



Government of Western Australia  
Child and Adolescent Health Service  
WA Country Health Service



# Your baby

Edition 2  
2023



# 4-12

Months

health

family

development



The Child and Adolescent Health Service and WA Country Health Service are here to support you to raise a happy and healthy child.



This magazine includes a range of information and advice for your baby's life between 4 and 12 months. The articles are based on current 'best practice', and have been written by experienced health professionals and reviewed by a wide range of families.

The magazine has been designed to be used together with your baby's Purple Book by providing extra background information about your baby's growth and health.

### Acknowledgement of country and people

The Child and Adolescent Health Service and the WA Country Health Service acknowledge Aboriginal people of the many traditional lands and language groups of Western Australia.

We acknowledge the wisdom of Aboriginal Elders both past and present, and pay respect to Aboriginal communities of today.

### Have your say

We also welcome your feedback to help us continue improving this magazine and how we work with families – see back cover.



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## Child health nurses

Child health nurses are specially trained in child and family health, and work in local child health centres.

- They offer health and development checks at key stages of your child's life.
- They can assist with the many aspects of parenting and family health.
- They can link you to local services and doctors in your community, as well as hospitals and other health professionals when needed.

Your child health nurse appointments are a great opportunity to discuss your baby's health and development. The nurse will check that your baby is growing and learning new skills as expected. The visits are also a good time to talk about how you are doing – how you're feeling and coping, and any concerns you are having looking after your new baby.

**We recommend you visit the child health nurse when your child turns:**

- 4 months
- 12 months
- 2 years

**You can also visit or contact your nurse at any other time if you are worried or have any questions.**

### Booking

If you live in the Perth metropolitan area you can make appointments by calling **1300 749 869** or register for an appointment at [cahs.health.wa.gov.au/purplebook](http://cahs.health.wa.gov.au/purplebook)

If you live outside of the metro area please contact your local child health centre for a booking.

To find your local child health centre (metro and non-metro) visit [health.wa.gov.au/Services-Search](http://health.wa.gov.au/Services-Search), or Google 'child health centre'.



Always bring your baby's Purple Book (All about me) to your appointments.

### Drop-in sessions

Some centres offer these when you want to:

- see the nurse for a quick question
- get parenting information and support.

You don't need an appointment – your nurse will tell you about local drop-in sessions.

**★ If you think your baby is sick, you need to see a doctor. Your child health nurse cannot help when your baby is sick.**

### Other services

If needed, the Child and Adolescent Health Service and WA Country Health Service offer families additional help in areas such as Aboriginal Health, Child Development and school health.

You can also self-refer to the Child Development Service if you have concerns about your baby's development (see page 9).

## Parenting groups

Ask your nurse about free parenting groups in your area, or visit [cahs.health.wa.gov.au/ParentingGroups](http://cahs.health.wa.gov.au/ParentingGroups) (Perth metropolitan area).

These groups are a great way of meeting other people with babies and sharing experiences.

### A solid start (around 6 months)

One 2-hour session covering when and how to introduce solids to your baby.

The session also includes moving from first foods to family foods, food and drinks to avoid, food safety and common allergies.

### Let's sleep (between 6 and 12 months)

One 2-hour session for parents with concerns about their baby's sleep.

The session covers realistic expectations of sleep and settling strategies. It will help you develop a plan for change, and be aware of your baby's emotions and needs while changing sleep patterns.



## Circle of security (4 months and over)

This is an 8-week program with one 2-hour session each week. It's aimed at parents and carers who are interested in finding different ways to connect with their child or manage their child's behaviour.

This program will help you to understand and learn to read your child's emotional needs. Through the program you'll learn to support your child to manage emotions and develop their self-esteem, so your child will feel more secure.

Talk to your child health nurse to see if this group is suitable for you.

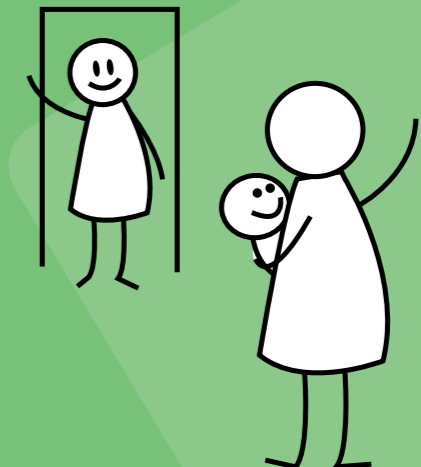
### Playgroups

A playgroup is a group of parents, carers and extended family who come together with their babies and young children to learn together through play. Young babies can benefit from social experiences at an early age, plus playgroup is a place for parents to make friends and learn from each other.

#### **i** Need more information or help?

- Child health nurse
- [cahs.health.wa.gov.au/ParentingGroups](http://cahs.health.wa.gov.au/ParentingGroups)
- Playgroup WA

Child health nurses offer health and development checks at key stages of your child's life.



## Healthy relationships

Babies are born ready for relationships and ready to learn. Loving, stable and responsive relationships are essential to your child's development.

Healthy relationships develop when you consistently respond to your baby with love, warmth and care so your baby feels safe and understood. Through healthy relationships, children are better able to cope with stress, have fewer behaviour problems, and have healthy self-esteem and satisfying relationships.

It is important that your baby knows they can always depend on you even when they're upset or not feeling 'OK'.

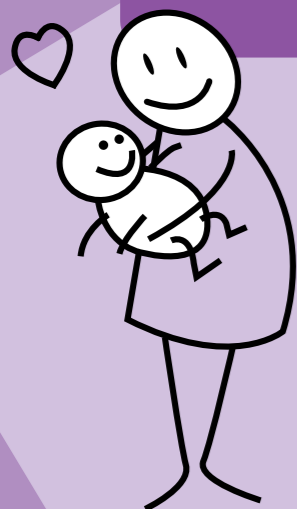
## Baby's body language

You are probably familiar with your baby's signals by now and feel more confident about what they need, how they are feeling and when they want to connect with you. It's also getting a little easier to know how to respond to their needs.

**Responding to your baby's needs creates trust – it does not 'spoil' them.**

If you comfort your baby when they're crying or upset, over time they'll learn that the world is safe (see page 24). Children with healthy relationships tend to be more independent, not less.

Babies are born ready to learn



## Do your best.

You don't have to be a perfect parent all the time. Just do your best, and don't worry if you don't always know what your baby wants.

## What if I'm concerned about my relationship with my baby?

Sometimes it can be hard to relate to your baby the way you want to. If you have any concerns about connecting with your baby, or feel you don't understand or know how to respond to your baby's needs, talk to your child health nurse or doctor.

## Your baby's brain

Babies are all different and develop at different rates. Their brains and bodies develop in response to their surroundings, what they experience, as well as their family genetics.

A baby's brain begins developing through pregnancy and continues to develop for the rest of their life. The most rapid changes happen during the first 3 years of life.

Babies are born ready to learn, and their brains develop through use. Providing a caring and interesting environment with lots of different activities will give your baby plenty of ways to play, develop and learn, and practice what they're learning.

Show your baby each day how much you love them by talking to them and listening to them. It doesn't matter if they can't understand you yet, it still makes their brain grow.

### **i** Need more information or help?

- Child health nurse
- Circle of Security (CircleOfSecurityInternational.com)
- Bright Tomorrows Parenting App
- Raising Children Network



## Communication

Long before they can speak, your baby is listening to you. They're beginning to make the little noises and sounds that come before speech. When you copy these, you're 'talking' to your baby.

By responding to your baby's needs when they cry, you are showing that you've heard them and that they matter. This is the start of communication.

- Talk to your baby during daily routines. Tell them what you are doing and name things (such as 'spoon'). Use simple words and very short sentences.
- Babies like interesting noises. You can use a sing-song voice to help their listening skills develop.
- Sing to your baby.
- When your baby makes a sound, repeat it so they know what sound they've just made.
  - You've started a conversation game between you!
  - Say what your baby is trying to tell you.

### **These conversations are really important.**

Your baby is learning to talk, but is also discovering that there is a 'me' and a 'you', and that language can help join the two of you.

This sets the basis for all their relationships for the rest of their life.

### **Books**

#### **Read to your baby every day.**

- Babies are usually interested in picture books by now.
- Reading with your baby really helps develop language.
- Look at simple books with clear pictures in them.



### 4 to 6 months

#### From around 3 months, babies:

- begin babbling and then listening
- coo and gurgle with pleasure
- turn their head towards sounds, and settle when they hear your voice
- startle when they hear a sudden loud noise.

#### Talk with your doctor or child health nurse if your baby:

- doesn't react to sounds
- is not making sounds
- doesn't turn and look to see where sounds are coming from.

### 6 to 9 months

Your baby's sounds are becoming more like real words.

#### Your baby will:

- enjoy making sounds and know that they have made them
- try different sounds like clicks, kisses and raspberries, as well as make word-like sounds, and copy the sounds you make
- use lots of different sounds to express different emotions – frustrated grunts, and squeals and giggles of delight
- probably be putting a vowel and a consonant together, like 'muum' or 'bubub'

- smile when they hear your voice, turn towards familiar sounds and voices, and recognise tones of voices
- react when their name is called, listen carefully when you speak to them, and talk back with babbling sounds
- enjoy noisy toys and making sounds by banging things together.

#### Talk with your doctor or child health nurse if your baby:

- doesn't react to sounds or voices
- isn't making sounds.

### 9 to 12 months

Talk with your baby a lot – they now understand how conversations work by taking turns.

- Although you might not understand, your baby will chat away, and enjoy having 'conversations'.
- Your baby may say simple sounds like 'mummum' and 'daddad'.
- Your baby knows several words even if they can't say them.
  - They may shake their head for 'no' and wave 'bye-bye' when asked.
  - They may respond to simple requests like 'give me the ball', or look around when you say, 'where's mummy/daddy/nanna?'
  - They'll also know their own name and react when you say it.
- They're making fewer sounds, but starting to put strings of babble together instead, which sound more like language.

Sing songs with actions and repeat phrases. Move to the rhythm of music together.

Your baby loves music and rhymes, and will bounce and sway to the rhythm. They'll love repeating songs over and over again.

#### Talk with your doctor or child health nurse if:

- your baby's babbling is not becoming more complex and they don't have 'conversations' with other people.



## Development

### 4 to 6 months

Your baby has come a long way in the first 4 months.

Your baby is probably a very social being who loves being with you and having fun together.

By now, you've learnt enough of their signs and body language to respond properly – most of the time. Hopefully, early problems such as feeding difficulties and crying, have settled down.

By 4 months, your baby is beginning to get an idea about being in the world, and you're getting to know each other. Your baby happily looks into your eyes, and you'll smile at each other.

### Social and emotional

Your baby can now 'read' some of your expressions. They might smile when you show you're happy, and look worried if you look angry or tired.

Your baby has learnt that you are the person who usually comes when they need something, but still doesn't fully understand that you are a separate person. The idea that you are completely separate, and can take yourself away from them, will not come until your baby is 7 months or older.

When you understand what your baby wants and try to meet their needs, they feel that the world is safe and predictable. Your baby is learning the important lesson that relationships are rewarding and valuable.

### SAFETY!

Your baby does **NOT** understand danger.

You need to watch your baby now they are moving and putting everything into their mouths.

They can quickly swallow small objects or crawl into unsafe places.

(See page 41 for more about safety and your baby.)

Your baby loves music and repeating songs over and over again.





Have 'conversations' with your baby – they'll get excited when you respond to them, and kick their legs, wave their arms and start to make sounds.

Your baby will still easily become over stimulated, so take care – too much excitement and they may start to cry and need to be calmed down.

Every baby grows and develops new skills or milestones at different rates.

