



HOW DO I POSITION MY BABY AT THE BREAST?

Breastfeeding is natural: nature's most perfect system is specifically designed to enable each mother to nourish and nurture her baby.

Breastfeeding is also a learned activity. Mothers need information, encouragement and sometimes help to learn how to breastfeed. Learning how to properly position and latch the baby onto the breast will ensure a good start to a healthy relationship. It will also help prevent the discomfort of sore nipples and assure that the baby will stimulate the breast correctly to receive and maintain an adequate supply of milk.

Finding a comfortable position

As important as learning to position the baby at the breast is to find the position(s) most comfortable while breastfeeding. A chair with arms and good support for the back is best. This will keep from having to lean over the baby while breastfeeding which can cause tension and pain in the neck and back. Using a foot stool so the legs can be bent at the knees can make the mother more comfortable. Pillows or rolled up blankets can be used as support for the mother's arms and under the baby to lift him to the breast.

When breastfeeding in the feeding position, the baby's head is held in the crook of the elbow with the arms and hand supporting baby's back and bottom. This is the cradle hold. The baby's body is turned to face the mother's body, tummy to tummy, with his mouth at the same height as the breast. Baby's ear and shoulder should be in line with his hip and his head will tip back slightly. If baby's lower arm seems to get in the way, it can be tucked under the mother's arm around her side.



Cradle Hold

Once baby is positioned correctly and securely and the mother is comfortable, she can begin to concentrate on getting the baby latched on to the breast.

Other positions for feeding

Figures 3 and 4 illustrate other positions for breastfeeding. Mother can experiment to find various positions that work for her and her baby. Most importantly, in any position the mother tries, she needs to be relaxed with no muscles straining, and baby needs to be well supported and secure. The beginning of breastfeeding is a time for learning and practice and is followed by adjustment and comfort. Mother and baby will soon know exactly what to do without even thinking about it and will have established a firm foundation for their nursing relationship.



*Football or Clutch Hold
(Figure 3)*



*Transitional or Cross Cradle Hold
(Figure 4)*

This is general information and does not replace the advice of your physician or healthcare provider.

If you have a problem you cannot solve quickly, seek help right away.

Every baby is different, and your baby may not be average. If in doubt, contact your physician or other healthcare provider.