

Breastfeeding positions

The rooting reflex

Always get the baby to turn his or her head toward your breast. To do this, simply stroke the baby's cheek nearest the breast with your finger. This triggers a reflex.

Proper nipple position

Be certain the baby has a good grasp of the nipple as well as the areola (the brown area around the nipple). NEVER allow the baby to suck on just the nipple! You can guide your breast into a good nursing position by holding your breast from below so that the nipple and areola don't get pulled out of your baby's mouth by the weight of the breast.

Breast-feeding positions

In all positions make sure the baby's nose is not pressed into the breast and unable to breathe. Also be sure your baby's body is directly facing the breast.

SITTING

The most common position is sitting with baby in your lap, with baby's head in the crook of your arm. Baby's chest should be against your chest so he or she can turn the head to reach your nipple. Be sure the arm of the chair is the right height to support your arm. Use pillows to support your back, arm, and baby's head. A footstool may help your feet.

LYING DOWN

This position is useful for night-feeding. Lay on your side and place baby on the side facing you, with the head at your breast. You can place a few pillows at your back for extra support. Be sure baby can breathe. By adjusting your position slightly you can feed baby from both breasts while lying on one side. Make sure you feed from both breasts.

FOOTBALL HOLD

Hold your baby like a football along your forearm, with baby's body on your arm and face toward your breast. Use your other hand to support and position baby's head. The football hold is useful if you have plugged ducts or if you have twins.

AFTER C-SECTION

Lying down may be more comfortable, and football hold may help as well.

PREMATURE INFANTS

Support baby's head with the crook of your arm while placing your hand under his or her bottom. Use your other hand to guide your nipple into the mouth. If the baby's suck is weak, pull down on baby's chin and direct the nipple into the back of the mouth.

TWINS

Use the football hold with pillows under each arm to support the babies, or use a regular sitting position with the babies overlapping. You can combine the regular sitting position for one baby and the football hold for the other. Alternate between feeding each baby separately and nursing the babies at the same time. Don't let baby feed from just one breast. Always alternate breasts. Nurse the hungriest baby on the fullest breast.

Generally, any position that works is OK as long as the baby has the WHOLE nipple in the mouth, he or she can breathe easily, and YOU are comfortable.