

# 0-2 MONTHS

Your baby from birth to two months  
Supporting your family during your baby's first year



0-2  
MONTHS





## YOUR BABY AT 0 - 2 MONTHS

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

This booklet provides general information on your baby's health in the first months and how to look after your health too.

### RECOMMENDATIONS



#### Baby nutrition

- Exclusive breastfeeding is recommended for 6 months
- At around 6 months, start to introduce a variety of solid foods, starting with iron rich foods (e.g. mashed meat, fish, chicken or legumes), with continued breastfeeding up to 2 years of age or beyond



#### Active play

- Children under 2 years should have no screen time including, no television, DVDs, using computers, iPads, iPhones or any other electronic games
- Babies, toddlers and pre-schoolers should not be kept inactive for more than one hour at a time, with the exception of sleeping



#### Immunisation

- At birth your baby should receive a hepatitis B vaccine
- At baby's 6 - 8 week health check they should receive 3 vaccines, to protect against hepatitis B, diphtheria, tetanus, whooping cough, influenza, polio, pneumococcal disease, and rotavirus

# FEEDING YOUR BABY



## BREASTFEEDING

Exclusive breastfeeding is recommended until your baby is 6 months old. This means that your baby does not need to be given other food or drink including water, juice, non-human milk and formula (unless advised by your Child and Family Health Nurse (CFHN), GP/Paediatrician).

### Tips for successful breastfeeding:

- hold your baby close to you
- cradle your baby in your arms so they are facing you, chest to chest
- ensure your baby's nose or top lip is opposite your nipple
- move your baby towards your breast
- have your baby's chin touching your breast
- keep your baby well supported during the feed

### First months

During the early weeks breastfeeding can be challenging. It can take up to 6 - 8 weeks to get through some breastfeeding problems and build your confidence. You and your baby are learning how to breastfeed together.

During the first months your baby may have hungry days when they need to feed more often for a day or two to maintain or build up your supply. The only way to know how many feeds your baby needs is by watching out for and responding to their feeding cues. In the first few weeks your baby will want to be fed around every 2 - 5 hours. Most babies will breastfeed 8 - 12 times within 24 hours.

### Common problems during breastfeeding

Sometimes mothers experience problems with breastfeeding such as breast fullness, sore nipples or breast infection. These can all be treated easily. Breastfeeding will be an enjoyable and comfortable experience. If you are not feeling confident breastfeeding your baby there are a number of free services that can support you and help build confidence.

### Expressing

There may be occasions when your baby cannot feed at the breast and you may need to express and cup or bottle feed. You can express by using your hand, hand-held pumps or electric pumps. This is a personal decision. It may also be helpful to talk to your Midwife, CFHN, Lactation Consultant/breastfeeding support clinic, GP or one of the services below if you have any questions.



SERVICES	CONTACT DETAILS
Australian Breastfeeding Association	1800 686 268
Lactation Consultants	<a href="http://www.lcanz.org/">www.lcanz.org/</a>
Tresillian	1300 272 736
Karitane	1300 227 464
Raising Children Network	<a href="http://raisingchildren.net.au/">raisingchildren.net.au/</a>



### Cup or bottle feeding

If you are unable to feed your baby at the breast, it is important that you or your partner interact with your baby when cup or bottle feeding. This includes holding your baby close, giving them eye contact, smiling and enjoying this time together.

For safe feeding remember to:

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

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

Contact Healthy Beginnings via email [SLHD-HealthyBeginnings@health.nsw.gov.au](mailto:SLHD-HealthyBeginnings@health.nsw.gov.au) for further support and information.