#### Here are some things your baby may do at around 4 months:

- feeds well during the day and the night
- has 2 to 4 daytime sleeps for 1 or 2 hours each time, and may stay awake for 1½ to 2½ hours at a time
- sleeps a total of 12 to 15 hours a day – but not in one go (see page 20)
- smiles and makes sounds when happy, especially at you and other people, but also shows emotions like anger and frustrations
- turns eyes and head to sounds, and knows your voice
- makes eye contact when spoken to, enjoys looking at things and following them with their eyes
- watches own hands and plays with fingers, opens and closes fist, holds rattle for a few moments when placed in hand

- enjoys playing in different positions:
  - holds head steady when held or supported in sitting
  - props on arms and lifts head and chest when on tummy
  - moves arms and legs, and able to bring head and hands to the middle when playing on their back
  - may also like to lie or play on their side
- very interested in people and what's happening around them
- reacts to familiar situations such as feeding and bathing – smiling, cooing and with excited movements.

#### How to help your baby develop:

- Make faces and blow raspberries on your baby's tummy.
- Put your baby on the floor on their tummy to play for short periods (tummy time).
- Put them on the floor without a nappy so they can freely kick their legs.
- Give your baby bright objects to look at.
- Put some within reaching distance so that they accidentally touch them – then they'll try to touch or hit them again.
- Provide your baby with different things to do – change what they're looking at or move them so they have something else to look at.

#### 6 to 9 months

You'll notice some big emotional and physical changes between 6 and 9 months.

Your baby is starting to become their own person, with their own personality.

They're starting to sit up, move around, reach out, and take a much more active part in family life.

#### Social and emotional

Your baby is beginning to realise they're a separate person.

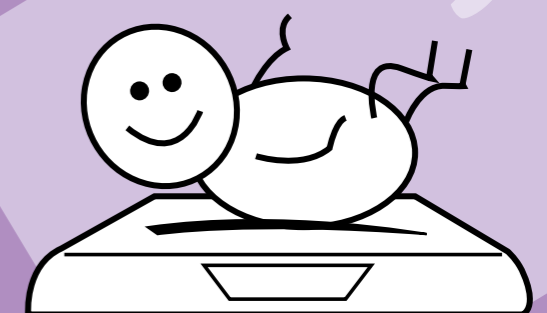
- Your baby may start to worry when they can't see or feel you nearby.
- They begin to recognise their own feelings and that these vary. For instance, they may know the difference between feeling hungry and feeling lonely, and give different signals if they want food or a cuddle. You've helped your baby recognise different feelings by giving them food when they're hungry and cuddles when lonely.
- Your baby may start to want to do things their own way, which may be different from the way you do them.
- Your baby now recognises the important, familiar people in their world.

They may become shy with strangers, and might not even want to be close to people they know, such as grandparents, but this will change. It's a very sociable age, and they'll love playing and chatting with familiar people.

#### Here are some things your baby may do at around 6 months:

- feeds during the day and night, but may sleep up to 6 hours before first night feed
- still breastfeeding but begins to take solid foods – but spits out food with tongue at first (see page 27)
- has 2 to 4 daytime sleeps for 1 or 2 hours each time, and may stay awake for 1½ to 2½ hours at a time
- sleeps a total of 12 to 15 hours a day – but not in one go (see page 20).
- turns towards familiar sounds and voices, and recognises tones of voice
- visually very alert, moving head and eyes in every direction when watching you or other people, follows when you point, or searches for a dropped toy
- reaches out with one hand to grasp objects, passes objects from hand to hand, and **puts everything in mouth**
- takes weight on legs when held standing and may bounce up and down
- rolls from tummy onto back at around 4 to 6 months, then from back to tummy a month or so later
- sits by themselves between 5 and 9 months
- plays in a variety of different positions – back, tummy and sitting – and may start to move between these positions on their own
- enjoys play – repeated games, nursery rhymes and action songs
- ignores you when very interested in something or a toy.

Every baby grows and develops at different rates.



### How to help your baby develop

Your baby loves to touch and grasp, and 'make things happen' – shaking, banging and pulling objects. These activities are great fun and help them understand that they have an effect on the world – they can DO things to it.

Your baby is learning about up and down, coming and going, and loves to play games that act these things out.

Give them lots of safe things to look at, touch and play with. Playing on their tummy on the floor will make your baby's back strong and help them learn to crawl.

#### Your baby will love:

- you looking into their eyes and chatting with them
- lying on their back and grabbing their feet
- lying on their tummy and reaching for brightly coloured toys or paper
- dropping a toy from the highchair or stroller, over and over, and watching you pick it up and give it back
- playing together, such as 'here's your nose – here's mummy's (daddy's, nanna's) nose', and hiding your face behind a book or cloth and saying 'peek-a-boo' when you show your face.

Most of all, your baby needs to be and have fun with people, especially you and others who are close to them. People are much more interesting than things.

### 9 to 12 months

Your baby's personality is becoming clear.

- They love you talking to them and looking at picture books together, pointing to objects they know and trying to turn the pages.
- Your baby's putting sounds together by babbling, trying to copy or say first words, and saying 'No' with a shake of the head.
- They may be clingy and wary of strangers, but your baby is forming special relationships with you and other family members.

#### Social and emotional development

It is usually during this time that your baby begins to understand their very special relationship with you and with friends and family.

- They will smile and babble, try to have conversations with you, and copy simple hand games like 'clap hands' or 'bye-bye'.
- They're starting to know that when you go away you'll come back again, and that you are still there even when they can't see you.



- Unfortunately, this also means that your baby's frightened when you leave them, and may cling and cry. They will start to be wary of strangers.
- Talking to your baby when you are in another room can help them to understand this. 'Peek-a-boo' and 'hiding' are favourite games because they're about familiar people coming and going. They're beginning to understand that when they see you, you also see them. But your baby still thinks if they can't see you, you can't see them (which is why they put their hands over their eyes to hide).
- They're really starting to know what they like and don't like, and understand 'No!' They may kick and resist nappy change time or other limits on behaviour.
- Your baby is getting better at controlling their eye movements and coordinating their eyes and body movements. Your baby's eyes are working together (no more cross eyes), and they're beginning to see the world in 3D – not just flat.

#### Here are some things your baby may do at around 9 months:

- feeds during the day and night, and may sleep longer than 6 hours in a continuous stretch before the first night feed
- has 2 or 3 daytime sleeps for 1 or 2 hours each time, and may stay awake for 2 to 3 hours at a time (see page 20)
- holds, bites and chews a variety of solid foods, enjoys babbling with a mouthful of food, and tries to hold the spoon while you're feeding them
- goes from rolling and wriggling on their tummy to crawling on hands and knees. Crawling will help your baby develop coordination between their eyes, hands, feet and body.
- able to get up into sitting position on their own, sit by themselves, and can reach forwards and turn body without losing balance
- pulls themselves to stand, holds on to a support and then falls backwards with a bump
- points and pokes with index finger, immediately reaches for an offered toy with one hand
- picks up small objects with a pincer grip and can let go of objects, so enjoys dropping objects and looks in the correct direction for the fallen object
- shows great interest in toys, looking and turning them over from hand to hand, and shakes toys that make noises
- begins to understand about cause and effect
- enjoys looking at, and watching people, objects and activities, and playing social games like 'peek-a-boo' and 'pat-a-cake'
- throws body back and stiffens when annoyed or resisting you, usually making loud noises at the same time.





### How to help your baby develop

- If you can, give your baby their own cupboard – they can open and shut the door, and play with things inside. (Baby-proof any cupboards that have breakables or dangerous things in them.)
- Give your baby pots, lids and spoons to bang.
- Play 'hiding' behind the couch or curtains.
- Sit your baby on the floor with their toys and play together. Follow their lead if they start playing a certain way – copy them and take turns. For example, build a tower of blocks so you can both have fun knocking them down, over and over.
- Cuddle and roll on the floor.

At this age, your baby will like being with people best of all, but they're starting to be interested in toys that move or make a noise.

### 12 months

When you visit your child health nurse at the 12-month appointment, make sure you get a copy of the 'Your 1 year old' magazine for more information about development in toddlers.

### Here are some things your baby may do at around 12 months:

- eats a variety of solid foods
- feeds during the day and night, may sleep longer than 6 hours during the night before waking for a feed
- 2 or 3 daytime sleeps for 1 to 3 hours each time, and may stay awake for 3½ to 4 hours at a time (see page 20)
- judges distances fairly well and aim well when they throw things
- pulls self to stand and sits down again while holding onto furniture – may start to rise from the floor without help and may walk alone or holding onto hands
- has a well-developed pincer grasp (thumb and tip of index finger)
- starts getting parent's attention and wants to play with them and things
- follows simple instructions and gestures (such as signs, waves, nods, shrugs and movements).

### When to be concerned about your baby's development

Sometimes babies have delays in their development.

You will probably be the first person to notice when things don't seem quite right. If there is a problem, it's better to get help early.

#### ★ Contact your child health nurse or doctor if your baby:

- doesn't seem to be learning new skills at the same rate as other babies of the same age, over several months
- isn't doing things they used to do
- isn't making eye contact, doesn't follow objects with their eyes, or has trouble with eye movements
- doesn't smile or show if they're happy or sad
- isn't babbling or trying to speak to you
- can't sit without your help at 6 months or on their own at 9 months
- isn't rolling at 6 months or crawling at 12 months.

### Child health nurse visit

When your baby is around 12 months old it's a good idea to book your free child health nurse appointment. (See your Purple Book for information about booking.)

Your nurse may ask you to fill in two 'Ages and Stages' (ASQ) forms.

- Your answers provide information on how your child is doing in important areas such as communication, movement and social skills, and if these are on schedule for their age.
- This information can help you celebrate your child's achievements, as well as identify any potential concerns, so we can offer support as early as possible.

Child health nurses can discuss things that might help your child's development and may suggest a referral to other professionals. This could be your doctor, or people who can help with issues such as medical problems, hearing, speech or movement.

You can also visit or contact your nurse at any time if you are worried or have any questions, or if:

- you are not sure that you understand your baby's needs, or how to respond
- you find your baby too difficult or needy
- your baby seems quite different to others – too tense or too calm
- you feel unhappy or anxious a lot of the time.

#### **i** Need more information or help?

It is easier for parents to help their baby's growth and development when life is going smoothly. However, many families go through stressful times – financial, health and emotional.

When you are feeling stressed and overwhelmed, your baby is more likely to feel tense. So, in order to take good care of your baby, it's really important that you take good care of yourself.

Family support services like counselling, quality child care and financial support are available in the community for parents (see page 50).

**You can get more information about your baby's development and family support services from:**

- Child health nurse
- Your doctor
- Ngala
- Raising Children Network
- Bright Tomorrows Parenting App
- Better beginnings (better-beginnings.com.au)





## Tummy time

Tummy time is still important. Tummy time helps babies to strengthen their muscles and get ready for sitting, crawling and walking. Keep giving your baby lots of practice time playing on the floor.

### SAFETY!

Never leave your baby alone when on their tummy.

Never let babies sleep on their tummies.

## Sitting

Babies usually sit by themselves between 6 to 8 months. If your baby needs some support, put them in a box or clothes basket on the floor until they're able to sit up on their own.

- Add new play things for them to explore, such as spoons, cups and balls.
- Move your baby around to where you are, and talk to them while you work.



## Walking

Your baby will stand and walk by themselves once their muscles are strong enough and they can balance and coordinate their movements. This is usually between 11 and 15 months.

- Your baby will enjoy playing on the floor for longer periods as they get better at lifting and turning their head, rolling, crawling, sitting and pulling themselves up to stand.
- Eventually they'll stand and walk while holding onto furniture (cruising).
- Playing on the floor also lets your baby explore the world and enjoy their toys.
- Safety gates are a good way to stop your baby going anywhere dangerous once they start to really move around the house!

### Why we don't recommend baby walkers

Using a baby walker or suspended jumping toy such as a Jolly Jumper will not help your baby learn to walk earlier, and may even delay it. Babies may learn to walk on their toes instead of their feet – it may then be difficult for them to learn to walk properly.

Babies that spend a lot of time in walkers and jumpers also miss out on new experiences through play time on the floor.

