






d. Learning to Breastfeed

MODULE 4

Begin breastfeeding as soon as possible after the delivery. The baby is most awake and ready to learn how to breastfeed during the first two hours after birth. Breastfeeding as soon as possible after delivery will favour skin to skin contact with your baby and will help you produce more milk.

Once you are in a comfortable position, you are ready to offer your breast to your baby. The cross cradle position may be the best position for the learning period.

Babies often suck better if their skin is in contact with the mother's skin. They will keep warm from being skin to skin with you. In the beginning, undress the baby down to just their diaper prior to feeds to help keep baby awake at the breast. Some infants find the breast and latch on correctly from the first tries. Others need help. The following pictures provide a few tips to help your baby accept the breast correctly.

TIPS TO HELP THE BABY TAKE THE BREAST CORRECTLY	
	Hold the breast in your hand with your thumb on top and your fingers below the breast. Fingers and thumb stay well back from the areola.
	Hold the baby's head with your hand so that it will be slightly inclined towards the back. Stroke the baby's upper lips with your nipple. Wait until the baby's mouth is wide open like a yawn.
	Pull the baby towards your breast with head tilted back and chin forward. The chin and the lower jaw must touch first. The baby's mouth should cover a larger part of the areola on the lower part of the breast than on the top.
	Your baby is latched on properly if the baby's mouth is opened wide, the lips are curled out and the chin is pressed against your breast and you have no nipple pain.
	If your baby falls asleep after a few minutes, squeeze your breast to increase your milk flow. Continue squeezing while baby is actively feeding. Do not squeeze so hard that it hurts. Release the pressure on your breast when the baby stops suckling. Then repeat the process.

The following video shows a baby well positioned on the breast.



The following video demonstrates how to apply pressure to your breast to encourage feeding.



Feed the baby before he or she gets upset or cries loudly. Crying is a late sign of hunger. The baby will show signs of hunger long before starting to cry.

Your baby can

- have rapid eye movements under the eyelids when he/she begins waking up to drink.
- make sucking and licking movements with his/her mouth.

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- put his/her hand in his/her mouth.
- stretch and become more agitated.
- make small noises.



A sign that the baby is hungry.