

Position of mother and baby for comfortable and effective feeding

Mothers often say they receive conflicting information about how to position their baby. There are basic principles which remain the same in any technique.

Principles:

1. **Mother in a comfortable position**

- ⇒ Back supported and legs not dangling or tense.
- ⇒ Able to support the baby's weight without a strain and to have at least one arm free to use.
- ⇒ Leaning back rather than leaning forward.



2. **Baby is a comfortable position**

- ⇒ Close to mother so that baby does not need to stretch his/her neck to stay attached.
- ⇒ Facing chest to chest without baby's neck or body twisted or falling away from the breast.
- ⇒ Supported so baby feels stable, secure and not hanging loose. The weight of baby's body is supported at the shoulders and hips and the baby can freely move his/her head without restriction. Many babies like their feet to touch something rather than hanging in mid-air.



3. **Bring baby to breast, not breast to baby**

- ⇒ Breasts and nipples are different shapes and can point different directions. Look in the mirror to see what direction your breasts point.
- ⇒ Position your baby so that her/his nose is where your nipple is when your breast is in its natural place.
- ⇒ Baby will tip his/her head back and use her/his mouth and chin to feel for the areola and its distinctive smell. The chin touching the breast first helps the baby to feel stable. Avoid bending forward trying to put the nipple to where the baby's mouth is. Let the baby attach to the breast her/himself.

Techniques:

Use the basic principles to find a technique that suits you and your baby in different situations and mothers-babies. A laid back technique may suit you in bed or when relaxing in the sitting room, and a more upright position may be more suitable when out with friends in a café. There is no one best technique for everyone.

Watch some videos and read more - and find techniques to suit you and your baby.

Position to Breastfeed <http://breastfeedingtoday-llli.org/position-to-breastfeed/>

Feeding positions <https://www.breastfeeding.ie/>

Your Baby the Mammal <http://www.normalfed.com/mammal/>

This is general information. Discuss your specific needs with your midwife, nurse, lactation consultant or doctor.

Like more info sheets? Visit the BFHI web site