Walkers are also unsafe as they allow babies to move too quickly, reach things you don't want them to reach, or fall down steps.

## Play

Play is the way your baby learns about themselves and the world around them.

Playing with your baby right from the start helps develop your baby's:

- brain and senses (like sight, hearing, touch and smell)
- muscles and movement
- communication and social skills.

Play helps you and your baby get to know each other, and develop a healthy and loving relationship.

You are your child's first teacher and you are your child's best toy they could ever have. When you play with your child they feel loved, happy and safe.

Between 4 and 12 months, babies become increasingly more active and are wondering about how things work in their world.

Your baby will love:

- moving their arms and legs about
- reaching out to touch everything
- exploring their environment – pulling out drawers, dropping food on the floor, pushing any buttons they can find
- putting everything into their mouths.

Sometimes, your baby will like you to join in and follow their lead. Other times, they may like to do things on their own.

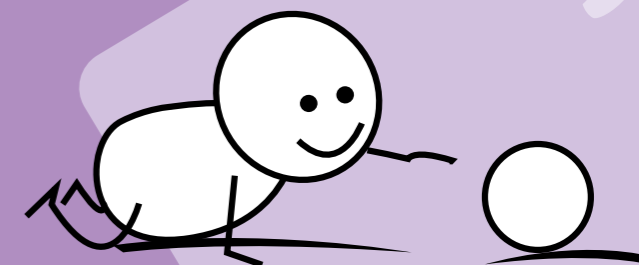
Encourage your baby to take the lead and help them when they need it. (But take control if there is any risk of injury or danger.)

### Play with your baby

- Babies love lots of repetition and they practice by playing.
- Babies learn best when they are actively involved and having fun with you during everyday activities, like bath time or putting out the washing.
  - Spend time each day playing, learning and having fun with your baby.
  - Keep baby with you – talk and sing as you do your daily activities.
  - Give your baby your full attention during playtime.

- Provide a safe play environment without distractions such as television, computers, tablets and phones.
- Talk, read and sing to your baby.
- Take your baby outside to play so that they experience lots of different sensations.
- Watch what your baby is interested in. Join in and copy baby's actions, facial expressions, and the sounds they make. Later, add your own actions and sounds for your baby to copy.
- Enjoy talking about play – smiling and laughing, imitating babbling and sounds, copying facial expressions, and saying simple words and sentences.
- Make eye contact with your baby. Listen and respond when your baby 'speaks' to you.
- Use simple toys from around home and only keep a few toys out at a time.
  - Home toys can include plastic bottles, large plastic and jar lids, empty tins with a secure lid and safe edge, boxes, spoons, sand and water.
  - Try small toys that your baby can hold and pass from one hand to another (rattles), soft toys to chew on, mobiles to look at, books, blocks, music, toys that make sounds (noisy shakers), push and pull toys, simple posting boxes (putting objects in and out of containers), mirror toys and crinkle bags.
  - Visit Playgroup WA for play and homemade toy ideas.
  - See if there's a toy library near you. For a small fee, toy libraries provide a range of quality fun and educational toys, games, puzzles and activities to borrow.

Playing lets your baby explore the world and enjoy their toys.





### What if my baby doesn't want to play?

Follow your baby's signals. Babies have different levels of tolerance at different times. While some can handle lots of sound and movement all at once, others find that overwhelming.

Sometimes your baby may not want to play, especially if they're tired or hungry – or maybe they just need a short break. This is normal.

★ Talk to your child health nurse if your baby isn't interested in playing, or in being with you or other people, most or all the time.

- i** **Need more information or help?**
- Child health nurse
  - Playgroup WA
  - Raising Children Network
  - Toy Libraries Australia (toylibraries.org.au) or your local council

### SAFETY!

Supervise your baby at all times, especially around water and play equipment.

Babies, toddlers and young children can choke on small toys and objects.

Check toys regularly to make sure they are safe.

Strings on toys should be less than 20 centimetres long.

(See page 41 for more about safety and your baby.)



### Screen time

Screen time describes the amount of time spent looking at all screens including TVs, computers, smartphones, tablets and video consoles.

Children under 2 years of age should not have any screen time except for video-chatting (such as Facetime or Skype).

### Why limit screen time?

For healthy development, your baby needs:

- face-to-face contact to develop social skills
- to play and explore
- to learn to use their body and be active
- to be protected from images and sounds that might be disturbing.

### How you can help:

- Avoid checking the phone during feeds, bathing and play times.
- Turn off the television and other screens when not in use, or when you're playing, reading and talking with your baby.

- i** **Need more information or help?**
- Child health nurse
  - Raising Children Network



## Sleep

### Why is sleep important?

Sleep helps your baby grow, and to learn and remember things. It restores your baby physically and mentally, and helps immunity.

### Types of sleep

When we sleep, we move through cycles. Becoming drowsy, falling asleep, moving into deep sleep then back into light sleep is called a sleep cycle.

Each sleep cycle is made up of two types of sleep:

- **Light sleep** is when babies dream and practice new skills. You may see your baby moving around the cot during this light sleep,

and may think they're awake. During light sleep, hearing is sensitive, so a dog barking or other noise can easily wake them.

- **Deep sleep** is when your baby is resting and restoring. Babies can often sleep through loud noises during deep sleep.

A baby's sleep cycle is about 45-60 minutes. (For adults it's about 90 minutes.) Some babies need to learn how to go back to sleep after one cycle, so you may need to help them settle and start another sleep cycle.

This can be tiring and stressful, and some babies take longer to learn, but it will get better.

### Tired signs

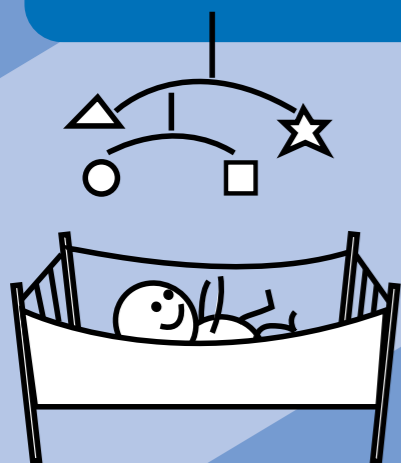
Your baby will show you tired signs in lots of different ways such as:

- avoiding eye contact, rubbing eyes, having difficulty focusing or a glazed expression
- clenching fists, jerky movements, clumsiness, arching their back, or rubbing their ears
- being grizzly, unhappy, frowning, yawning or crying.

It can be harder to get your baby to sleep when they are overtired.

Try to respond to your baby's early tired signs, with a regular and soothing bedtime routine to show it is bedtime.

Sleep helps your baby grow and learn.



## How much sleep does my baby need?

You may worry that your baby doesn't sleep enough.

- Babies are individuals (just like you) and don't have to fit into any sleep, awake and feeding patterns.
- Sleep is a developmental milestone (see page 9) so it takes time to develop – you can't speed it up.

### 3 to 6 months

- Between 3 and 6 months, babies need about 12 to 15 hours sleep every 24 hours, including sleeps during the day.
- Your baby will still need a feed every 3 to 4 hours, day and night.
- However, night sleeps should be getting longer, and your baby may sleep up to 4 to 6 hours in one stretch, before the first night feed.
- They can now stay awake for around 1½ to 2½ hours before showing signs of being tired, and sleep for a total of 4 to 6 hours during the day, which may be divided into 2 to 4 sleeps.

### 6 to 12 months

- Between 6 and 12 months, babies need about 12 to 15 hours sleep every 24 hours, including sleeps during the day.
- Your baby will still need a feed every 3 to 4 hours during the day.
- This may drop to 1 or 2 feeds at night, until around 8 months of age when babies are usually eating 3 meals a day.
- Your baby should start sleeping for longer before the first night feed, but many babies will still wake a few times during the night and need you to help them settle.
- They can now stay awake for around 2 to 3 hours before showing signs of being tired, and sleep for a total of 5 hours during the day, which may be divided into 2 or 3 sleeps. They may drop a day sleep at around 9 months.



**At this age, there are a lot of changes going on in your baby's life which can affect sleep.**

- Your baby may learn to keep themselves awake if something interesting is going on.
- Older babies are more active during the day, which may also affect their sleep patterns
- They may also be upset when you leave them (see page 13).
- ★ If you are worried, talk to your child health nurse or contact Ngala for information about sleep, comforting and settling.

### Comforting your baby

- Follow your baby's signals, rather than watching the clock.
- Even at 4 months and older, your baby may not feed or sleep at set times of the day or night. Your baby is an individual, and as your baby develops, their needs will change.
- Start developing a bedtime routine that allows for a quiet, calm time before bedtime.
  - A bedtime routine such as a bath, brushing teeth, and some fun but quiet activities, such as reading a book, before putting your baby to bed with a cuddle and kiss, may help your baby wind down and prepare for sleep.
  - Try and do similar things in the same way each night, around 20 minutes before bedtime.
  - Once your baby is in bed, say goodnight and leave straight away – make it clear this is sleep time.
- **You may need to return to comfort your baby at regular intervals if they don't settle.**

## Safe sleep

Sudden Unexpected Death in Infancy (SUDI) is when a baby dies and the cause is not immediately obvious. It includes Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS).

### How to sleep your baby safely

- 1. Sleep baby on back from birth, not on their tummy or side.**
- 2. Keep head and face uncovered:**
  - Put your baby's feet at the bottom of the cot so they can't slip down under the bedding.
  - Tuck bedding in firmly.
  - Use safe baby sleeping bags instead of bedding.
  - Remove any jewellery, amulets (such as amber beads), and head coverings (hats and beanies).
- 3. Keep baby smoke and vape free before and after birth.**
  - Keep the car, home and anywhere your baby spends time, a smoke and vape free zone.
  - If you want to quit smoking or vaping and you're finding it hard, ask for help (see page 44).

- 4. Provide a safe sleeping environment night and day.**
  - Use a safe cot that meets the Australian Safety Standards.
  - Keep cot away from hanging cords from blinds or mobiles.
  - Keep cot away from appliances such as heaters and fans.
  - Use a safe mattress that is the correct size for cot, firm, flat and clean, and not tilted.
  - Use safe bedding – no pillows, sheepskins, doonas, loose bedding, bumpers or toys, and no hot water bottles, electric blankets or wheat packs.
- 5. Sleep baby in their own safe sleeping place in parents' room for 6 to 12 months.**
- 6. Breastfeed your baby for the first 6 months.** Then your baby can start to have some solid food – and continue breastfeeding for as long as you both desire.

Source: Red Nose Australia.



## Dummies and thumbs

Many babies seem happier with a dummy or thumb, and sucking can help them feel secure and have a settling effect.

- Only offer a dummy when you are sure your baby isn't hungry, and don't give your baby a dummy to make them wait for a feed when hungry.
- Check the dummy regularly. Don't use a worn dummy – babies can choke on any bits. Replace them often.
- Never tie a dummy around your baby's hand, neck or cot. This is dangerous because it could go around the baby's neck and choke them.
- Never put anything sweet on the dummy, even before your baby has teeth – this can lead to tooth decay.
- Never force your baby to take a dummy.

