

Breastfeeding Your Baby: Getting Started

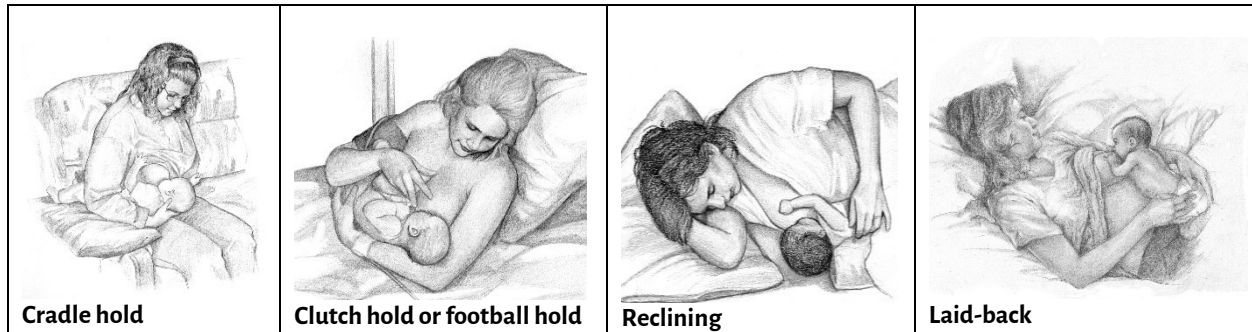
Breast milk gives your baby more than just good nutrition. It also provides important substances to fight infection. Breastfeeding has medical and psychological benefits for both of you.

The more relaxed and confident you feel, the faster your milk will flow to your baby. Getting comfortable will help you and your baby get started toward a better latch-on. Always take time to get comfortable. Don't be shy about asking for help, especially during the first feedings. It may take a few tries, but with a little patience, you and your baby will succeed.

Here is information from the American Academy of Pediatrics about different breastfeeding positions and how to get comfortable while breastfeeding.

Breastfeeding Positions

Here are 4 breastfeeding positions.



Cradle hold. This is the traditional breastfeeding position. Firmly support your baby's back and bottom. When feeding this way, make sure your baby's entire body is facing your body, not the ceiling.

Clutch hold or football hold. This hold may be more comfortable if you've had a cesarean delivery because it keeps the baby's weight off of the stitches.

Reclining. Feeding your baby while lying down lets you relax and can be helpful if you've had a cesarean delivery or are tired.

Laid-back. In this position lie back slightly with your head, shoulders, and back supported by pillows. With your baby on your stomach, let baby's head rest near your breast. Be patient while your baby crawls to the breast, latches on, and breastfeeds. Help as little or as much as your baby needs.

Important reminder: Breastfeeding babies can be brought into the bed for feeding at night. After breastfeeding, place the baby back into a bedside bassinet or crib for sleep. For instance, babies who sleep in the same bed as their parents are at risk of SIDS, suffocation, or strangulation. Parents can roll onto babies during sleep, or babies can get tangled in the sheets or blankets. And remember to place your baby on their back for every sleep. Also, place your baby to sleep in the same room where you sleep but not the same bed. Keep the crib or bassinet within an arm's reach of your bed. You can easily watch or breastfeed your baby by having your baby nearby.

How can I get comfortable while breastfeeding?

A few simple things can help you feel comfortable and relaxed.

- Sit on a comfortable chair with good back and arm support.
- Lie on your side in bed with your baby facing you. Place pillows to support your back and neck.
- Take deep breaths and picture yourself in a peaceful place.
- Listen to soothing music while sipping a healthy drink.
- Apply moist heat (such as warm, wet washcloths) to your breast several minutes before each feeding.
- If your home is very busy, find a quiet place where you won't be disturbed during feedings.
- If you had a cesarean delivery, use extra pillows to help position your baby.
- Try different breastfeeding positions.
- Make sure your baby is latched on correctly. (See the next question about latch-on.)

Remember

For some mothers and babies, breastfeeding goes smoothly from the start. For others, it takes a little time and several attempts to get the process going effectively. Like anything new, breastfeeding takes some practice. You're not alone. If you need help, ask your pediatrician, a lactation specialist, or a breastfeeding support group.

Visit HealthyChildren.org for more information.

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