



0-2 Months

A Healthy Beginning for Your Baby from Birth

Supporting your family during your baby's first year



0-2 Months



A HEALTHY BEGINNING FOR YOUR BABY FROM BIRTH

Your baby's nutrition and active play is important right from the start.

This booklet provides accurate, general information based on the latest scientific evidence for your baby's health in the first months and how to look after your health too.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR YOUR BABY AT 0-2 MONTHS



Nutrition

- Exclusively breastfeed (give only breast milk) for the first 6 months of life
- Wait until around 6 months of age to start introducing water and a variety of solid foods, starting with iron rich foods (e.g. mashed meat, fish, chicken or legumes)
- Continue breastfeeding until at least two years of age



Active play

- Interactive play with you, your partner and family is encouraged from birth
- Babies, toddlers and pre-schoolers should not be kept inactive for more than one hour at a time, with the exception of sleeping
- Children under 2 years of age should have no screen-time, including no television, DVDs, computers, iPads, iPhones or any other electronic games



Sleep

- Infants aged 0-3 months are recommended to have a total of 14 to 17 hours of good quality sleep, including naps during a 24-hour period



Immunisation

- At birth your baby should receive a hepatitis B vaccine
- At 6 - 8 weeks your baby is due for a health check. They should receive 3 vaccines, to protect your baby against some serious infectious diseases
- This can be done by your Child and Family Health Nurse, family doctor or paediatrician



FEEDING YOUR BABY

Breastfeeding

Exclusive breastfeeding is recommended until your baby is 6 months old. Breast milk has all the water and nutrients your baby needs for the first 6 months of life.

This means that your baby does not need to be given any first foods (solids) such as rice porridge, mashed fruit or vegetables, or any drinks such as water, juice, non-human milk or formula (unless you are advised by your Child and Family Health Nurse (CFHN), family doctor, or paediatrician.

Breastfeeding promotes physical growth and brain development, enhances immunity and brings lifelong health benefits to your child. It also helps establish a closeness/bond between you and your baby. Refer to your 'Antenatal' booklet for the benefits of breastfeeding.

Learning to breastfeed

During the early weeks breastfeeding can be difficult. It can take up to 6-8 weeks to get through some breastfeeding problems and to become confident about breastfeeding. Remember, you and your baby are learning how to breastfeed together - it takes time.

Tips for successful breastfeeding

- Cradle your baby in your arms so they are facing you, chest to chest.
- Ensure your baby's nose or top lip is opposite your nipple, move your baby towards your breast (not your breast towards the baby).
- Have your baby's chin touching your breast.
- Support your baby's body while feeding with your arms or pillows.

Expressing

There may be occasions when your baby cannot feed at the breast, such as returning to work, and you may need to express and cup or bottle feed. You can express by using your hand, hand-held pumps or electric pumps.



Do I have enough milk for my baby?

Since you cannot see how much breastmilk your baby had, you may worry that baby does not get enough, or you do not produce enough.

Most mothers can make more than enough milk for their baby (or babies!). The more your baby sucks at the breast the more you will increase your milk supply.

During the first months your baby may have hungry days when they need to feed more often for a day or two to maintain or build up your supply.

You may find it helpful to call the breastfeeding helpline (1800 686 268), or talk to your Child and Family Health Nurse or doctor to check that your baby is feeding well, or if you are concerned about your baby's appetite or growth.

Common problems during breastfeeding

Sometimes mothers experience problems with breastfeeding such as breast fullness, sore nipples or breast infection. It can be unexpected and sudden. These can all be easily treated.

Getting professional help and support

Breastfeeding will be an enjoyable and comfortable experience. If you have any questions, concerns or are not feeling confident breastfeeding your baby there are services that can support you and help build confidence.

There is nothing wrong with asking for help. Getting support early will mean you can overcome the problem faster.

Support Services

Talk to your Midwife, Child and Family Health Nurse, Lactation consultant/breastfeeding support clinic, or doctor. You can also contact:

- Australian Breastfeeding Association
1800 686 268
- Lactation Consultants
www.lcanz.org/
- If you need an interpreter, please first call the free Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS National) on 131 450, then ask them to call the Breastfeeding helpline on 1800 686 268.





Cup or bottle feeding

If you are unable to feed your baby at the breast, it is important that you or your partner interact with your baby when cup or bottle feeding.

