



2-4 Months

Your baby from two to four months

Supporting your family during
your baby's first year



2-4
Months



Healthy eating and active play are important for your baby.

This booklet provides information on your baby's health and tips for parents' health too.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR YOUR BABY AT 2 - 4 MONTHS



Nutrition

- Give only breastmilk (no other food, fluids or water) until your baby is 6 months old
- Breastmilk is the best food/drink for your baby's physical, mental and emotional development and has all the right water and nutrients your baby needs until around 6 months



Active play

- Place your baby on his stomach (tummy time) for 10 - 15 minutes, 3 times each day. Make sure baby is awake, supervised and mostly happy.
- Play, talk, sing and tell stories with your baby.
- No screen-time for children under 2 years (time spent watching or using screens, such as TV, computers and tablets, phones)



Sleep

Baby will sleep for around 12 to 16 hours in total (including naps) during a 24-hour period.



Immunisation

At 4 months of age your baby should receive immunisations (vaccinations) to protect against some serious infectious diseases. Refer to your child's Personal Health Record (Blue Book) and talk to your Child and Family Health Nurse or Family Doctor.



BABY FEED, PLAY AND SLEEP

As your baby grows, their feeding and sleeping habits also change, and you will get to learn their/his signals and know what they need.

Babies like to have a routine of feeding, playing and sleeping as this helps your baby feel safe and secure. It may help to do things in a similar order each day.



BREASTFEED

- At 4 months babies may want to feed up to 6 - 8 times in 24 hours
- Feed whenever baby wants. Continue responding to their feeding cues/signs (Please, refer to the Healthy Beginnings 0-2 Month booklet for feeding cues)
- As baby grows and becomes more efficient at sucking, feeds might become shorter in time and your breasts will adjust to these needs
- Start a feed with one breast. Feed until the breast is softer and lighter. If baby is still showing hunger cues/signs, then change to the other breast.

Express feeding

There may be occasions, such as returning to work, when you need to express your breastmilk and then cup or bottle feed. You can pump milk by using your hand, hand pumps or electric pumps. Talk to a Child and Family Health Nurse about how you can purchase or hire this device.

How do I know that my baby is getting enough breastmilk?

How do I know that my baby is getting enough breastmilk? **Look for these signs:**

Nappies

At least 5 heavy, clear-coloured wet nappies (on average over 24 hours)

Baby's poos are soft and yellow-mustard in colour

Growth

Baby is gaining weight, growth in-length and head circumference

Skin

Baby's skin colour looks healthy and the skin springs back when gently pressed

Alertness

Baby is alert and mostly happy when awake

Other signs

You feel that your breasts are softer and lighter after breastfeeding





LOOKING AFTER MUM AND DAD

The transition to parenthood is a time of great change and is an opportunity to build a strong family. As new parents, make sure you take time to look after yourself and each other too, and do activities you enjoy.

Looking after mum's psychological health

Meeting the demands of being a mother can be challenging and overwhelming. Some ways to look after yourself include the following:

Sharing the care: Asking family or friends to help with tasks such as laundry, cleaning, cooking or shopping.

Social interaction:

- talking with friends and family
- visiting your local library or council to find out about groups in your area
- meet other mums e.g. at the park, at language classes or online forums

Physical activity and nutrition:

- aim for 20 - 30 minutes of physical activity per day, such as walking
- eat a variety of foods from the 5 food groups
- join the 'Get Healthy' service to help you with your healthy eating and physical activity goals. You can make a free call to 'Get Healthy' on 1300 806 258

Mood and emotion: If you are not enjoying your usual activities or feeling sad, talk to your Child and Family Health Nurse or Family Doctor.

Developing dad's relationship with baby

A positive and involved relationship between a dad and baby can make a big difference to baby's early development, and later in life too. Mums and dads often parent differently. These differences can help baby's development.

Some ways that dad can build a strong relationship with baby include:

- Singing, reading, and talking with baby
- Changing baby's nappies
- Taking care of baby so mum can have a break
- Calming / settling baby to sleep





Who is the Child and Family Health Nurse?

Child and family health nurses (CFHNs) are specialist registered nurses who provide free health checks for babies and children aged 0-5 years. **They can talk with you and your family about:**

- Your child's health, growth and development
- Feeding, sleeping, settling, playing and safety for your child
- You and your family's health
- Connecting you with community activities and other health services

To find your local CFHNs clinic, you can ask your Family Doctor or local library. **You can also visit:**

www.health.nsw.gov.au/child-family-health-services



NEXT BOOKLET

4-6 MONTHS

Don't speak English or need help with interpretation?

Free Call: 13 14 50

Telephone interpreters can help you to call national support lines. If you don't speak any English then just say in English "Arabic" and they will put you through to the Arabic interpreter, who can then help make the call.

FOR SUPPORT AND MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT

HB

Healthy Beginnings

SLHD-HealthyBeginnings@health.nsw.gov.au
www.healthybeginnings.net.au
02 9515 9055

HD

Health Direct Australia

www.healthdirect.org.au
1800 022 222

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Health



FEEDING YOUR BABY

Continue exclusive breastfeeding

The World Health Organization recommends exclusive breastfeeding (giving only breastmilk) until your baby is 6 months old. Water and other fluids or food will make baby full and reduce their hunger and this can interfere with your breastmilk supply.

