

Positioning Baby Properly For Breastfeedings

Proper positioning of your baby for breastfeeding is one of the biggest keys to preventing many feeding problems. The first few weeks of breastfeeding can be tough. Between the frequent feedings and just trying to find the best technique of breastfeeding can be exhausting. You may also experience painfully sore nipples and/or possibly nipple infections. Don't dispare, it gets better!

Below are some positions you can try:

-Cradle Hold. This is normally the most common breastfeeding position. To start, lay baby on his/her side across your lap. Now rest babys shoulder and hip level with his/her mouth, this should be level with your nipple. It helps if you use pillows, (a nursing pillow is best) to lift baby to your nipple height. You can rest your elbow on the pillow for support. With your hand, support your breast by forming a "U" shape or a "C" shape, cupping your breast. Using this position, baby's head should be resting on your forearm and your baby's back should be along your inner arm and your palm. Looking down toward your baby, you will be looking at his/her side. When baby starts to latch on, his/her mouth should be covering about a half of an inch of your areola. Baby's ear, shoulder and hips should be in a straight line in your lap. During the first few weeks of using this position, baby's head and bottom should be level with each other.

The above position works very well for most mothers but it's also important to vary your position.

Another good variation:

-Cross-Cradle Hold. You should be able to use this position with the same ease of the cradle hold, but this position will give you much more control during a feeding. In this particular position, you will support your baby with a pillow across your lap. Remember, a nursing pillow that is specially made is very helpful throughout your entire breastfeeding process. The pillow will help bring the baby up to your nipple level. The pillow will also help you in supporting the weight of your baby, normally your arms will get tired long before the feeding is complete. With the cross-cradle hold, if you are planning to feed baby with your left breast, you should use your left hand for support and form a "U" and cup your breast. You will then be supporting your baby with your right hand. You need to place your entire hand behind your baby's ears and neck. Baby's neck should be resting between your thumb and your index finger, with the rest of your palm between baby's shoulders. Once you're ready, be certain your baby's mouth is close to your nipple. When your baby opens his/her mouth, push baby forward. Like the cradle hold, your baby's mouth needs to cover about half an inch of your aerola.

Both of the above holds, the "cradle hold" and the "cross cradle hold" are the most popular for early nursing positions and most new mothers are very comfortable using them. Note that there are a number of other nursing positions you can also try. The "clutch hold" or "football hold" and the side lying positions. If you encounter any problems getting your baby positioned correctly, don't hesitate to contact a lactation specialist. They can help you figure out which position will work best for your and your baby.

Before you know it you'll be a PRO!

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