



Patient Information

How to do REVERSE PRESSURE SOFTENING?

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Try this in the early weeks of learning to breastfeed, if pain, swelling, or fullness cause problems:

The key is making the areola (the circle) very soft right around the base of the nipple, right before every feeding, for better latching.

- Your baby needs the areola soft to get a “good mouthful” of breast, beyond the nipple, to remove more milk, and be very gentle to your nipple.
- Lie most of the way down on your back when you soften the areola. (This is a great way for your baby and you to learn to breastfeed too).
- Look at the pictures below. Choose the easiest way for you to press on the areola.
- Be gentle to avoid pain, but press the circle firmly and steadily in toward your heart, counting slowly to 50; **Count very slowly if very swollen.**
- In the hospital, ask someone to show you. At home, ask for help from a relative or friend.
- Soften the areola right before each feeding (or pumping) till latching is always easy.

If you need to pump milk for your baby,

- Always soften the areola first before you pump, too.
- Use only medium or low vacuum so swelling won't move back into the areola.
- Pause to re-soften the areola once or twice, to get more **total** milk out.
- Make pumping sessions short, but often, (2-3 hours.) while awake.

Method 1: Two step method, use the straight fingers of both hands, placed with the knuckles touching the nipple: Count to 50 in each position. **If very swollen, count very slowly.**



1. Place fingers on each side of the nipple.



2. Place fingers above and below the nipple

All drawings by
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Method 2: Soft Ring Method: cut off bottom half of an artificial nipple to place on the areola and press with fingers. Count to 50. If very swollen, **count very slowly.**



Method 3: One handed “flower hold”. Fingernails, short, fingertips curved, placed where baby's tongue will go. Count to 50. If very swollen, **count very slowly.**



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