

Positions to use when Breastfeeding

Cross cradle hold



This position is useful when you are just learning

1. Use your fingers under the baby's head so his head and the weight of his head are supported, but make sure his head is free to tilt back through the gap between your finger and thumb
2. The palm of your hand supports your baby's shoulders and you can press on his shoulders to bring him into the breast when ready
3. Your forearm can tuck the rest of the baby's body close to you. Most mums use their other hand to support their breast while the baby attaches
4. When you are sure that the baby is attached and suckling well, you can bring that hand and arm around the baby too.

Cradle Hold



The position most mums use instinctively.

Your hand needs to be supporting your baby's shoulders and he is free to tilt his head back out over your wrist. Baby's head needs to be free to tilt back.

Lying Down Hold



Useful if you have:

- Painful stitches or haemorrhoids
- Had a caesarean section
- Also helpful if you are tired, and need to feed and rest, but make sure it is safe for your baby if you were to fall asleep while feeding

You need to lie on your side with your head on the pillows and your shoulders on the mattress

Bend your legs slightly, but not enough for your baby's legs to touch your thighs

Your baby should be on his side facing you with his nose opposite your nipple. Make sure none of your arm is pressing on the back or top of his head. His head must be free to tilt back

You need to press on your baby's shoulders with your upper hand (or sometimes the fingertips of your lower hand) to bring him to the breast when he is ready

The Madonna Hold

This position can be hard to master at first but may become the most practical once you and your baby are comfortable with breastfeeding.

Position baby before the feeding starts.

Support your breast with the hand opposite the side that the baby is feeding, with your thumb and fingers well back from the areola.

Use your arm on the same side the baby is feeding to support the baby's head and body and to keep him close to you.

The Laid back approach



Another way to enable your baby to be able to access the breast is to place baby on your body and allow her to self attach. You need to be reclining so that your baby feels secure. You may need to support baby and/or your breast.

Positioning yourself and your baby in this way can help gently encourage skin to skin and body contact, and to enjoy a special closeness without either feeling any pressure to “get on with” feeding. Instead, this position encourages your baby to use natural reflex behaviour to help them to find your breast and feed effectively when ready.

Underarm / Rugby ball hold



Very helpful if you have:

- A small or pre-term baby
- A caesarean section
- Large breasts or inverted nipples

The baby is usually held on a pillow, just under breast height, turned slightly towards you

2. It is very important that the baby is held very close to your side but is not able to touch anything; otherwise he will push with his legs and come too far forward

3. Hold your baby's head in the same way as in the cross cradle hold

4. When the baby feels your nipple against his nose, his head will be free to tip back between your finger and thumb as you press his shoulders in towards your breast

Close – Is your baby's body touching yours?

Head free but supported – support the baby's neck, shoulders and back and ensure nothing is on your baby's head

Inline – Baby's nose, knees and belly button facing the same way

Nose to nipple – touch the baby's nose to your nipple as your baby should have to attach themselves to your breast

Sustainable – although it is ok to change position slightly during a feed it is best to get comfortable before as your baby could be feeding for a while

Attachment



1. Hold your baby's whole body close with his nose level with your nipple.



2. Let your baby's head tip back a little so that his top lip can brush against your nipple. This should help your baby to make a wide open mouth.



3. When your baby's mouth opens wide, his chin is able to touch your breast first, with his head tipped back so that his tongue can reach as much breast as possible.



4. With his chin firmly touching and his nose clear, his mouth is wide open and there will be much more of the darker skin visible above your baby's top lip than below his bottom lip. Your baby's cheeks will look full and rounded as they feed.

Are your baby's head and body in a straight line? If not, your baby might not be able to swallow easily.

Are you holding your baby close to you?

Support baby's neck, shoulders and back. Baby should be able to tilt his head back easily and he shouldn't have to reach out to feed.

Are you comfortable?

It's worth getting comfortable before a feed, although it's ok to change your position slightly once the baby is attached to the breast.

Is your baby's nose opposite your nipple?

Your baby needs to get a big mouthful of breast from underneath the nipple. Placing your baby with his nose level with your nipple will allow him to reach up and attach to the breast well.