

Wearing Your Baby

Carrying (or wearing) your baby in a sling or cloth carrier is a practice found throughout history and around the world. Current research shows that wearing your baby has a positive impact on a baby's development. Many parents find baby wearing convenient and like the feeling of having their baby close in certain situations. Parents with back problems may find wearing their baby in an ergonomic carrier to be more comfortable than holding their baby.

Baby wearing is in direct contrast to the old myth that holding young babies will cause them to become "spoiled" or develop the need to be held all the time. Research continues to suggest that when young babies are held frequently they learn to feel safe and secure and they learn to trust other humans. This can actually lead a baby to be more independent as they get older. Trust is vital in order for humans to develop healthy relationships and interact with other humans.

Many child development specialists feel that babies who are worn in carriers and slings:

- **Tend to cry less.** This is an observation anthropologists have seen around the world.
- **Spend more time in a quiet alert state,** which is when babies are most content and most able to interact and learn from the world around them. At this time, being in a carrier allows babies to be "where the action is." This allows them to absorb more from their environment while feeling safe and secure.
- **Appear to be better organized.** Being in a carrier mimics the rhythm of being in utero. The familiar heartbeat and breathing of mom, as well as the rhythm of walking, makes for a smoother transition to independent life, or life on the outside.

In many cultures, young girls watch their mother and other women wear their babies. This helps them learn how to wear their baby. If you have not grown up watching a baby safely "worn," the following guidelines may help you. Practice will help you become more comfortable.

- Baby carriers/slings should hold your baby **snug against your body**, rather than allow your baby to dangle from your body (like a purse or backpack).
- **Your baby's bottom should be at or above the level of your naval.** This makes wearing your baby more comfortable and keeps you better balanced.
- Your baby's chin should not be against your baby's chest. This will keep your baby's airway free. In addition, **your baby's face should not be covered** and should be visible.
- Older babies should have their knees higher than their bottoms. This takes pressure off of their inner thighs and distributes it to the back of their legs and buttocks.
- A two shoulder carrier will distribute baby's weight more evenly on a parent's shoulders and is usually more comfortable for longer periods of wear.

MilkWorks



Community Breastfeeding Center

5930 S. 58th Street
(in the Trade Center)
Lincoln, NE 68516
(402) 423-6402

MilkWorks O
10818 Elm Street
Rockbrook Village
Omaha, NE 68144
(402) 502-0617

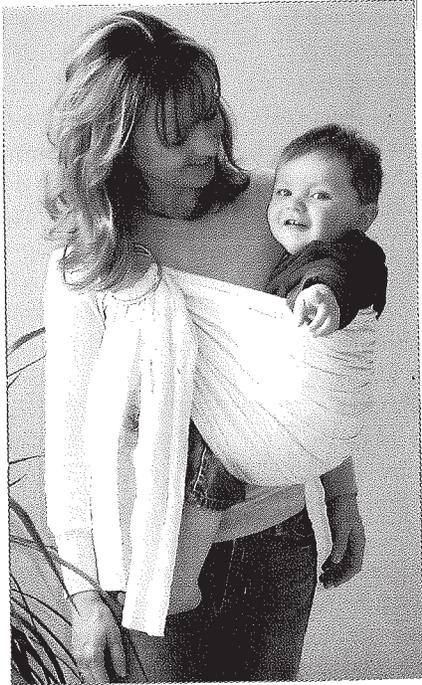
For additional
information:



www.milkworks.org

Types of Baby Carriers

There are 3 common types of carriers:



Ring Sling

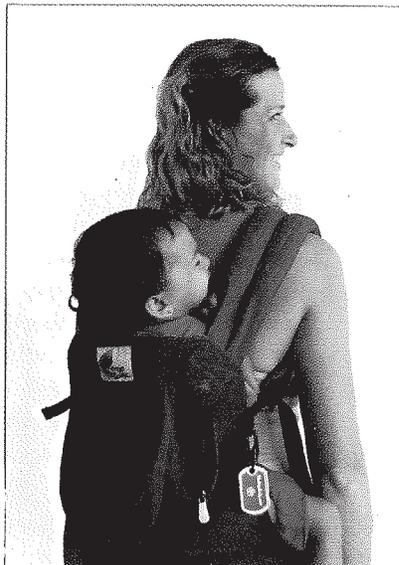
A one shoulder, quick-to-learn and quick-to-put-on carrier. It easily adjusts to different wearers.



Wrap Carrier

A two shoulder carrier that takes more time to learn and put on, but is very comfortable and easily adjusts to different wearers.

Generally more comfortable for longer term wear.



Soft Carrier

A two shoulder carrier especially good for older babies and toddlers. It tends to be easier to learn than a wrap carrier and is often more “masculine” looking, thus it is often favored by dads.