This includes holding your baby close, giving them eye contact, smiling and enjoying this time together.

For safe feeding remember to:

- hold your baby upright for feeds while supporting their head
- wait for your baby to accept the teat by opening their mouth
- keep teat full of milk
- offer them short breaks during the feed to give the baby a rest so you can see if they are still hungry or full
- never leave baby alone with a bottle

A bottle may take about 20 - 30 minutes of sucking time for the baby to feel satisfied.

Contact Healthy Beginnings via email SLHD-HealthyBeginnings@health.nsw.gov.au for further support and information.

How do I know when and how many times a day my baby needs to be fed?

To know how many feeds your baby needs you need to watch out for and respond to their feeding cues. In the first few weeks your baby will want to be fed around every 2 - 5 hours. Most babies will breastfeed 8 - 12 times within 24 hours.

BABY FEEDING CUES/SIGNS

Your baby will try to tell you when it is hungry or had enough to eat. It's important to get to know and recognise these different signs.

Early cues - "I'm hungry"



Stirring



Mouth opening



Turning head /seeking/rooting

Mid cues - "I'm really hungry"



Stretching



Increasing movement



Hand to mouth

Late cues - "Calm me, then feed me"



Crying



Agitated body movements



Colour turning red

Fullness cues "I've had enough to eat"

Stops sucking

Closes mouth, turns away from the nipple

Falls asleep

Time to calm crying baby

Cuddling

Skin-to-skin on chest

Talking

Stroking



ACTIVE PLAY WITH YOUR BABY

Playing with your baby is important for their brain and speech development. You and your partner / family can try the following:

- Putting your baby on their tummy 2-3 times throughout the day for 1-2 minutes.
- Taking them for a walk, then you can get your exercise too.
- Singing a song or reading a story

Tummy time happens when your baby lies on its tummy with weight on the forearms. Tummy time has many benefits for baby.

Brain

Helps my brain develop

Before you start make sure:

- I am awake and happy
- I am on a firm surface
- I am supervised at all times



I love Playtime -Tummy Time!

Head

Prevents me having a flat head

Eyes

Develops my visual skills

Arms

Strengthens my arms
for reaching and
crawling

Back

Strengthens my back

Legs

Helps me develop
muscles for crawling

Neck

Strengthens my neck

Tummy

Helps with my
tummy issues like
constipation, gas
& wind

"Mum and dad started putting me on my tummy when I was just one week old! I didn't like it at first, but now I like doing it every day, a few times a day. I'm stronger now and can even do it for 15 minutes!"



24 HOURS WITH YOUR NEW BABY

For the first few months of life your baby's day will include a feed, play, sleep cycle. Every baby is different and the cycle will change as your baby grows.

The key is to learn your baby's signals including when to feed them following hunger and fullness signs, when they are sleepy and how to include play time throughout the day.

BABY FEED, PLAY AND SLEEP CYCLE



I only have a small tummy so I need to feed regularly, 8 - 12 times a day!

I might take an hour for every feed!



Play with baby helps their development.

Put your baby on their tummy 2-3 times throughout the day for 1-2 minutes

Sing a song or read a story

I might wake up regularly at night for the first 6 months



Most babies sleep between 1 - 4 hours at a time (14 - 17 hours total over 24 hours)

Mum needs to try and sleep when she can



I might look like I am in pain even though I am not

I might cry for 5 hours or more every day



I might cry more each week, and mostly when I am 2 months old, but less when I am 3-5 months old.

I might start crying then stop, but you don't know why. Or I might not stop crying no matter what you do

Infant crying is normal

All babies cry, and some cry a lot! Babies usually cry more when they are 2 months old than when they are first born, and then their crying reduces. This is normal. But if you are worried about your baby, please contact your Child Family Health Nurse or doctor.



LOOKING AFTER YOURSELF

Getting help from family and friends

Some cultures encourage mothers to stay at home after the baby is born. It is really important that you receive help and support from family, friends, or neighbours, join a mother's group, or cultural organisations or make time for regular calls with family living overseas.

Don't worry about housework: you and your baby are more important than the house being tidy. Ask your partner and family to help with this and things like shopping, meal preparation and laundry.



Sharing the care

The transition to becoming a family is a joyful experience but it can also be physically and emotionally stressful on you and your partner.