### Thumbs, toys and blankets

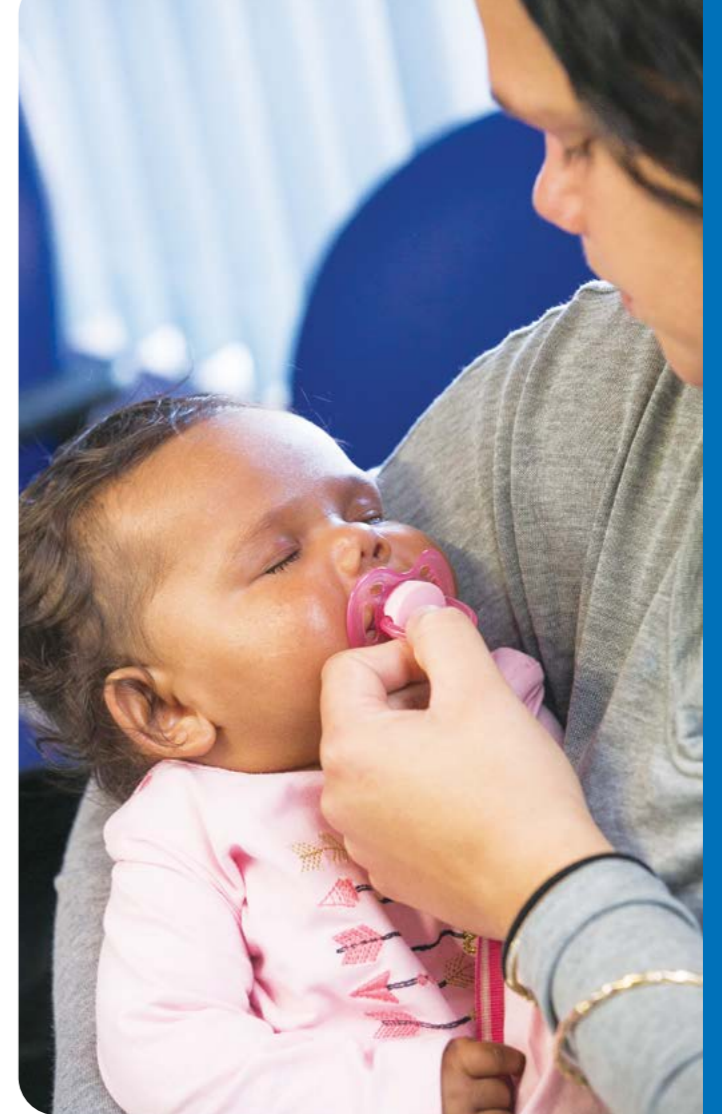
Let your baby suck their thumb or fingers if they want to as this can comfort them. If you don't want this to continue, try giving your baby a dummy before they get too attached to sucking their thumb.

If your baby has a 'special' blanket or toy, it's a good idea to buy a second one for when you need to wash one or if one gets lost.

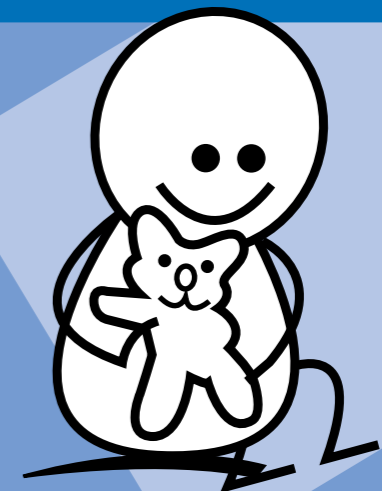
Giving your baby a dummy is your choice. Most babies will find a special 'comfort' object until they are old enough to do without it.

#### **i** Need more information or help?

- Child health nurse
- Ngala
- Raising Children Network
- Red Nose Australia



Have a second 'special' toy for washing or in case one gets lost.





## Crying

**Crying is the main way babies communicate.**

**It's how babies show they're hungry, tired, uncomfortable – or just need comfort.**

Most babies cry less from around 4 months, and when they do cry, are more likely to be crying to communicate with you.

Every baby has their own crying pattern and it's normal for babies to cry some of the time.

- Some babies can be settled for most of the day.
- Some babies cry at the same time each day or night.

However, it is not healthy for babies to cry for long periods of time.

### How to soothe a crying baby

When your baby cries, they need you to respond before they get too distressed.

Sometimes a baby's crying can be very difficult to soothe.

It may take time to get to know the best way to settle your baby. One of the most important things you can do is simply to be with your baby.

Babies feel safe and secure when you interact with them in warm, loving and responsive ways. You can't spoil your baby by picking them up, cuddling them or talking to them.

Feed your baby whenever you think they're hungry, and pick baby up to offer comfort when they're crying.

Here are some ideas for soothing a crying baby, after checking that your baby isn't hungry, tired or has a dirty nappy:

- skin-to-skin contact, cuddling and patting
- carrying in arms, a sling or carrier in upright positions
- repeating soothing words, singing or listening to quiet music, while gently rocking baby
- a warm bath or a gentle massage
- offering a feed – sucking is very comforting
- burping your baby during or at the end of each feed
- reducing noise and activity.

### When babies cry more than expected

★ If you are worried about the type of crying, how long your baby cries for or if you can't seem to soothe your baby, talk to your child health nurse, Ngala Parenting Helpline or your doctor.

★ If your baby keeps crying and has a fever, rash, is vomiting or is not feeding well, take them to your doctor or the hospital, or call 000.



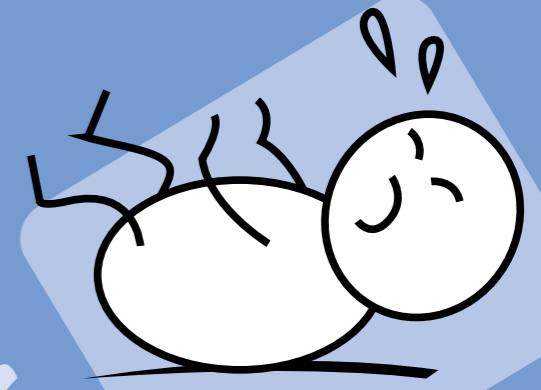
## Looking after yourself

When babies are unsettled and cry a lot this can be upsetting and stressful for parents. You may feel helpless at not being able to soothe your baby.

- If your baby is crying a lot, it's OK to have a short break, as long as your baby is somewhere safe. If you can, get your partner or a friend/family member to help (see page 42).
- If you feel unsupported, overwhelmed, frustrated or angry, contact your child health nurse, Ngala Parenting Helpline (9368 9368) or your doctor to help manage these feelings and keep baby safe.
- If you think you may shake or hurt your baby or yourself – put baby in a safe place like a cot – and get help immediately by contacting Crisis Care (08) 9223 1111 or 1800 199 008.

★ **If you believe that someone's life is in immediate danger, call 000.**

★ Getting help is an important part of looking after yourself and your family. **If you just can't cope or are worried that you'll hurt your baby, call Beyond Blue 1300 224 636.**



Have short break as long as baby is somewhere safe.

## NEVER shake your baby

- It is very important not to hit or shake babies.
- Shaking your baby can cause brain damage.
- If you are feeling very angry or upset, put your baby somewhere safe and take a break until you feel calmer.

### **i** Need more information or help?

- Child health nurse
- Your doctor
- Ngala
- Raising Children Network

## Breastfeeding

Breast milk contains all the nutrients your baby needs for their health, growth and development for around the first 6 months. Until this time, a baby's digestive system is not ready for solid food, so breast milk is all they need.

From 6 months, you can continue to breastfeed your baby – along with giving them solid food – for as long as you and your baby want. Breast milk will still benefit your baby, and there is no set age when your baby should stop breastfeeding.

What you eat, drink, smoke or vape is passed through your breast milk to your baby and can affect your baby's health and development. So, if you're breastfeeding it's safest for your baby that you do not drink alcohol, smoke, vape or use drugs, including marijuana.

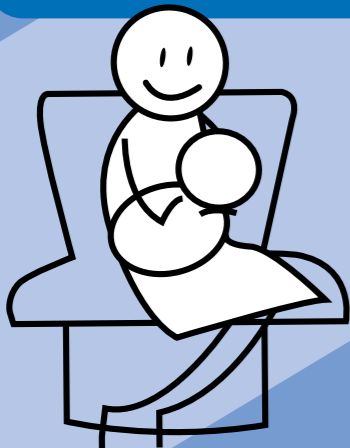
### Expressing and storing breast milk

You can express your breast milk for others to give to your baby if you can't be with them all the time. Express after a feed, or instead of a feed if your baby is not with you.

- You might need to express between feeds for some time to increase your milk supply.
- You can express milk by hand, or with a pump. There are many types of pumps – some work by hand and some with an electric motor.

Ask your child health nurse, Australian Breastfeeding Association counsellor or a lactation consultant for more information.

Breastfeeding...  
time together after  
a day apart.



- Put breast milk into a clean, closed container or sealable plastic bag, and write the date on it.

### Use expressed breast milk within:

- 6 to 8 hours at room temperature (under 26 °C)
- 3 days kept at the back of the fridge where it's coldest (not in the door).
- frozen
  - 2 weeks in the freezer compartment inside a fridge
  - 3 months in the freezer of a fridge with a separate freezer door
  - 12 months in a deep freeze

### Thaw milk in the fridge or by standing it in warm water.

- If thawed in the fridge, use within 24 hours.
- If thawed in warm water use straight away, or within 4 hours if kept in the fridge.
- Never refreeze thawed breast milk.
- Never use a microwave oven to thaw or heat milk as it can damage the goodness of the milk and cause hot spots which can burn your baby's mouth.
- If your baby leaves any expressed breast milk, throw it away – you can't use it for another feed.

### Balancing breastfeeding and work

Going back to work doesn't have to mean the end of breastfeeding. Here are some possible options:

- Work part time, at least at first, or try to fit your working hours around your baby's needs. See if you can do some work from home.
- You can express milk at work, store it in a fridge then take it home to be fed to your baby the next day. The carer can use a cup or a bottle for this. You and your baby can continue to enjoy breastfeeds when you are home.
- Your baby may be happy to have more breastfeeds before and after work. This is a great time to spend together after a day apart.



## Baby's first foods – from 6 months

At around 6 months, your baby needs more iron and other nutrients than they can get from breast milk or infant formula.

- Starting solid food before 4 months can increase the risk of allergies.
- Waiting too long after 6 months means your baby may miss out on important nutrients needed for growing and developing, and may increase the risk of allergies if you avoid some foods.
- Keep breastfeeding while introducing solids.

### It's time to introduce solid food when your baby:

- is around 6 months old
- is able to sit supported with body and head upright
- seems interested in food – reaching out for food when you're eating
- opens their mouth when you offer them food
- takes pureed food from a spoon without pushing it out of their mouth with their tongue
- looks for more food after a breastfeed or formula feed.

### Every baby is different

If you are having problems or if you aren't sure if your baby is ready for solid foods, talk to your child health nurse or doctor.

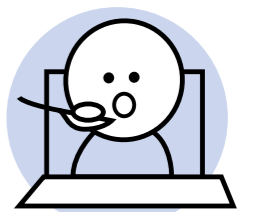
### How do I start?

Pick a time when you and your baby are happy and relaxed.

- Your baby (and you) will enjoy it more if they're sitting comfortably and supported, and aren't too tired or too hungry.
- Use a soft, plastic spoon.
- Start with small tastes of food after a breastfeed or formula feed.

### Your baby is probably hungry when they:

- are excited when they see food
- lean forward towards you when sitting
- open their mouth, ready to be fed.



### Your baby is probably not interested in eating when they:

- turn their head away
- are distracted and not interested
- push the spoon away
- firmly close their mouth.





### Preparing baby's food

- Cook vegetables, fruit, meat, chicken or meat alternatives in a little water or baby's milk.
- Don't add sugar, salt or salty seasonings.
- To puree foods, use a blender or mash the food through a sieve.

#### ✓ Tip

Store homemade food in ice cube trays (with a cover), small sealed containers or bags in the fridge or freezer.

### What food?

Start with foods that are high in iron:

- iron-enriched baby cereals
- pureed meat or chicken
- cooked tofu
- legumes (beans, peas and lentils).

After this, you can introduce new food in any order, and more than 1 new food at a time. It's OK to mix different food together.

Try to give your baby homemade food if you can.

This is also a good time to think about your own diet – and make some healthy changes.

Offer a variety of foods from the **five food groups**:

- **vegetables/legumes/beans**
- **fruit**
- **grain (cereal) foods**
- **lean meat/poultry/fish/eggs/tofu**
- **milk/yoghurt/cheese**

### Dairy food

Full cream cow's milk, cheese and yoghurt are best until your baby turns 2, then you can offer low fat varieties.

### Vegetarian diet

If you are feeding your child a vegetarian diet, talk to your nurse, doctor or a dietitian to make sure they are getting all the nutrients they need.

