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Breast Compression and Release

Breast Compression and Release are used to:

- Increase the flow of milk
- Assist a sleepy baby to nurse more actively
- Increase the milk supply in a mother with a low supply

Hold the breast in a C or U hold and build up the pressure in the breast by gently squeezing the breast far away from the nipple. You should notice the baby begin to actively suck. Continue the compressing the breast while the baby is sucking and swallowing. When the baby stops, wait about 10-15 seconds to see if she begins again. If she does not begin swallowing, then release the breast. This allows milk to flow from the areas that your hand was blocking. Let the baby continue to swallow. When she stops again, wait 15 seconds to see if it is a natural pause. If she does not begin again, then do Breast Compression again. You continue Breast Compression and Release during the feeding to increase the milk supply and/or keep a sleepy baby actively nursing.

In non-nutritive sucking just the lips move. This is also called “flutter nursing”. In nutritive sucking a facial muscle moves near the ear or temple. The tongue and lower jaw is connected to this muscle and when baby is actively nursing it moves. Listen also for swallowing.

Summary:

- Breast Compression – baby begins to swallow. Hold until baby pauses more than 15 seconds.
- Breast Release – baby starts swallowing again after the pause
- Breast Compression – baby begins to swallow again
- Continue compression and release throughout the feeding until baby stops nutritive sucking. *Listen for swallowing.*

No need to do anything if baby is drinking, pauses, and then swallows again.