



Breastfeeding tips & techniques:

Breastfeeding with Large Breasts & Extra Weight



Most women are able to breastfeed. If minor problems arise, many of these problems can be easily overcome. For some women, extra body weight can make breastfeeding more challenging. Extra weight may interfere with the hormones of lactation. Extra weight and large breasts can make it more difficult for babies to latch on to the breast. Sometimes there are other health complications, too.

Breastfeeding benefits

It is hard to beat the benefits of breast milk. The benefits to you and your baby increase the longer you breastfeed. Breast milk can offer your baby protection from illnesses and infections. Breastfeeding lowers mom's risk of breast and ovarian cancer. It also helps you return to your pre-pregnancy weight.

Cesarean births

Pregnancy and birth complications, including cesarean births, may be more common for women with extra weight. Having a cesarean birth may cause a delay in when you can start to breastfeed your baby. To shorten the delay, ask to breastfeed your baby right after you give birth or as soon as medically possible. Breastfeeding also helps you and your baby to bond. This is important if you and your baby were separated right after the birth. Your baby's sucking helps your uterus return to its pre-pregnancy size. It also speeds your healing by decreasing postpartum bleeding.

Large breasts

One concern that large women have is how to latch their baby if they have large-sized breasts. Women with large breasts may need to experiment with different breastfeeding positions and learn what works best with their body. Most women with large breasts find it easier to feed in the football hold (refer to handout on positioning). If your breasts are very large, you may need to place your baby on a pillow to bring your baby up to the level of your breast. It is important to make sure you are not leaning down to the baby but instead bringing the baby to the level of the nipple to help get a good latch. Ask for help in finding a position that works best for you.

continued »

Need
breastfeeding
advice or help?

It is OK to **ASK** for help:

CALL your doctor or pediatrician » **CONTACT** a lactation consultant » **REFER** to the numerous resources listed at www.abbottnutrition.com/breastfeeding

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Breast care

Having a well-fitting bra is important for all women, but especially for those with large breasts. You should not use an underwire nursing bra as the wires can press up against sensitive breast tissue and cause plugged ducts and mastitis.

Large women are more at risk to develop skin infections and irritations underneath the breasts. After bathing it is important to completely dry under the breast with a towel, to be sure all excess moisture is gone. (Excess moisture can cause or irritate topical yeast infections.) Wash your bra frequently as well to prevent yeast infections.

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