Your partner and family can share baby's care by doing activities like:

- taking care of the baby for small breaks
- placing the baby on your partner's chest for skin-to-skin contact
- bathing and massaging the baby
- changing the baby's nappy
- cuddling and settling
- carrying the baby in a sling or carrier
- putting baby on their tummy - tummy time
- singing, reading, and talking with baby

All of these activities will help dad and family members bond with the baby. Don't worry if they do things differently, these differences in handling baby can have a positive effect on brain development.

Getting active after birth

When you feel ready, starting to do some gentle exercise helps your body recover, and will also help you feel better. It is normal that you will have interrupted sleep looking after a new baby and you will be tired. Try to rest when you can and try to get some exercise every day.

Start gradually with 30 minutes a day. Try:

- Walking in a pram group with other mothers
- Walking with your partner or family
- Yoga or light stretching at home
- Light gardening
- Exercises for your pelvic floor muscles (refer to 'Antenatal' booklet)

Your nutrition

Eating healthy, nutritious food is important to keep healthy, and give you energy to look after your All new parents need to keep their energy levels up.

- Eat a variety of foods from the 5 food groups:



Vegetables and legumes/beans



Fruits



Wholegrain breads and cereals



Dairy



Protein rich food such as meat and meat alternatives

- Eat plenty of vegetables. Aim for half of a plate of vegetables, one quarter of a plate of protein rich foods, and one quarter of a plate of foods such as rice, bread, potatoes.
- Eat healthy snacks, such as fruit (fresh, tinned or dried), nuts, cheese or yoghurt.
- Drink plenty of water



About 1/2 plate of vegetables

1/4 plate of protein rich foods (e.g. chickpeas, tofu, meat, eggs)



1/4 plate of rice, noodles, potatoes, slice bread

Breastfeeding and your diet

It is normal to feel hungrier when you are breastfeeding as your body needs more energy to make milk. Making breastmilk uses extra fluid, so you may be more thirsty than usual too.

When you breastfeed, your body absorbs the nutrients from food better, and uses some of the fat stores from when you were pregnant. This is why breastfeeding can help you lose weight.

In some cultures, women are advised to eat a lot of sweet foods or high fat foods to produce more milk. In fact, scientific evidence suggests that particular foods have very little effect on milk production.

<https://www.breastfeeding.asn.au/bfinfo/breastfeeding-fact-or-fiction>

Your emotional wellbeing

Soon after giving birth, you may feel like crying, feel anxious or moody. This is called the 'baby blues', which is experienced by almost 80% of women.

These feelings usually last for only a few days. You may also:

- have a persistent low mood
- be unable to do daily chores or enjoy your normal activities
- feel like running away
- not feel like eating or overeat
- be unable to rest even when baby is sleeping
- cry often but for no reason
- have low confidence or low self esteem

If you or your partner have any of these symptoms for longer than 1 - 2 weeks it is important you seek help early from your Doctor, Child and Family Health Nurse, or contact:

- Perinatal Anxiety & Depression Australia (PANDA) - 1300 726 306 www.panda.org.au/
- beyondblue - 1300 224 636 www.beyondblue.org.au/
- NSW Mental Health Line - 1800 011 511

In an emergency, telephone 000 or go to a Hospital Emergency Department.

If you need an interpreter, please first call the free Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS National) on 131 450, then ask them to call the service you need.

WHAT TO CONSIDER DURING YOUR BABY'S FIRST MONTHS



YOUR BABY'S HEALTH

- Establishing breastfeeding with your baby
- Tummy time
- Feed, play, sleep cycle
- Sleep and settling
- Immunisation



SOCIAL SUPPORT

- Early Childhood Health Centres
- General Practitioner/ Paediatrician
- Lactation Consultants
- Keep connected with other mums: Parenting forums and groups



YOUR HEALTH

- Getting support and sharing baby's care
- Healthy eating
- Breastfeeding and nutrition
- Physical activity
- Emotional health



HOME, FAMILY AND WORK

- Infant CPR
- Creating a safe environment for your baby



Next Booklet

2-4
MONTHS

Need an interpreter?

Call the free Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS National) on 131 450. If you don't speak any English then just say in English "Mandarin" and they will put you through to the Mandarin interpreter and can then help phone the health service/number you need.

FOR SUPPORT AND MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT

HB

Healthy Beginnings
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www.healthybeginnings.net.au
02 9515 9055

HD

Health Direct Australia
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