### How much food and when?

- Once a day, start with a teaspoon of iron-rich food after a breastfeed or formula feed. Mix the food with your baby's milk or boiled water into a smooth paste.
- Introduce a variety of foods, moving from pureed → smooth → mashed → soft pieces.
- Gradually increase the amount from 1 or 2 teaspoons up to 2 or 3 tablespoons, according to your baby's appetite.
- Start with 1 meal and gradually increase the amount. By 8 months, your baby should be having 3 meals.
- Once your baby is eating a variety of foods, offer food **before** your baby breastfeeds.
- Babies know when they are full or hungry, so it is important to recognise your baby's hunger and full 'signs'.

### What drinks?

- Breast milk for the first year, and as long as you want after that.
- Lots of cooled, boiled tap water from 6 months (from a cup).
- If your baby has formula, stop using it at 12 months.
- Full cream cow's milk from 12 months (from a cup).

### Cups

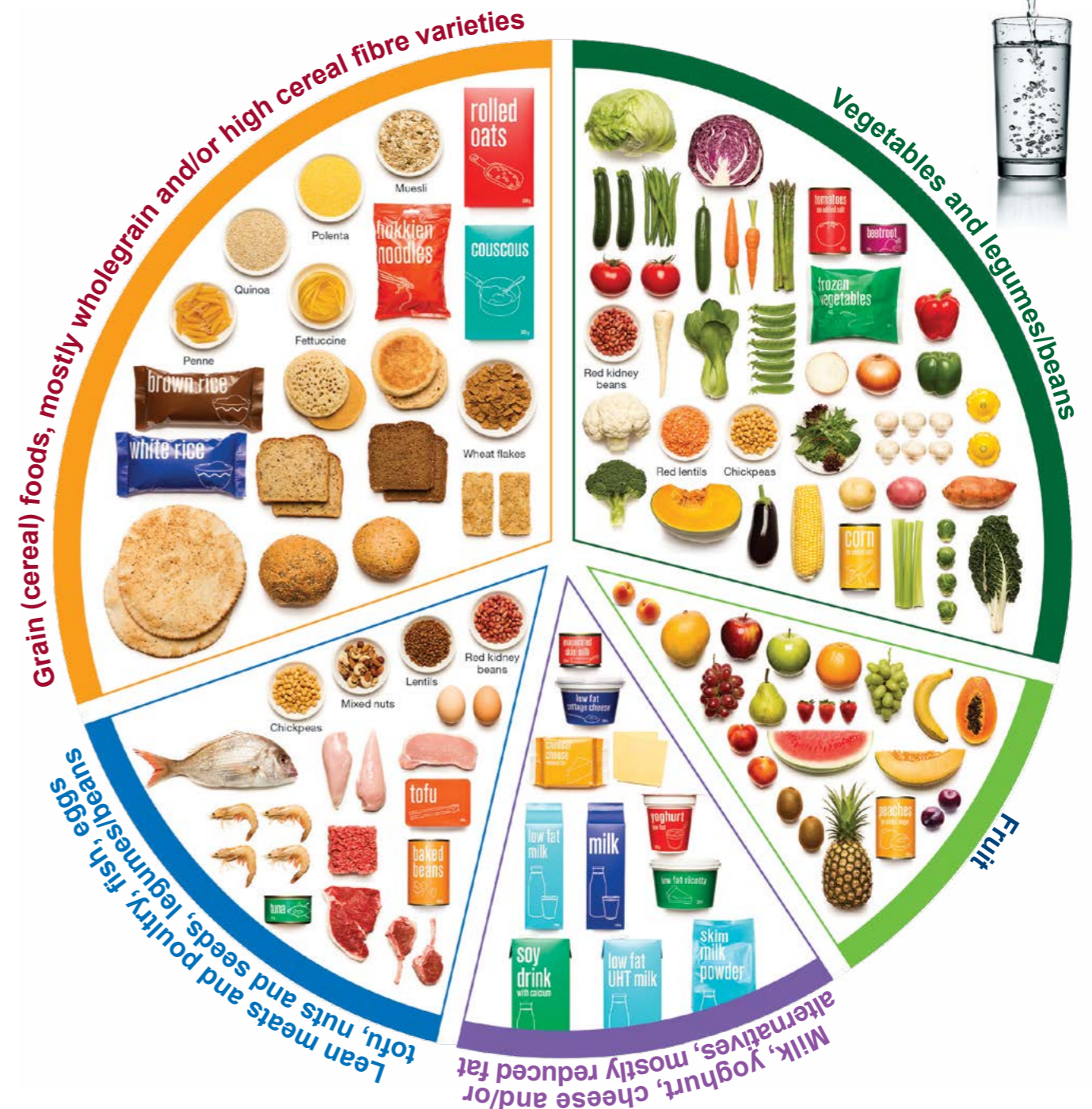
- Use a cup instead of a bottle – continued use of bottles is linked to tooth decay.
- Start with a sippy cup with a lid, but work towards no lid as soon as possible, and avoid cups with valves.

## Australian Guide to Healthy Eating

This guide shows the proportion of the **five food groups** we should all eat daily.

Enjoy a wide variety of nutritious foods from these **five food groups** every day.

Drink plenty of water.



Use **small amounts**



Only **sometimes** and in **small amounts**



Modified from the Australian Guide to Healthy Eating ([eatforhealth.gov.au](http://eatforhealth.gov.au))



## Textures

Offer lots of different tastes and textures, suitable for your baby's stage of development. Textured foods help your baby to chew. This helps develop the muscles used for talking.

- Start off with smooth or pureed foods.
- Once your baby is used to that texture, quickly move on to mashed, followed by lumpier foods.
- At around 8 months, your baby will be ready to eat diced, chopped, soft strips and finger foods.
- Don't worry if your baby has no or few teeth. They can chew mashed and finely diced food with their gums.
- Don't worry if your baby 'gags' – it's a natural reflex to avoid choking. It's also a normal response to a new texture.
- Offer foods your baby can pick up. As your baby develops, they will start wanting to feed themselves.
- Don't worry if your baby spits out food. Learning to eat takes time and patience.

If your baby doesn't like a type of food, try it again some other time. You might have to offer it many times before your baby accepts the new taste or texture.

## Tips

- Stay calm.
- Talk to your baby about the food they're eating. Look into their eyes, and make sure there are no distractions. Turn off the TV and other screens.
- Sit your baby with the family at meal times so they can watch, learn and join in.
- It will be messy! Put newspaper or plastic under the high chair.
- Be prepared for a change in your baby's poo! Different foods create different coloured poo.

## Commercial baby food

- Commercial baby food (in a jar or a pouch) can be handy when you're travelling or in an emergency.
- It's not a good idea to use them a lot – your baby can get used to the taste and smooth texture of these foods and refuse home-cooked food.
- With home-cooked food, you are giving your baby lots of variety in taste and texture, and it's a lot cheaper.

## ALERT

Do not give your baby:

- ✗ **honey**  
The bacteria in honey can make babies sick – don't give them honey until they are 1 year old.
- ✗ **raw eggs and raw meat**  
The bacteria in raw eggs and meat can make babies sick. Cooked eggs and meat are OK.
- ✗ **salt and sugar**  
Your baby doesn't need salt, sugar, or processed flavours added to their food. They have sensitive tastebuds, so will enjoy their food just as it is.
- ✗ **these drinks:**
  - cow's milk and goat's milk (at least until they're 1 year old)
  - plant-based drinks such as soy, rice, oat, almond and coconut 'milk' (at least until they're 1 year old), unless under doctor's advice.  
You can offer calcium-enriched soy, rice and oat 'milks' after 12 months
  - follow-on toddler formula – these are not necessary
  - fruit juice – these have lots of sugar and can cause tooth decay, even when the teeth haven't come through, and reduce your baby's appetite. They can also cause an upset tummy or runny poos.
  - soft drinks, cordials, flavoured milk – these have lots of sugar, and can cause obesity and tooth decay
  - energy drinks – these contain guarana and caffeine which are not safe for babies or children
  - tea, herbal tea – the tannin in tea can affect how your baby absorbs iron
  - coffee, cola – the caffeine in coffee and cola is not safe for babies or children.



## ALERT! Prevent choking

Always watch carefully when your baby is eating.

- ✗ Don't let your baby move, crawl or walk with food in their mouth.
- ✗ Babies and young children can choke on food that is small, hard, round or sticky, such as nuts, carrots and apple.
  - Cut up round foods like grapes and cherry tomatoes.
  - Cook, then grate or mash all hard fruit and vegetables like apples, carrots and beans.
  - Remove small bones and gristle from meat, chicken and fish.
  - Remove the skin from sausages. (Sausages are not recommended for babies as they are high in salt and fat.)





### Food safety

Babies can easily get very sick from food poisoning.

It is important to keep your baby's food safe.

- Wash your hands before preparing food.
- Wash your baby's hands before eating.
- Clean utensils and work surfaces.
- Use separate chopping boards and utensils when preparing raw food and ready-to-eat foods.
- Use clean spoons, cups, bowls and plates.
- Wash all fruit and vegetables.
- Store prepared food in a sealed container in the fridge or freezer.
- Always store raw meat in containers or wrap in the **BOTTOM** of the fridge so raw meat juices can't drip onto other foods.
- Re-heat prepared food really well and then cool it down, before giving it to your baby. Never re-heat food more than once.
- Never keep food that your baby has dribbled on.
- Keep pets away from food and food preparation surfaces.

### Allergies

★ Talk to your doctor if you are worried about allergies, particularly if your baby already has severe eczema or food allergy, or other members of your families have allergies.

- Even if some family members have food allergies, you don't need to delay starting solids foods, even the common allergy-causing foods. In fact, delaying or avoiding some foods can increase the risk of your baby developing an allergy.
- From 6 months, you can offer your baby cooked egg, smooth nut pastes (including peanuts and tree nuts), wheat, cow's milk (in cooking), sesame, fish and shellfish, and soy and lupin at regular intervals.
- Some food can irritate the skin around the mouth or cheeks as a baby's skin is very sensitive. This includes citrus, tomatoes and berries – this is not a food allergy.
- Some babies are allergic to some foods. Most symptoms of food allergy are mild to moderate.

### ALERT

#### Watch for:

- swelling of face, eyes or lips, hives or welts (red lumps on the skin)
- vomiting and diarrhoea
- rashes or redness of the skin.

#### Call 000 immediately if your baby has these severe reactions to any food:

- difficult or noisy breathing
- wheeze or ongoing cough
- swelling of the tongue
- pale skin and floppy.

## Feeding your baby: the first 12 months

### The first 6 months:

- breast milk
- commercial infant formula



### At about 6 months, offer some solid foods:

- start with iron-rich foods
- try new foods in any order
- offer smooth puree → mashed foods (mash with a fork)
- offer cooled, boiled tap water in a cup
- start with a teaspoon after their milk feed
- increase when your baby is ready to eat more.



### At about 8 months:

- thicker/chunkier food → finely chopped food → finger foods
- babies like to feed themselves
- offer about 3 meals a day
- offer cooled, boiled tap water in a cup.



### At 9 to 12 months:

- lots of different foods and textures
- sit with the family and eat family foods
- offer cooled, boiled tap water in a cup
- offer about 5 small meals a day.

#### Learning to eat is messy!



#### ★ Talk to your child health nurse or doctor if:

- you are worried about your child's growth
- your child is unwell, tired and not eating
- mealtimes are causing a lot of family stress and anxiety.

#### **i** Need more information or help?

- Child health nurse
- Your doctor
- Raising Children Network ([raisingchildren.net.au](http://raisingchildren.net.au))





## Immunisation

### Why immunise my baby?

Immunisations are a simple and safe way to protect everyone, including your baby, against many diseases that can cause serious illnesses and sometimes death.

- Many serious diseases are rare in Australia today because of immunisation.
- If you and your baby are immunised, it will prevent you from getting or passing on these diseases to others, especially to young babies who are not yet fully immunised.
- When more babies, children and adults are immunised, these infectious diseases are less likely to spread in the community.


