

Breastfeeding, Baby & the Nervous System

A Parent's Wellness Guide to More Comfortable Feeding



Breastfeeding is natural—but that doesn't mean it's always easy.

Latch difficulties, uncomfortable feeding positions, tension, long feeding sessions, and a fussy baby can leave parents wondering:

“Is this normal, or could something else be making feeding harder?”

This guide will help you better understand some of the physical factors that can influence the breastfeeding experience, simple things you can try at home, and when it may be helpful to bring another member onto your breastfeeding support team.

Hi, I'm Dr. Christina —
chiropractor, mama, and
founder of Vitalise
Chiropractic.



Your body has just done something incredible. But postpartum isn't only about recovery — it's about reconnection. The shifts in posture, alignment, hormones, and emotional energy can be profound, and it's okay to give yourself the space to heal.

This guide will help you gently restore balance, reconnect to your body, and find daily habits that bring you back to center.

With care and compassion,

Dr. Christina Lowenthal, D.C. Vitalise Chiropractic

Breastfeeding Is a Whole-Body Activity

For your baby, breastfeeding requires much more than simply opening their mouth.

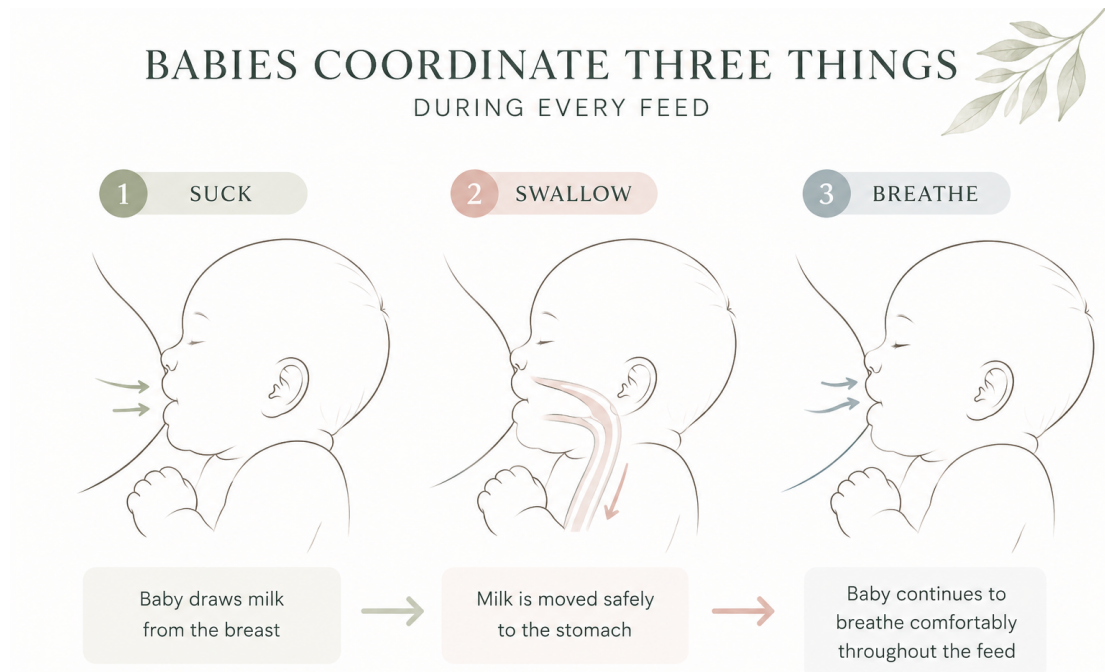
During a feeding, your baby needs to coordinate:

Suck → Swallow → Breathe

At the same time, they need to comfortably:

- Turn their head toward the breast
 - Open their mouth
 - Move their jaw and tongue
 - Maintain a comfortable position
- Coordinate sucking, swallowing, and breathing

Because feeding involves the whole body, tension or difficulty with movement may sometimes make feeding more challenging.



Signs worth paying attention to

You may notice your baby:

- Strongly prefers feeding on one side
- Has difficulty turning their head one direction
 - Frequently pops on and off the breast
- Seems uncomfortable in certain feeding positions
- Has difficulty getting or maintaining a comfortable latch
 - Becomes frustrated or fatigued during feeds
 - Has noticeable body stiffness or tension
 - Seems uncomfortable during tummy time

These signs don't necessarily mean something is wrong, but they can be helpful clues to discuss with your pediatrician, IBCLC, or other qualified provider.

Why Might a Baby Have Tension?



Birth is a significant physical experience for both mom and baby.

A baby's movement and comfort can be influenced by many factors, including their position during pregnancy, their birth experience, individual anatomy, feeding mechanics, and other health or developmental factors.

This is why I encourage parents to look at the **whole baby**, rather than focusing only on the mouth.

When I evaluate an infant in my office, I'm interested in questions such as:

Can baby comfortably turn their head both ways?

How does their body move?

Do we notice areas of tension or asymmetry?

Are certain positions noticeably less comfortable?

The goal is not to assume every breastfeeding challenge comes from the spine—or that chiropractic replaces lactation care.

It's to identify whether musculoskeletal factors may be one piece of the puzzle.

Where Chiropractic Might Fit

Pediatric chiropractic care focuses on the musculoskeletal system and how a baby's body is moving and functioning.

When I see a breastfeeding family, I assess areas such as:

- Head and neck movement
 - Spinal and body mobility
 - Areas of muscular tension
- Postural preferences or asymmetries
- Comfort with different positions

If chiropractic care is appropriate, infant techniques are modified for the baby's age and size and are different from techniques commonly associated with adult chiropractic care.

