

Nutrition Guide

Breastfeeding tips & techniques: the positions

You will need to find the position or positions that are most comfortable for both you and your baby. Some experts suggest alternating positions. That way your baby will not latch on and apply pressure at the same spot every time. Try these positions and see what works best for you.

The cradle hold



- Sit in a comfortable chair, with support for your arms and back – do not lean over your baby.
- Use a pillow or soft rolled-up blanket, towel, or other soft item to support your arm and bring your baby to the height of the breast. Some mums find it helpful to use a stool to keep their knees at the same level as their hips.
- Place your baby facing you across your stomach, tummy to tummy, with his or her face and knees close in.
- Position your baby's head in the bend of your elbow, with his or her mouth in front of your nipple, and tuck your baby's lower arm around your waist, out of the way.
- Pull your baby onto the breast when his or her mouth is open wide, far enough onto the breast so that his or her nose, cheeks, and chin all are touching your breast.

Cross-cradle hold



This position is good for mums who've had trouble with latching-on and with small or premature babies. You can see the latch-on more clearly than with the cradle-hold position. For this hold, position yourself comfortably, with pillows behind you. Lean back slightly so that you don't have to bend over your baby.

- Hold your baby across your body, in the arm opposite the breast from which baby will nurse.
- Support your baby's neck and head with this hand as his or her body extends along the length of your forearm.
- Use the hand on the side of the breast you are feeding from to support the breast.
- Position your baby's mouth at the level of your nipple, with his or her body on his or her side, facing you.
- Pull your baby onto your breast when his or her mouth is open wide, far enough onto your breast so that his or her nose, cheeks, and chin all are touching your breast.

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Football hold



This position is good for mums with large breasts, for those who've had a caesarean birth, trouble with latching-on, or mums with small or premature babies. This hold can also provide you with a free hand, or enable you to breastfeed two babies at once. The advantage of this hold is that you can clearly see latch-on.

- Sit in a comfortable chair, with support for your arms and back – do not lean over your baby. Use a pillow or soft rolled-up blanket, towel, or other soft item to support your arm.
- Use a pillow or rolled-up blanket, towel, or other soft item at your side to support your elbow and baby's bottom.
- Put your baby's head in the palm of your hand, level with your breast, and tuck your baby into the side of your waist, cradled under your arm.
- Support the base of your baby's head between your thumb and forefinger. Place a soft blanket between your hand and your baby's head for padding, if you think that he or she is uncomfortable.
- Pull your baby onto the breast when his or her mouth is open wide, far enough onto your breast so that his or her nose, cheeks, and chin all are touching your breast. If your baby has problems with gas, you can change this hold so your baby sits slightly upright, leaving less room for air in his or her tummy.

Lying down

Good for night feedings and when sitting is uncomfortable.



- Lie on your side, using a pillow to support your head and neck, and another along your back if needed; or lie on your side with one arm bent under your head and the other hand supporting your breast.
- Lay your baby next to you on the bed, so his or her mouth is opposite your nipple, and place a small rolled blanket, towel, or soft cloth behind your baby's back. Support the base of the baby's head between your thumb and forefinger.
- Pull your baby onto your breast when his or her mouth is open wide, far enough onto your breast so that his or her nose, cheeks, and chin all are touching your breast.
- If you need to switch breasts, hold your baby close to your body and roll onto your back, then to the other side.

No matter which breastfeeding position you choose, an important thing to remember is that your baby's mouth should be at the same level as your nipple. His or her head should be in a straight line with his belly – directly facing you – not turned to the side. Remember if your baby's head is turned to the side, it's hard for him or her to swallow. (*See for yourself: turn your head and swallow. Then face forward and swallow again. Notice a difference?*) Also, if your baby's head is turned, it makes it more difficult for your baby to get enough of the nipple and breast into his or her mouth.

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