### When should my baby be immunised?

- Your baby will need immunisations throughout childhood.
- Check your baby's Purple Book for a list of immunisations and when they are due.

### Where can I get free immunisation?

Ask your child health nurse, doctor, or Aboriginal Medical Service about your baby's free immunisations.

Visit [healthywa.wa.gov.au/immunisation](http://healthywa.wa.gov.au/immunisation) to find your local immunisation clinic, as well as information about immunisations.

 Remember to bring your Medicare card and your baby's Purple Book (which has your child's immunisation record card in it) to all your immunisation appointments.

**i** **Need more information or help?**

- Child health nurse
- Your doctor
- [healthywa.wa.gov.au/immunisation](http://healthywa.wa.gov.au/immunisation)
- [health.gov.au/immunisation](http://health.gov.au/immunisation)




Check your baby's Purple Book for when immunisations are due.

## When to see your doctor

**It's always OK to visit your doctor if you think your baby is ill.**

You know your baby best. If you notice something is not right, or if you are worried about your baby's appearance or behaviour, don't be afraid to phone or visit your doctor.

Even if the doctor tells you nothing is wrong – at least it may set your mind at rest. But if you're still worried, it's OK to visit the same or another doctor, or to call *healthdirect*.

You can talk to a health professional at any time, day or night, at **healthdirect** on **1800 022 222**.

**★ Call 000**  
**If your baby is so ill that you think they need urgent medical attention, don't hesitate to call 000.**

**★ Call 000** if your child is unresponsive, or has symptoms including strong pain, dehydration, drowsiness, seizures or fitting, difficulty breathing, pale, blotchy or blue skin, or a rash that doesn't fade when you press their skin.

**★ See your doctor immediately or go to Emergency** if your baby has a fever (a temperature above 38 °C), or your baby is feeding poorly, vomiting a lot and/or weeing less than usual.

## When to get help

**It's OK to put yourself first.**

Talk to your child health nurse or doctor if things seem to have become too hard, if you are worried about your own health, or your baby's health or development.

It can be difficult to know what's 'too hard', particularly if this is your first baby.

You should get help if:

- you are unhappy a lot of the time (see page 46)
- your baby is not developing or growing well (see page 15)
- you feel you're not getting any sleep at all
- your baby seems fine but you worry about them a lot of the time.

**i** **Need more information or help?**

- Child health nurse
- Ngala
- PANDA
- Beyond Blue

## Daily care

Good hygiene habits make your baby feel more comfortable and help keep everyone healthy.

Babies can't easily fight infections, so you need to protect them from germs and viruses that can cause sickness. There are germs and viruses on hard surfaces, in body fluids (saliva, snot, poos and wees), on people's hands, and in the air if someone sick sneezes or coughs nearby.

### Stopping germs from spreading

Make sure everyone washes their hands before they hold or play with your baby. If people are unwell, discourage them from being near or holding your baby.

If your baby or other children in the house have runny eyes, ears or noses, clean their faces and hands as often as needed. Wash your own hands afterwards. This will help stop the spread of sickness and make the children feel more comfortable.

Wash your own hands with soap and water before preparing or eating food, after using the toilet, blowing your nose, getting body fluids (saliva, snot, wees and poos) on your hands, and changing nappies.

At home, cleaning with detergent and water, followed by rinsing and drying will remove most of the germs and viruses from hard surfaces, such as the kitchen bench and plastic toys. You don't need special cleaners.

### Bathing

Bath time can be a special time to spend with your baby. It can be fun and splashy, or quiet and relaxing. You can bath your baby any time, though some babies sleep better when they have a bath just before bedtime.

- A bath 2 or 3 times a week is enough to keep your baby clean, but you can do it every day if your baby enjoys it.
- As your baby becomes more active, you may need to bath them more often.
- If you aren't giving your baby a bath, you still need to clean their face and hands at least once every day.

### Getting ready

- You can use a baby bath, or a big bath.
- Have everything ready – towels, clean washcloth, clean clothes and nappy.
- Always use warm water – not hot. Run some cold water through the tap, after filling up the bath.
- Test the water before you put your baby in. The water should be body temperature – a little cooler than most adults like, and no more than 38 °C.
- Only fill the bath 5 centimetres deep.
- You only need to use water – however, baby shampoo and baby bath lotions are OK.
- Do not use talcum powder anywhere on your baby, including their genitals as your baby can breathe in the powder. Cornstarch-based powders can also make rashes worse.

You can also bath or shower with your baby – this may be easier with another person to help. Make sure the water is only warm, and keep your baby's face away from the water.

**Never leave your baby, or any child, alone in the bath, or just in the care of other children.**

Babies can drown in less than 5 centimetres of water. If you need to leave the bath area – even for a second – take your baby with you (wrapped in a towel).

### Cleaning the nappy area

Cleaning the nappy area every time you change a nappy helps protect your baby's skin and prevent nappy rash.

- Girls: Wipe from front to back when cleaning your daughter's vulva. You don't need to clean inside her vagina.
- Boys: Clean your son's penis during nappy change and in the bath. You don't need to pull back your son's foreskin for cleaning at this age.

(Read more about nappies and their contents on page 38.)

## Your baby's skin

Healthy skin helps to stop germs and viruses getting inside our bodies and making us unwell.

This is really important for babies because they are not able to easily fight infections and they need to be protected from germs that can cause illness.

You can look after your baby's skin by:

- keeping baby clean and dry – bathing and changing wet and dirty nappies
- washing your own hands before touching your baby and after changing nappies
- looking for rashes, dry areas or sores when bathing and changing nappies.

★ **See your doctor if there are any breaks, rashes or weeping sores on your baby's skin.**

### Common skin conditions

Some rashes and spots are normal and don't need treatment. It is common for babies to have dry skin. You can help by avoiding soap and using moisturisers.

#### Heat rash

Heat rash happens because a baby's sweat glands are not properly developed. The glands get blocked if the baby gets too hot and sweat gets trapped under the skin, forming small lumps or blisters. Babies often get heat rash in hot weather, if they are over-dressed or have a fever.

★ **See your doctor if:**

- the blisters are filled with pus
- the rash lasts more than 3 days
- your baby has a rash, is feeling unwell, has a fever or isn't feeding well
- you are worried.

#### Eczema

Eczema is common in babies and children. Children with eczema have dry, sensitive skin and get red, itchy, scaly patches on their skin.

★ **See your doctor if you think your child might have eczema.**

**Nappy rash and thrush (see page 38)**



#### Scabies

Scabies are tiny mites that burrow into the skin and cause red, itching bumps or blisters in the skin. Scabies can spread through everyone in the house. In children, the rash usually affects the face, scalp, palms and soles of feet. It is important to get treatment for scabies, usually from the pharmacist.

### Skin problems that need treatment

★ **See your doctor as soon as possible if your baby:**

- has weeping sores on their skin (clean the area and cover with a dressing)
- shows signs that their throat is sore (like crying when they swallow), and that their joints are sore (like crying when they move). Some germs in skin sores can get into baby's blood and make them very sick (such as rheumatic heart disease).

#### **i** Need more information or help?

- Child health nurse
- Your doctor
- Raising Children Network
- *healthdirect* (1800 022 222)

## Nappies and their contents

### Is my baby's poo normal?

Babies' poos vary a lot in colour, consistency and frequency.

- The poo will vary a lot with how your baby is fed, particularly once they start eating solid food.

### Is my baby constipated?

Constipation is when the poo is so hard and dry that it is difficult to pass, and your baby may become upset.

- ★ If it looks like pebbles or you notice a streak of blood on the poo from a small tear in the anus, talk to your doctor or child health nurse.
- Once they're 6 months old and over, offer your baby cooled, boiled tap water.
- Babies sometimes get constipated when they start solid food. This normally sorts itself out in a few weeks.

### Does my baby have diarrhoea?

It may be diarrhoea if the poos become more runny (even watery) and frequent than normal for your baby. This may mean they have a gut infection, especially if your baby's vomiting too.

★ **In this situation, see your doctor immediately or call *healthdirect* on 1800 022 222.**

### How many wet nappies will there be?

As your baby gets older, they may have fewer wet nappies, but still will have at least 6 to 8 each day. Plenty of wee is good because it shows that your baby is getting enough to drink.

They often wee when you take off their nappy or start to put a dry one on. Your baby has no control over when they poo or wee, so don't take it personally if they wee on you during a nappy change!

- Disposable nappies can absorb a lot of moisture without feeling wet, so check the weight of the nappy rather than how wet it feels.
- Check that the wee is a pale colour – in hot weather, or if your baby is not feeding well, the wee may be a darker yellow and smelly. An extra feed may help, or drinks of cooled, boiled water from 6 months, but if you think your baby is unwell, see your doctor.

### How can I avoid nappy rash?

Baby wee is clean and doesn't usually smell unless it's been in the nappy for a while.

When this happens the wee turns to ammonia which can irritate the skin. This is why it is important to change the nappy regularly and wash your baby's skin.

- Nappy rash is common and can happen no matter how often you change nappies. Almost all children who wear nappies get nappy rash at some stage.
- Clean your baby's skin gently with water using a cloth or wet cotton wool. If you use baby wipes choose ones without alcohol to avoid stinging especially if there's already a rash. After cleaning, put on lots of Vaseline, zinc cream or other nappy cream to keep wetness away from their skin.
- Try to leave their nappy off for a while during playtime to allow air to your baby's skin.

### Thrush

Thrush can grow in the nappy area once a rash has developed. This will show as a very red area with spots around it.

★ **See your doctor if your baby develops a rash in their nappy area that doesn't go away in a few days. Your doctor might prescribe a special cream which clears this type of rash quickly.**

### When will my baby be ready to toilet train?

Most children are **NOT** ready to control their poo and wee until they are 2 or even 3 years old.



## Your baby's teeth

Baby teeth are important to your child's health and development. Children need their baby teeth to:

- eat and grow
- talk clearly
- give shape to their face
- keep space for the adult teeth
- smile and feel good.

Start healthy teeth and gum cleaning habits early to set your baby up for life.

### Teething

Your baby was born with all their baby teeth already developing in their jaws.

Baby teeth come through at different times. Some babies have a tooth at 6 months – most have some teeth by 12 months.

Your baby won't have all 20 baby teeth until they're around 3 years old (see next page).

Some babies get their teeth without any problems. Others have sore gums every time a new tooth comes through. Their gums might be red and swollen and you can feel the hard point of the tooth underneath with your fingertip.

When your baby is teething, they may not be their usual self. They may want to bite on things, go off their food and dribble a lot. Your baby may also wake more often at night for comfort.

- Give your baby something firm to chew on such as a cold teething ring or a cold, wet flannel. Teething necklaces (amber beads) are a choking hazard and should not be used.
- Some babies want firm things to chew on such as sugar-free rusks – others like mushy food for a while.

★ **See your doctor if your baby seems very uncomfortable when teething or is unwell** (such as developing a fever, a rash or diarrhoea) to see if this is from teething or something else.

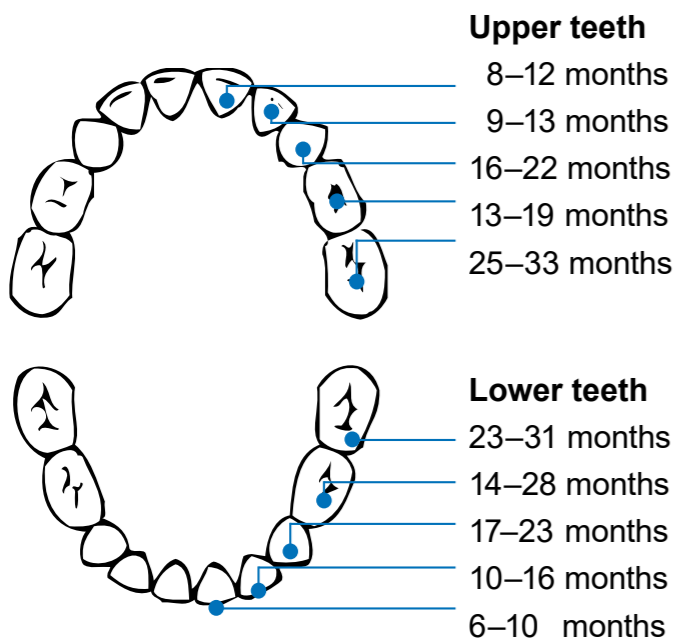
### **i** Need more information or help?

