



Good Latch vs. Poor Latch

As you settle into feeding your baby, here are few things to notice about how well they're eating. Note we're looking for a range of 8-10 feedings in a 24 hour period (according to the baby's cues) for the first few weeks.

SIGNS OF A GOOD LATCH

- Deep, strong pulling sensation at the breast without sharp pain
- Consistent sucking with only brief pauses
- Deep latch with the jaw open at 140* angle
- Consistent swallowing at the breast
- Softer breasts after the feeding
- Visible milk in baby's mouth
- Seeing milk in your baby's mouth
- After 1-3 minutes at the breast, feeling a let-down reflex and/or seeing a faster feeding rhythm in baby
- Adequate wet diapers and stools
- Minimal weight loss during first few days (it's natural for babies to lose 7-10% of their body weight in the first 1-2 weeks after birth)
- Baby regains birth weight by 2 weeks and gains 3/4 - 1 oz daily thereafter
- Baby is more relaxed after a feeding. A common sign is a relaxed arm and open palm, as opposed to clenched fists when they are hungry.

SIGNS OF A POOR LATCH

- Pain at the breast during feedings
- Nipple damage
- Sleepy baby at the breast, not waking for feeds
- Inconsistent, flutter (weak) sucking with minimal swallowing
- Difficulty getting and/or staying latched
- Clicking sounds in your baby's mouth during feeding
- Prolonged nursing (20-25+ minutes on each side)
- Infrequent nursing (baby does not wake to feed at least every 3 hours)
- Baby is not satisfied and still hungry at the end of the feeding
- Extended cluster feeding in which baby wants to eat every hour around the clock for many days in a row rather than just a day or two
- Breast engorgement because milk isn't getting removed
- Inadequate wet diapers and stools
- Baby has rapid or excessive weight loss (more than 7-10%) during the first few days
- Baby has not regained birth weight by 2 weeks and gains less than 1/2 - 3/4 oz per day thereafter

This guide was created in collaboration with Carrie Dean, IBCLC for Expectful, Inc.