

Breastfeeding Positions

The classic cradle hold is the most common nursing position. It is often shown with the baby's head in the crook of the mother's arm. This position will force the baby's head forward and down. Put your chin down toward your chest and try to swallow. See how difficult it is.

Sit upright in a comfortable chair, with a pillow supporting your back, one under the arm holding the baby, and another in your lap to bring him up to the level of your breast. You will be spending a lot of time in this position, so make sure that you are comfortable, and are not straining the muscles in your arm, neck, shoulder, or back.



Cradle hold: The baby should not be supported in the crook of the arm but rather in a position further down the forearm (see picture). The support should be at the shoulder girdle in a way that does not prevent your baby from tipping back his head.



Transitional hold: The baby is supported by the hand opposite to the breast being used. The heel of your hand should be between the shoulder blades, and allow the baby's head to fall back naturally into the cradle formed by the thumb and forefinger. The thumb and forefinger should support the baby's head on or behind the baby's ears. If you apply pressure higher up on the back of the baby's head you may cause the baby to push back against your hand and away from the breast.



Football hold: The support is the same as the transitional hold but the baby is brought to the breast on the same side as the hand used for support. Use pillows at your back to give the baby extra leg room. If your baby's feet push against a solid surface it will cause the baby to straighten his legs and the movement may move him out of a good position at the breast.



Reclining: In this position mother is laying down turned to her side. Infant is laying down facing mother.

ALL Hold/Positions: Your baby should be positioned on his side, with his whole body facing yours. His ear, shoulder, and hip should be in a straight line. He should not have to turn his head to reach your breast. Try turning your head to the side and take a swallow of water. It's hard to do.