

- many moms are very concerned that their breastfeeding baby may bite when they begin to get teeth
- some mothers never have this problem and their babies continue to feed with no problems
- babies who are biting **do not** need to be weaned from the breast
- many can learn very quickly that biting is unacceptable and you can continue to breastfeed for as long as you like

## How can I prevent my baby from biting my breast?

There are many things that moms can do to help their babies learn not to bite the breast:

- make sure that your baby is well latched to the breast. When the baby is latched well, the tongue is over the bottom gum and your baby is not able to bite
- discourage older babies from feeding with a “lazy latch”
- pay attention to **when** the baby is biting during the feeding; it is hard for babies to bite when they are actively sucking and swallowing
- remove him from the breast when you no longer hear him swallowing, or when you notice he is beginning to fall asleep, or when sucks slow down to very few
- if your baby is biting during the active feeding time when you are hearing swallowing, remove your baby from the breast, firmly tell him “no” and then resume the feeding
- if your baby bites, again, repeat “no” and end the feeding; your baby will learn that he cannot bite the breast



- it is important not to laugh or smile as your baby may think it is a game and try it again to see your reaction
- some babies may bite very early in the feeding because the flow of milk is too slow and they want your milk to come faster; try using breast compressions to increase the flow, or switch to the other side if swallowing has stopped on the first side
- if your baby's gums are sore, try giving him something cold to bite down on before the feed; this might soothe him so he does not need to "chew" on the nipple for relief

Babies may bite at the breast because:

- their gums are sore as the new teeth are coming in
- they are learning how to use new teeth and biting lets them play and practice
- the flow of milk has changed and they want to get more milk from the breast faster
- they have fallen asleep and the "bite" is a reflex

### What else can I do?

- if you are concerned that your milk supply has changed, talk to a Lactation Consultant or family doctor
- if your baby breaks the skin, apply expressed breastmilk on the broken skin and allow it to air dry before putting your bra back on (see sore nipple fact sheet)
- you may also use an over the- counter antibiotic cream to aid healing. Gently wash it off with warm water before a feed

- Continuing to breastfeed as your baby gets older has many advantages—speak to your lactation consultant if you would like more information.



March-2014