

Nursing Tips for Large Breasted Women

When it comes to making milk, breast size, large or small, does not matter. But size does matter when trying to latch a baby onto the breast. For large breasted women, nursing may be easier for baby if you hold the end of your breast in the baby's mouth. To do this, you need a way to support your breast and the baby without using your hands. It can be done. Here are some ideas:

- Lie down on your side on a firm mattress or the floor.
- Use a nursing pillow for twins. It has a larger platform which can support both breast and baby.
- Use the dining room or kitchen table as a platform. At the hospital, try the bed tray table.
- Lay baby in your lap. If needed, raise your breast to baby's level using a pillow or blanket.
- Sit crossed-legged and build a platform using pillows.



You have options. Get creative and find a position that works for you. For many positions, your baby will need to be turned on his side to nurse. You can keep baby from rolling over on his back by placing a rolled-up towel behind him. Make sure the towel does not touch the back of the baby's head. Baby needs to be able to move his head while nursing.

Once baby is positioned well, try latching on. Line baby up so baby's nose is opposite your nipple. Then place your hands on opposite sides of your breast and squeeze your breast to flatten the nipple area so that it fits better into the baby's mouth.

Need some extra support for your breast?

- Use an old bra. Cut out a circle large enough for both the nipple and the dark area around it. While nursing, baby's face should feel skin not cloth. If not, cut the hole a bit larger.
- Roll up a small towel and place under your breast.
- Make a sling using 1½ yards of fabric. Tie it around your neck and put your breast in the sling.
- Use a small pillow for under your breast.

What if your breast covers baby's nose?

You should be able to find a position so that the baby's nose is free. If not, make an airway by pressing the breast down and toward the baby's nose. (Do not pull the breast away from the baby, because that will pull the breast out of the baby's mouth.)

Keep the weight of your breast off baby's chest.

For a newborn, the weight of your breast on the baby's chest can be a problem. Use your hand to lift your breast off the baby's chest. As baby gets older, you may not need to lift your breast.

Flat Nipples?

Flat or short nipples can be a challenge for the newborn to latch onto the breast. Forming the breast with your hands so it fits into the baby's mouth can help the baby grasp the breast well. You can also:

- Pull back on your breast to make the nipple stand out more.
- Pump to pull out the nipples, and then offer the breast.
- As a last resort you can use a nipple shield, but this can slow down milk production. While using a shield, pump 4 to 6 times a day after nursing. A pump provides the extra nipple stimulation needed so your breasts learn to make enough milk.

Nipples too large?

If your nipples are too big to fit into your newborn's mouth, there is good news. Babies grow fast. Very soon the baby will be big enough to nurse at the breast. In the meantime, pump your milk and feed it to your baby.

Helpful pumping tips

Most of the pumps available in stores come with a standard size flange. This is the plastic piece that fits over the breast. The tunnel on a standard size flange might be too small for your nipple size. Several pump companies carry flange sizes that have larger tunnels, but they might not be available in the store where you buy the pump. Call a local lactation consultant or breastfeeding mothers' group for information on how to get larger flange sizes. You can find information on breastfeeding resources and services in the *Pennsylvania Breastfeeding Referral Guide*. www.health.state.pa.us/breastfeeding

Worried that you are not pumping enough milk?

Relax! Newborns are born with tiny bellies and drink very small amounts the first few days. Overfeeding your newborn can result in spit-up and belly aches. Use the feeding guide below. Small babies (5 lbs.) will be at the lower end of the range; large babies (10 lbs.), at the higher end.

- Day 1: drops per feeding
- Day 2: drops to $\frac{1}{3}$ ounce per feeding
- Day 3: $\frac{1}{3}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ ounce per feeding
- Day 4: $\frac{1}{2}$ ounce to 1 ounce per feeding
- Day 5: 1 ounce to $1\frac{2}{3}$ ounce per feeding
- Day 6: $1\frac{1}{3}$ to 2 ounces per feeding
- Day 7: $1\frac{1}{2}$ to $2\frac{2}{3}$ ounces per feeding

How much milk should I expect to pump?

Expect to pump small amounts of milk when first starting out. During the first week, the guide below shows how much you can expect to pump **in 24 hours**.

- Day 1 = drops
- Day 2 = 3 ounces per day
- Day 3 = 8 ounces per day
- Day 4 = 12 ounces per day
- Day 5 = 16 ounces per day
- Day 6 = 20 ounces per day
- Day 7 = 20 ounces per day

As days go by, the volume of milk will increase to meet your baby's growing needs.

During the first month, most babies drink 24 ounces or less in 24 hours. After the first week or so, some mothers pump as much as 30 ounces in 24 hours. If so, keep it up! You can store the "bonus milk" in your freezer for later use. Pumping extra milk also helps you maintain a good supply until your baby is big enough to nurse at the breast. If you cannot pump extra, pump what your baby needs.

Rest baby's cheek on your bare breast while feeding a bottle of breast milk. Hold your baby skin-to-skin as much as you can. That will help with your milk production and help baby make the switch to feeding directly at the breast. After waiting a few weeks, your baby should be big enough to make the switch.

What if I cannot see or feel my nipples?

If you cannot see your nipples or feel the baby's suck, look in a mirror to get an idea of where your nipples are located. It may help to apply adhesive tape or band-aids as a marker to show you where to place your finger and thumb so that the nipple is between them.

Breastfeeding in public

If you are uncomfortable with breastfeeding in public places, you can feed your baby pumped milk when you are out. If you wish to nurse in public, here are some tips that women with large breasts have shared to reduce body exposure.

- Wear a matching T-shirt underneath your blouse. Cut a hole in the T-shirt large enough for baby to latch onto the breast and feel your skin on his/her face.
- Wear a tank top or a man's undershirt with no sleeves and large armholes to cover your midriff.

Yes, you can breastfeed!