Breastfeeding has many benefits for baby, including:

- strengthening the closeness/bonding between baby and mother
- promoting healthy physical growth and brain development
- protecting from infections and sickness
- lowering the risk of food allergies

Breastfeeding challenges and milk supply

Many mothers worry about their milk supply, but nearly all mothers do produce enough milk for their babies. The amount of milk a mother produces depends on how much and how frequently baby sucks at the breast. A mother's body will produce milk according to the demand.

If you are experiencing any problems feeding, any breast or nipple pain or are concerned about your milk supply, talk to your local Child and Family Health Nurse (CFHN), Lactation Consultant or Family Doctor.

Wait until your baby is around 6 months old before introducing foods

When your baby is around 6 months old, your baby will begin to show signs of being developmentally ready for food. **These signs may include:**

- they no longer poke out their tongue and push the food out of their mouth (this reflex prevents choking and indicates your baby is not ready for solids)
- showing an interest in food (with their eyes, gestures and sounds)
- holding their head up and sitting up without support

At around 3 to 4 months you may notice your baby start to dribble more, put their hands to/in their mouth, and seem interested about food. These are normal signs of starting to grow their teeth and discover their world.

Baby food products are widely advertised and expensive. Your baby does not need these foods. No food or water are needed until baby is around 6 months old (unless you have been advised by a health professional).





PLAY

As your baby grows you will see them develop physically and mentally at different ages and stages.

At 2 - 4 months, developmental signs may include:

- Sitting upright with hand support and better head control
- Pushing themselves up with their hands and rolling from their tummy to back
- Putting their hand in their mouth
- Beginning to creep and crawl
- Reaching out to grab things such as toys and watch out for your hair!
- Turning their head to sounds such as your voice

You are your baby's best teacher

Play is the natural way that babies learn, and interaction with you is one of the best things you can do for their development. **At this age, you could do the following:**

- watch baby while awake on his stomach, 10 - 15 minutes, 3 times a day (Please, refer to Healthy Beginnings 0-2 Month booklet)
- tell stories, use soft baby books
- walk in the pram
- join a parent group or playgroup
- sing songs or nursery rhymes

It is best to avoid using screens with your baby, like TV or tablets. Other play activities are much better for baby's development and psychological health.



SLEEP

- Even babies with lots of energy need time to rest. Follow your baby's cues/signs that say 'I'm tired', such as staring into the distance, yawning, crying and losing interest in people or toys.
- At around 4 months, babies may cry more, need more comfort, maybe difficult to settle or wake more often. This is a normal developmental stage.

Ideas for settling/calming baby

- Gentle touching or stroking baby's head, leg or back
- Rhythmic, gentle patting or rocking mattress beside baby, or slowly rocking the cot
- Using a soothing, gentle voice to whisper or sing
- Cradling or holding baby firmly at their shoulder and hip (supporting their head) and gently rocking back and forth
- Wrapping baby gently but firmly, then place baby in their cot on their back
- Taking the baby for a picnic in the pram or sling

For more advice on settling the infant, talk to Tresillian www.tresillian.org.au/-**contact-us**, your Child and Family Health Nurse, or visit www.karitane.com.au

WHAT TO CONSIDER WHEN YOUR BABY IS 2 - 4 MONTHS

USEFUL LINKS AND SERVICES

YOUR BABY'S HEALTH

www.breastfeeding.asn.au 1800 686 268	Continue exclusive breastfeeding
Raising Children Network www.raisingchildren.net.au/newborns/play-learning Tresillian www.tresillian.org.au (Karitane) www.karitane.com.au	Active play: watching the baby when he/she lies down on his/her stomach, play by reading, singing, talking
Baby cues/signs video guides www.raisingchildren.net.au/newborns/behaviour/crying-colic/baby-cues	Sleep and settling
Talk to a Child and Family Health Nurse or Doctor	Immunisation

YOUR HEALTH

1300 806 258 - Get Healthy www.gethealthynsw.com.au	Physical activity and healthy eating
Beyondblue - 1300 224 636 www.beyondblue.org.au	Psychological health and wellbeing for mum and dad
Perinatal Anxiety & Depression Australia (PANDA) 1300 726 306 www.panda.org.au	

SOCIAL SUPPORT

www.health.nsw.gov.au/child-family-health-services	Connect with a clinic administered by a Child and Family Health Nurse
Resourcing parents NSW www.resourcingparents.nsw.gov.au	Help with parenting
Playgroups NSW www.playgroupnsw.org.au/	Join parent groups
Talk to parenting forums, friends and family	Connect with other mums

HOME, FAMILY AND WORK

Kidsafe NSW www.kidsafensw.org/	Creating a safe environment for your baby
Raising Children Network www.raisingchildren.net.au/grown-ups	Raising Children Network - for parents www.raisingchildren.net.au/grown-ups