

Kirsten
Living with a stoma



Breastfeeding with a stoma

Some expectant / new mothers may wonder is it possible to breastfeed with a stoma? The answer is most definitely yes.

Whilst it may be daunting to breastfeed with a stoma, this factsheet will provide you with some practical tips to help you successfully breastfeed your baby.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) recommends exclusive breastfeeding for 6 months and continued breastfeeding with other foods until baby is 2 years old.

[WHO, 2022](#)

There is lots of support available to you on your breastfeeding journey. Your midwife will provide you with details of local support groups in your area.

Your stoma care nurse can offer excellent support and guidance, especially if there are changes to your body shape and profile as well as your stoma after pregnancy. We would advise you also discuss breastfeeding your baby with your GP in relation to any medications etc.

Here are some tips you may find useful when starting on your breastfeeding journey:

- If baby can wait, empty your stoma bag prior to feeding.
- Make sure YOU are comfortable, baby can be positioned around you. It's important you're able to maintain this position for the duration of the feed. This may mean lying down in bed or laying back on the sofa propped with pillows. There are plenty of positions in which to breastfeed.
- Have plenty of water and some snacks to hand.
- Enjoy lots of skin to skin contact with your baby, especially in the early weeks.
- Have plenty of pillows to hand, these will be useful to support you and baby.

Here are some different positions to try whilst breastfeeding:

- **Side lying:** lie on your side and place your baby on his or her side, facing your breast. You can put a pillow behind baby.
- **Laid-back feeding:** this involves feeding in a reclined position on a chair or in bed with baby on top of you.
- **Rugby hold:** the rugby hold, or clutch, is good if you have a stoma, as there's no pressure on the tummy. Sit in a chair with a cushion or pillow along your side. Position your baby at your side, supported by your arm or a pillow.
- **Cradle hold:** The most popular breastfeeding position with baby in your arms across the abdomen. This may feel a bit awkward when first starting out if you're worried about your bag filling etc.



You can find a whole range of support and advice on living with a stoma online. Simply scan or visit:
coloplastcharter.co.uk



Whatever position you choose to feed your baby, the acronym **CHINS** will help you get good attachment at the breast. This is essential in avoiding sore nipples:

Close: baby should be close to enable enough breast into mouth

Head free: allowing baby's chin to lead as they are attaching to the breast

In line: so baby doesn't have to twist their neck

Nose to nipple: just below baby's nose so that they root and tilt head backwards

Sustainable: the position should be comfortable for mother and child