- Child health nurse
- Raising Children Network



Falls are the most common cause of injury for babies.

### When your baby's teeth are likely to come through



Original concept produced by SA Dental Service.

### Cleaning your baby's teeth

Look after your baby's teeth right from the start to ensure healthy teeth as they grow. Even before any teeth arrive, wipe your baby's gums after feeds using a damp, clean cloth if awake.

Once your baby's first tooth appears:

- brush teeth twice a day – morning and night
- only use water and a soft toothbrush
- let your baby get involved – they can hold the toothbrush with you.

Always put your child to bed with freshly cleaned mouth and teeth for a healthy smile.

### Caring for teeth

- Only give water or milk in a baby's bottle. After 6 months, your baby should drink from a cup – continued use of bottles is linked to tooth decay.
- Remove the bottle after a feed, and don't put your baby to bed with a bottle.
- Sugar or food acids can damage your baby's teeth, even when the teeth haven't come through. Don't put anything on your baby's dummy or clean the dummy with your mouth.
- Lift your child's lip at least once a month to check for early signs of decay, such as white lines along the gum line. See a dentist if you notice any changes in your child's teeth.

#### **i** Need more information or help?

- Child health nurse
- Raising Children Network
- Dental Health Services ([www.dental.wa.gov.au](http://www.dental.wa.gov.au))

### Safety

One of your most important jobs is to keep your baby safe.

Your baby will learn new skills very quickly. If they're not doing it already, your baby will soon be rolling, crawling and then walking, and start to explore on their own.

During their first year, your baby will learn to move around (very fast), pull themselves up to reach and grab things, but still has no sense of danger.

Stay close to your baby. Be one step ahead of your baby and do safety checks of:

- your home
- the car
- other homes and places you visit
- the places where:
  - your baby sleeps
  - you bath your baby
  - you change nappies
  - you feed and play with your baby.

### Home safety

#### Falls

Falls are the most common cause of injury for babies and children.

Now your baby can move around, even if they're only rolling, they can easily fall off change tables, chairs and beds and down steps.

**Where possible**, change your baby on the floor, use harnesses in high chairs and shopping trolleys, and install safety gates at the top and bottom of stairs.

#### Choking

Remove all small objects (anything smaller than a 20-cent coin) within your baby's reach.

Your baby should be sitting down while eating.

Avoid hard food items such as nuts (see page 31)

#### Hot drinks and food

Hot drinks and food can burn your baby as badly as fire does, so keep these away from your baby.

Never hold your baby while you are having hot food or drinks, or while cooking.

Always test the temperature of any hot food or drinks before giving them to your baby.

## Poisoning

Keep all medicines, essential oils, cleaning products and other poisons (including alcohol and cigarettes) up high and locked away. Put them away immediately after you've finished using them.

- **Keep the Poisons Information Centre number (13 11 26) in your phone.**

## House fires

Make sure your house has smoke alarms – test your smoke alarms every month. Change the batteries every year on 1 April if your alarm is not wired in.

## Furniture and electric appliances

- Make sure you keep batteries, electric appliances and cords out of reach.
- Be particularly careful with button batteries as these can badly burn your baby's throat and insides.
- Secure TVs, drawers, bookcases to the wall, if possible, so they can't be pulled over. In most cases you can do this if you rent, but talk to your landlord first.

## Baby equipment

- Check that your pram, cot and other baby equipment are safe and meet Australian standards. Follow the instructions carefully.
- Be particularly careful with second hand equipment.

## Water safety

Never leave your baby or any children alone around water.

- **Make sure there is no uncovered water in the house or garden. This includes:**
  - containers such as nappy buckets
  - pet water bowls
  - pots that might fill with water after rain
  - ponds and wading pools.
- Make sure that swimming pool fences and gates are working properly.
- **Take extra care in the bath.** (see page 36).

## Heat and sun safety

Babies are very sensitive to over-heating and sunburn.

### Time of day

- UV (Ultraviolet) radiation levels show when the sun is most likely to cause skin damage. In summer, levels are highest between 9am and 4pm. You can check the UV levels for your area using the SunSmart app ([www.myuv.com.au](http://www.myuv.com.au)).
- Keep your baby out of direct sunlight, especially when the UV radiation level is 3 or above.

### Shade

- Your baby can still get burnt and overheated in the shade.
- Regularly check that your baby is out of direct sunlight.
- Cover your baby, even in the shade:
  - Long sleeves and long pants made of cotton are the best choice for babies.
  - Wide brimmed hats and sunglasses protect baby's eyes.
  - Use sunshades for prams that let through air, and window shades in your car.
- When your child is under 6 months, it's best not to use sunscreen regularly – use shade, clothing, hats and sunglasses. If you need to use sunscreen on uncovered skin for children aged 6 months and older, use one labelled 'for babies' and always test the sunscreen on a small area of your baby's skin to check for any reactions.

## Pet safety

- Never leave your baby alone with animals – even a much loved and gentle old cat or dog can behave differently around babies and children.
- Always wash your and your baby's hands after handling any pets.



Image: Britax Australia

## Car safety

### Heat

- **Never leave your baby or any child alone in a car.**
  - If you have to leave your car, always take your baby with you.
  - It can quickly get very hot inside a car, even on a cloudy day or if the car is in the shade.

### Restraints

It is illegal to put a child under 4 years in the front passenger seat of a vehicle which has 2 or more rows of seats.

#### Under 6 months

- Your baby must travel in an approved, properly fitted baby restraint that is:
  - rear-facing – baby faces backwards in the car
  - properly adjusted to fit.

#### 6 months to 4 years

- Keep your baby in a rear facing child car restraint until they outgrow it – when they have reached the maximum size limits (length/weight).
- Your baby must travel in an approved, properly fitted baby restraint that is:
  - rear-facing – baby faces backwards in the car OR a forward facing child restraint with an inbuilt harness
  - properly adjusted to fit.

### Outside

Don't let your baby play in driveway areas, and always walk around the car before moving it.

- If you're alone with your baby and need to move a vehicle, put them in their car restraint while you move it.
- Make sure everyone who cares for your child is aware of this information.

For more information on babies and car safety including hiring and fitting restraints visit Kidsafe WA ([kidsafewa.com.au](http://kidsafewa.com.au)).

## Alcohol and other drugs

If you're affected by alcohol or other drugs, you may not be able to properly care for your baby. Any alcohol or other drug use can also have negative side effects like mood swings, depression and anxiety, making it hard for you to tune in to your baby's physical and emotional needs. It can also affect your relationship with your partner, making it hard for you to work together to care for your baby.

Alcohol, cigarettes, vapes and other drugs are also toxic to babies and children – even small amounts can lead to death. Treat alcohol and other drugs the same way you treat other poisons:

- Keep substances up high and locked away.
- Wash your hands after use and before handling your baby.

If you're breastfeeding, it's safest for your baby if you don't drink alcohol, smoke, vape or use other drugs as these are passed on to your baby through the breast milk.



## Smoking and vaping

**Cigarette smoke and e-cigarette vapour are bad for everyone, especially babies.**

- If you smoke or vape, one of the best things you can do for you and your baby's health is to quit.
- If anyone smokes or vapes around your baby, your baby is smoking too.
- Smoking and vaping increases your baby's risk of:
  - Sudden Unexpected Death in Infancy (SUDI)
  - ear and chest infections
  - asthma, coughing and wheezing
  - long-term damage to lungs, brain and blood.
- In Western Australia it is against the law to smoke:
  - in a car carrying children
  - within 10 metres of children's playground equipment.

E-cigarettes and vapes can contain nicotine and other harmful chemicals, so do not leave or use them around your baby or other children.

**If you need help to stop smoking or vaping talk to your doctor or pharmacist, or call the Quitline on 13 78 48.**

## In an emergency

They don't happen every day, but accidents do happen.

- It's a good idea to take a first aid course and learn how to do CPR. (CPR is first aid for when someone isn't breathing properly, or their heart has stopped.)
  - Raising Children Network has information on CPR for babies under 12 months.
- Keep a list of emergency phone numbers in your phone or in a handy place.
- **In an emergency call 000.**

### **i** Need more information or help?

- Child health nurse
- Kidsafe WA has a lot of child safety information including a **Child Safety App** with tips based your baby's age.



## Parenting

Hopefully, things will have settled down a bit, you and your baby are getting to understand each other better, and you're getting more confident in parenting.

It's still important to talk through issues and come to agreements about how you parent. Parenting teamwork is good for you and good for your baby. It's about communication, shared decision-making and positive problem-solving.

Keep supporting each other by:

- doing your share around the house and looking after your baby
- giving lots of encouragement and praise
- taking care of yourself as well as your partner.

Remember you are not alone – talk to your partner, family, friends, workmates, or an appropriate professional. Nobody was born an expert at parenting and even with an older baby, we are all learning every day.

Continue to accept offers of help – you don't need to do everything yourself.

If you or your partner have any questions about parenting, you're welcome to speak to your child health nurse – you don't have to wait for your child health nurse appointment.

Your child health nurse will also be able to refer you to other appropriate support.

### **i** Need more information or help?

- Child health nurse
- Dads WA ([ngala.com.au/dadswa](http://ngala.com.au/dadswa))
- Dads in the Early Years ([meerilinga.org.au](http://meerilinga.org.au))
- Rainbow and same-sex families ([raisingchildren.net.au](http://raisingchildren.net.au))



Even with an older baby, we're learning every day.

## Looking after yourselves

One of the best things you can do for your baby is to take care of yourselves.

It takes a lot of physical and emotional energy to care for a baby.

If you are too tired, it can be hard to look after your baby. If you are worried and stressed your baby may sense it and may not settle or relax.

Don't feel guilty about taking some time for yourselves – you and your baby both deserve it!

- Eat well, especially if you are breastfeeding. Have easy, healthy snacks, and try to eat at least 3 times a day.
  - Rest as much as you can while your baby sleeps (or take turns with your partner). Try not to use all this time to catch up on housework or other things.
  - Get some exercise and fresh air. Take your baby for a walk every day, if possible.
  - Do something nice for yourselves every day. Even a quiet coffee or a few minutes phoning a friend helps.
  - Take a break away from your baby sometimes. Take turns having a break if you have a partner, or find someone you trust to mind your baby, even if only for half an hour.
  - Don't try to be perfect. Accept offers of help from people you trust.
  - Take care of your relationship. Spend some time as a couple talking about something other than your baby.
  - Join a group - chat with other parents.
- ★ **If caring for your baby is getting you down, or you are feeling tearful and depressed, read the next section and talk to your child health nurse.**



## Postnatal depression and anxiety

Being a parent is joyful and amazing, but it's also hard work, and there may be times when you (mothers and partners) feel sad, flat, tired or uptight.

These are normal responses that most parents go through.

### Postnatal depression

Postnatal depression can affect mothers and partners, up to a year after your baby was born.

★ **If you have any of the following symptoms for 2 weeks or more within the first year of having your baby, talk to a health professional:**

- finding it difficult to go to sleep, not sleeping well, or waking early (not just because of your new baby)
- not feeling like eating
- are crying or teary a lot of the time
- feeling that you can't cope
- feeling anxious or fearful most of the time
- afraid of being alone with your baby
- having problems with your memory
- thinking that you're not a good parent
- thinking there's something wrong with you
- not having the energy to do anything.

