

Bra Fitting During Pregnancy

During your pregnancy your abdomen and lower rib cage increase in size to allow for the growth of the baby. This will cause the under band measurement (right underneath your breasts) to increase during the pregnancy, from the first trimester onwards.

Your breasts start changing in preparation for feeding a baby early after conception. Women often find their breasts are tender, and this may be their first indication that they are pregnant. Breasts are likely to increase about one cup size during the first trimester.

1. Ensure the maternity bra is fitted firmly on its tightest fitting so that there is space to grow into as the rib cage expands.
2. Ensure the breasts are fully covered by the bra cup to support the growing and changing breasts. A deep centre on the front of the bra is a good guide to ensure a fuller cup. Even if this is a style you're not used to you may find it more comfortable with heavier breasts.
3. Ensure the fabric is not pressing on the breast tissue. Check the top of the breast and under the arm especially.
4. Choose a soft-cup bra rather than one with a wire – with the body and breasts constantly changing, a wired bra may fit well when bought, but may not fit in a couple of weeks time!
5. Get re-fitted/checked regularly during pregnancy to ensure the bra is supporting the breasts if you choose to wear an underwired bra, and/or if you feel uncomfortable in the bra you're currently wearing.
6. If there is a large difference in breast size between left and right, fit the larger breast, and use a soft filler in the smaller cup to even up the look. Differences in breast size are often accentuated during pregnancy.

Bra Fitting For Breastfeeding

Once your baby has been born, your rib cage will return to its pre-pregnancy size (unless a lot of extra weight has been put on, in addition to baby weight). The rib cage starts to reduce in size when reaching term at 37 weeks.

The best time to have a fitting for a nursing bra is about 36 weeks, when your back is at its biggest. The bra fitter will make the necessary adjustments, and it is easier to get the fitting done before baby arrives, so that you are ready for feeding. The last thing you need to think about when baby is born, is to go bra shopping!

1. Ensure the bra is fitted on its loosest fitting (as in a normal bra fitting) to allow for the back to reduce in size, and for wash and wear. This will ensure the bra can be tightened to make it firm, so that it is supporting the breasts.

2. Ensure there is space in the top of the cup for when the milk 'comes in'. Simply slide your hand under the fabric on the top of the cup to check if there is space for the fabric to be pushed outwards. Remember that breast pads will also take up some of the extra fabric, but this check is usually sufficient.

3. Check the top of the cup is not pressing on the breast. The fuller the breast, the higher the cup will need to be on the breast, and blocked ducts are less likely to occur. However, if the cup is too big there will be wrinkling in the fabric and the breasts won't be supported.

4. Check under the arms. If the cup is too high, it will cause discomfort and chaffing. If it is too low it will press into the breast tissue and milk ducts situated under the arm.

5. Fit to the larger breast if there is a marked difference in size between the breasts. A filler in the smaller breast may make it more comfortable or discreet when going out. Baby may also prefer one side to the other, which may or may not be your larger breast! This may have an effect on your breast sizes and shape.

This is only a guide and every bra will fit differently. There is more information about measuring and sizes on the [bras4mums](#) website. If you want to talk through how your bra is fitting, or about how your breasts are changing during your pregnancy and getting ready for nursing baby, please ring or [email](#) our bra fitters who are here to help you.

bras4mums offer the widest selection of maternity and nursing bras in the UK 28-50 A – L cups. Unlimited free UK exchanges supported by bra fitters to help you make the right choice.