

- use their tongues to push against anything entering their mouths
- elevate the tips of their tongues to reach the roofs of their mouths.

Suck training can help babies learn how to use their tongues correctly.

It's best to try this exercise when your baby is just starting to feel hungry instead of when he is very hungry or sleepy.

If your baby seems bothered by your finger in his mouth after a few tries, don't continue the exercise. Wait until the next feeding to try the exercise again.

## How To Do Suck Training

- Wash your hands.
- Using a finger, stroke the area around your baby's mouth.



- Then, touch or tickle your baby's lips until she opens her mouth widely (like a yawn).



**(over)**

- Put your index finger (fingernail down, pad up) into your baby's mouth up to the first knuckle or 1 inch. Be sure your fingernail is trimmed short.



- Gently rub the roof of your baby's mouth. Then gently press her tongue down and toward the front of her mouth.



Continue to repeat these two motions until your baby brings her tongue forward or until she stops elevating her tongue.

- When your baby's tongue is in the correct position, praise and encourage your baby.
- Breastfeeding will be more comfortable when your baby consistently has her tongue in the correct position.

**Important:** If your baby doesn't like doing this exercise after a few tries, stop and try again before the next feeding.

As your baby learns what to do, you may be able to shorten the length of suck training sessions and be able to put her to your breast sooner each time.

When you start to breastfeed, you may feel some gentle tugging discomfort during the initial latching on. Tenderness the first week is normal.

If needed, you can use suck training to remind your baby how to use her tongue correctly.

### Whom To Call With Questions

If you have questions or concerns about your baby's health (including feeding and weight gain), talk with your baby's health care provider.

If you have questions or concerns about breastfeeding, talk with your lactation resource or your nurse.

Instead of referring to your baby as "he or she" or "him or her" this fact sheet will use either "he" or "she" or "him" or "her." The gender will be used alternately to avoid awkward sentences.