## Everyone needs help sometimes

Sometimes, just the support of a loving partner or family may be enough to help you feel better. However, if the symptoms above don't go away, talk to a health professional you trust, such as your doctor or child health nurse. They can give you information and suggest options to help and support you during this time.

### Anxiety

It's normal to feel sad or worried at different stages in life.

Looking after a baby takes a lot of energy, and when you're exhausted this can lead to feeling of depression or anxiety.

Being a parent is one of the most important and demanding jobs there is. But we often don't recognise the time and energy it takes.

### What can I do about depression and anxiety?

Talk about your feelings with your partner or a health professional you trust, such as your doctor or child health nurse.

- Keep attending (or join) a parenting group to find people you can talk to.
- Don't blame yourself or others for feeling this way.
- Don't expect too much of yourself – set yourself small goals and take each day at a time.
- Follow your doctor's or other health professional's advice.
- Try to keep up your daily routine, including doing things you enjoy or find relaxing.
- Stay in contact with friends and family.

#### **i** Need more information or help?

- Child health nurse
- Your doctor
- Beyond Blue 1300 224 636
- PANDA Helpline 1300 726 306
- See page 50 for more information.

Try and take your baby for a walk every day.



## Child care

At some stage, you may want or have to place your baby in someone else's care – child care.

There are different kinds of child care, so you need to find the right kind for you and your baby.

You need to think about:

- how many hours of care do I need? Is it regular or just occasional?
- do I want my baby cared for in a home or in a centre?
- how many staff are there and are they qualified and experienced?
- do I want the service to provide lunch?
- does the centre provide nappies for children under the age of 2?
- can I claim any costs back?

#### **i** Need more information or help?

- See page 51 for information about child care.

★ **If you think your partner or baby would be better off without you, or are thinking about hurting yourself, your family or your baby, get help immediately (see page 50).**

**If you believe someone's life is in immediate danger, call 000.**



## Family and domestic violence

### What is family violence?

Family violence is when a family member threatens, harms, controls or abuses another family member.

Intimate Partner Violence is when this type of abuse occurs within an intimate relationship.

Family violence is sometimes also called domestic violence, intimate partner violence or domestic abuse.

### Your relationship will affect your baby's growth and development

If you're a parent experiencing family violence, it can also affect your relationship with your baby. It can make it difficult for you to care for your baby's everyday needs, and to give your baby the love and attention they need.

If this is your situation, it's important to know that family violence is never your fault. The person using family violence is responsible for it and the way it affects your family.

Is your relationship with your partner OK?



### Toxic stress

From birth, all babies are aware of, and affected by, what is going on around them. Babies can experience 'toxic stress' if the people caring for them are stressed and tense. Toxic stress is very harmful to a baby's early brain development.

★ **It is important to get help as soon as possible if this is happening.**

### Do you and your partner have a good relationship?

- **I feel safe.** I don't worry that my partner will hurt my body or my feelings.
- I can say 'no' for sex.
- **My partner respects me.** My partner feels what I say, how I feel, what I think is important.
- My partner is happy if I want to **see my family and friends.**
- I can honestly say what I think. If I don't want something, **I can say 'no'.**
- My partner and I **decide things together.** I feel I have the **same power as my partner** in my relationship.

**This good feeling is for everyone.**

**Everyone has the right to a healthy relationship.**

**Maybe your partner does not make you feel good like this.**

★ **If family violence is happening in your home, you need to get help.**



### The partner who is abused

You and your baby have a right to be safe.

You are not responsible for this violence and abuse.

★ **If you're scared or living in fear of your partner, think about your safety and the safety of your baby. You may need to make a safety plan. You can find services to help you with this safely and in confidence, as well as provide support, on page 50.**

**If you or your child are in immediate danger, call the police on 000.**

### The partner who abuses

If you bully or abuse your partner, or find it hard to control your anger, you can learn nonviolent ways to deal with your feelings. Being a good parent includes being a good non-abusive role model for your children.

If you think you could be a danger to your family, leave until you have calmed down.

★ **Talk to someone who understands the problem of family violence or phone a family violence helpline. There's lots of support if you need it – see page 50.**

**i Need more information or help?**

**1800RESPECT**

**(24 hours, 7 days) 1800 737 732**

**Support for people experiencing, or at the risk of experiencing, violence and abuse, their friends and family.**

Contact	How we can help
<b>Emergency</b>	
<b>Ambulance, Fire, Police</b>	<b>000</b> <b>For emergency and life-threatening situations</b>
Poisons Information Centre	13 11 26 If you think someone's been poisoned, including medicines, drugs, chemicals, plants, bites and stings
<b>Parenting information</b>	
Raising Children Network	raisingchildren.net.au Information for raising healthy, happy children
Ngala Parenting Line (8am–8pm 7 days)	ngala.com.au 9368 9368 or *1800 111 546 Counselling, information and support for families
<b>Support for parents and carers</b>	
Playgroup WA	playgroupwa.com.au 9228 8088 or *1800 171 882 Find and join a playgroup near you
Multiple Birth Association	mbawa.org.au 6458 1536 For families raising multiple birth children
Grandcare	wanslea.org.au *1800 794 909 For grandparents raising grandchildren
<b>Crisis and other support (24 hours, 7 days)</b>	
Crisis Care Helpline	*1800 199 008 For people in crisis, needing urgent help
1800RESPECT	*1800 737 732 For anyone experiencing, or at the risk of experiencing, violence and abuse
Men's Domestic Violence Helpline	*1800 000 599 For men concerned about violent and abusive behaviours AND/OR who have experienced family and domestic violence
Women's Domestic Violence Helpline	*1800 007 339 For women and children experiencing family and domestic violence, including safe accommodation
DVassist	dvassist.org.au Family and domestic violence help in regional Western Australia
Alcohol and Drug Support Line	9442 5000 or *1800 198 024 For anyone concerned about their own or another person's alcohol or other drug use
<b>Mental Health/Postnatal depression</b>	
PANDA - Perinatal Anxiety and Depression Australia	panda.org.au For anyone affected by anxiety and depression during pregnancy and early childhood
ForWhen Helpline	forwhenhelpline.org.au 1300 242 322 Access the help you need to better manage mental health challenges as they occur
beyondblue (24 hours, 7 days)	beyondblue.org.au healthyfamilies.org.au 1300 224 636 Crisis counselling and information on mental health, depression, anxiety, postnatal depression
Lifeline (24 hours, 7 days)	lifeline.org.au 13 11 14 Crisis support if you are experiencing a personal crisis or thinking about suicide
<b>Breastfeeding</b>	
Australian Breastfeeding Association Helpline (24 hr, 7 days)	breastfeeding.asn.au *1800 686 268 Breastfeeding support from trained counsellors. Information on breastfeeding including local support groups, breast pump hire.
Breastfeeding Centre of WA	6458 1844 kemh.health.wa.gov.au If you are having problems with breastfeeding
Obstetric Medicines Information Service	6458 2723 Safe use of medicines in pregnancy and breastfeeding

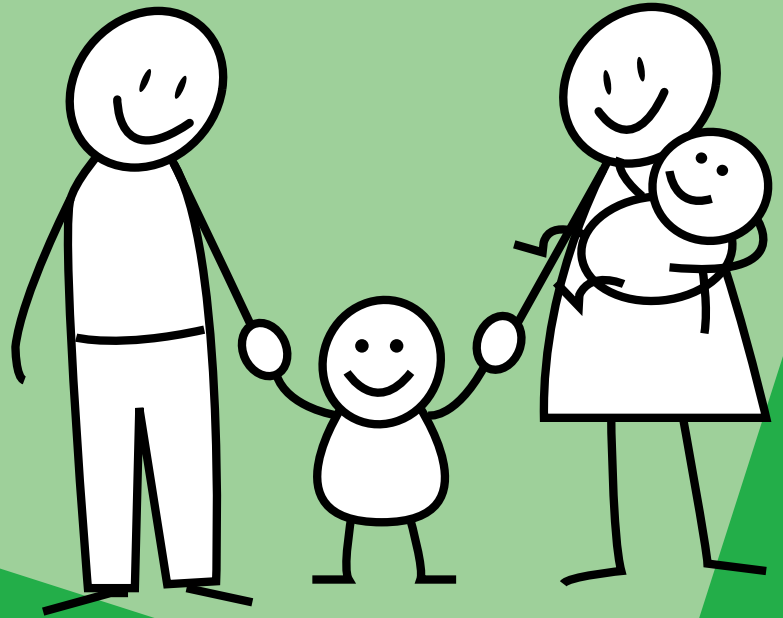
**Contact**      **How we can help**

Contact	How we can help
<b>Child health and safety</b>	
Purple book appointments (8.30am–4pm Mon–Fri)	cahs.health.wa.gov.au/ PurpleBook 1300 749 869 Book your Purple Book appointments by phone or register online (Perth metropolitan only)
Child Health Centre (you may need an appointment)	healthywa.wa.gov.au/ service-search Find your nearest Child Health Centre
Child Development Service (appointment/referral required)	cahs.health.wa.gov.au/ ChildDevelopment (metro) wacountry.health.wa.gov.au (non-metro) Services for children with, or at risk of developmental difficulties and delay
Immunisation clinic (you may need an appointment)	healthywa.wa.gov.au/ immunisation Find your nearest Immunisation Clinic for free childhood vaccinations.
Kidsafe WA	kidsafewa.com.au 6244 4880 Help keep babies and children safe at home, on the road and at play. Free <b>Child Safety App</b> .
Red Nose Australia	rednose.org.au Safe sleeping, tummy time and safe wrapping information. Free <b>SAFE SLEEPING App</b>
Bright Tomorrows	brighttomorrows.org.au <b>Free App</b> to help build young brains
<b>Health and medical services</b>	
healthdirect (24 hours, 7 days)	healthdirect.gov.au *1800 022 222 Health advice with a registered nurse. Online health information.
Quitline (8am–8pm Mon–Fri)	13 78 48 Help to quit smoking and vaping
Sexual Health Quarters	shq.org.au 9227 6178 or *1800 198 205 Information and services on contraception, pap smears, planned and unplanned pregnancy, period problems and sexual difficulties
<b>Child care</b>	
Starting Blocks	startingblocks.gov.au Finding the right child care for you
Child Care Subsidy	dese.gov.au/early-childhood Child Care Subsidy and how to claim it
<b>Translation/communication (24 hours, 7 days)</b>	
Translating and Interpreting Service (24 hr, 7 days)	13 14 50 Phone if you need an interpreter. You need the name and phone number of the agency that you want to contact.
National Relay Service (24 hr, 7 days)	relayservice.gov.au TTY/voice calls: 133 677 Speak & Listen: 1300 555 727 SMS relay: 0423 677 767 Phone service for people who are deaf or have a hearing or speech impairment or for anyone who wants to call a person with a hearing or speech impairment.

\*Freecall: Calls made from a mobile may be charged at a timed rate.

**i Find this information online:**





# Have your say

We welcome feedback, both positive and negative.  
It helps us provide you with a better service.

If you have any compliments or complaints about your child health appointment,  
please tell a staff member or contact:

- **Metropolitan:** [cahs.health.wa.gov.au/cahsfeedback](https://cahs.health.wa.gov.au/cahsfeedback)
- **Country:** [wacountry.health.wa.gov.au/feedback](https://wacountry.health.wa.gov.au/feedback)
- **Care Opinion:** You can also share your feedback anonymously (without your name) at [CareOpinion.org.au](https://CareOpinion.org.au)

## Your Baby magazine – what do you think?



This magazine is how we provide information to families in WA.  
Because every family is different, your feedback can help us  
make it better for other parents.

Please scan the QR code or visit  
[cahs.health.wa.gov.au/magazine](https://cahs.health.wa.gov.au/magazine) to let us know what's useful,  
what we should remove, and what we missed out.

This document can be made available in alternative formats on request for a  
person with a disability. Please contact: [childcommunity@health.wa.gov.au](mailto:childcommunity@health.wa.gov.au)

This publication is provided for general education and information purposes. Contact a qualified healthcare professional  
for any medical advice needed.

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