Chiropractic is not a replacement for:

- Your pediatrician
 - An IBCLC or lactation professional
- Evaluation of oral ties or feeding disorders
- Speech/feeding therapy when indicated
- Medical evaluation when baby isn't gaining weight appropriately or has other concerning symptoms

The best breastfeeding support is often collaborative.



Don't Forget About Mom

Breastfeeding can also place a surprising amount of physical demand on your body.

Hours spent feeding, rocking, carrying, pumping, and looking down at your baby can contribute to discomfort.

Common areas of tension include:

Neck → Looking down toward baby

Shoulders → Holding and supporting baby

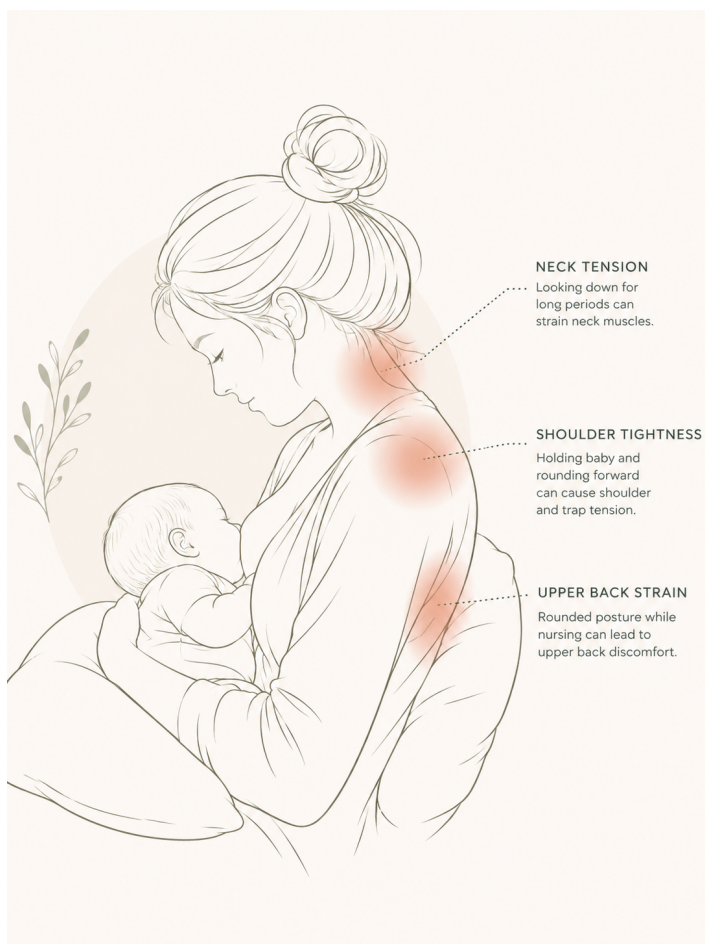
Mid-back → Rounded feeding posture

Low back → Unsupported sitting

Wrists & hands → Supporting baby's head and body

Your comfort matters too.

When you're constantly uncomfortable, it can make an already demanding season feel even harder.



The 30-Second Post-Feeding Reset

After feeding,
give your body
30 seconds.

1. Roll your shoulders backward × 5

2. Gently look left → center → right

3. Open your chest and bring your shoulders back

4. Take 3 slow breaths

INHALE
through your nose
•
HOLD
for a moment
•
EXHALE
through your mouth

Then go back to *loving on that baby.* ♥

During feeds, remember:

Bring baby to you—not your body to baby.

Use pillows or other support when helpful so you aren't constantly leaning forward or holding your body in an uncomfortable position.

Who Should Be on Your Breastfeeding Team?

You don't have to figure everything out alone.

Depending on what you and your baby are experiencing, your support team may include:

Pediatrician

Monitors baby's overall health, growth, development, and medical concerns.

IBCLC / Lactation Professional

Evaluates latch, milk transfer, positioning, supply concerns, pumping, and feeding strategies.

Prenatal, Postpartum & Pediatric Chiropractor

Evaluates musculoskeletal movement, mobility, tension, and asymmetries that may affect baby's comfort.

Pediatric Dentist / ENT

May evaluate oral anatomy or suspected oral restrictions when appropriate.

SLP / Feeding Therapist / OT

May help evaluate and treat oral-motor, swallowing, sensory, or feeding difficulties.

You may not need every provider on this list.

The goal is finding the right support for your baby's specific needs.

When Should I Ask For Help?



Reach out to your pediatrician and/or lactation professional if you're concerned about feeding, particularly if your baby isn't gaining weight appropriately, isn't producing an expected number of wet diapers, appears dehydrated, has difficulty breathing, is excessively sleepy or difficult to wake for feeds, or you have other concerns about their health.

For non-emergency breastfeeding challenges, consider asking for additional support if:

- Feeding consistently hurts
 - Baby struggles to latch or stay latched
- Feedings regularly feel exhausting or stressful
 - Baby strongly favors one side
- You notice persistent head-turning or body asymmetry
- You're concerned about baby's movement or comfort
 - Something simply doesn't feel right

You don't have to wait until feeding feels impossible before asking for support.

A Final Note From Dr. Christina

Breastfeeding can be beautiful, challenging, emotional—and sometimes all three within the same feeding.

My goal is never to tell a parent how they *should* feed their baby.

My goal is to help families feel supported, heard, and confident in finding the resources they need.

As a family chiropractor with a special focus on prenatal and pediatric care, I love being one part of that support system.

If you're wondering whether your baby's movement or tension—or your own postpartum discomfort—could be contributing to a difficult breastfeeding experience, I'd be happy to talk with you.

Dr. Christina Lowenthal, D.C.

Vitalise Chiropractic

Where wellness and family come together.

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