## BABY FEEDING CUES/SIGNS

### Early cues - "I'm hungry"



*Stirring*



*Mouth opening*



*Turning head/  
seeking/rooting*

### Mid cues - "I'm really hungry"



*Stretching*



*Increasing  
movement*



*Hand to mouth*

### Late cues - "Calm me, then feed me"



*Crying*



*Agitated  
body movements*



*Colour  
turning red*



# BABY FEED, PLAY AND SLEEP CYCLE

For the first few months of life your baby's day will include a feed, play, sleep cycle. Every baby is different and the cycle will change as your baby grows. The key is to learn your baby's signals including when to feed them following hunger and fullness signs, when they are sleepy and how to include play time throughout the day.



## FEED

- Newborns feed about every 2 - 5 hours throughout the day
- Babies need about 6 - 8 feeds every 24 hours (including overnight feeds)
- It is important to follow your baby's hunger and fullness signs; these will be different for each baby, so it is important that you get to learn your baby's cues



## PLAY

- Playing with your baby is important for their development
- Activities you and your partner can try include:
  - tummy time, 2 - 4 times throughout the day for 1 - 2 minutes
  - taking them for a walk, then you can get your exercise too
  - singing a song or reading a story



## SLEEP

- Most babies sleep between 1 - 4 hours (15 - 18 hours total over 24 hours)
- Some babies have long crying periods and may not always sleep at regular times. Babies cry mostly because they are hungry, thirsty, hot or cold, have a wet nappy, overtired, or in need of a cuddle
- To help settle your crying baby you and your partner can try the following:
  - cuddling or holding your baby close to you (can include skin-to-skin contact)
  - rhythmic gentle patting
  - walking your baby in a pram or sling, or giving them a bath

### **HUNGER** signs include:

- moving head and mouth about when waking
- clicking or sucking movements with mouth
  - sucking on hands
- increased alertness

### **FULLNESS** signs include:

- stops sucking
- closes mouth, turns away from the nipple

*See your CFHN or GP if you are concerned about your baby's appetite or growth.*

# LOOKING AFTER YOURSELF

## Getting active after birth






It is important to rest and recover from the birth of your baby. Exercising can help with both your physical and emotional health. When you feel you have recovered and you are ready to exercise, start gradually by doing moderate exercise, about 30 minutes per day.

### Exercise ideas:

- walking, or join a pram walking group in your area
- swimming after 4 - 6 weeks post birth
- yoga/stretching
- light gardening

## Your nutrition

Eating nutritious foods and physical activity work hand in hand. All new parents need to keep their energy levels up. This can be done by eating a variety of the 5 recommended food groups:

-  Vegetables and legumes/beans
-  Fruits
-  Wholegrain breads and cereals
-  Dairy
-  Protein rich food such as meat and meat alternatives

## Breastfeeding and nutrition

It is normal to feel hungrier when you are breastfeeding as your body needs more energy to make milk. When you breastfeed, your body absorbs the nutrients from food better, and uses some of the fat stores from when you were pregnant. This is why breastfeeding can help you lose weight.

Just like listening to your baby's hunger and fullness cues it is also important that you listen to your body to guide how much you eat and drink.

Whether you are breastfeeding or not, remember to eat a variety of the 5 food groups. For information on how much to eat from each group look at the 'Antenatal' booklet.



## Your emotional wellbeing

Soon after giving birth, you may feel like crying, feel anxious or moody. This is called the 'baby blues', which is experienced by almost 80% of women. These feelings usually last for only a few days.

You may also:

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

*If you or your partner have any of these symptoms for longer than 1 - 2 weeks it is important you seek help early from your CFHN, GP or Midwife.*

## Your relationship

The transition to becoming a family is a joyful experience but it can also be physically and emotionally stressful on you and your partner. Adjusting to your new responsibility as a parent might lead to spending less time with each other.

Tips on how to keep your relationship strong:

- encourage and support each other
- organise close friends or family to take care of your baby for small breaks
- share the care of your baby to give each other some individual 'me' time to look after your wellbeing
- enjoy going out together with the baby

## Sharing the care

Tips on how your partner can share the care:

- place the baby on your partner's chest for skin-to-skin contact
- change, bath and massage the baby
- cuddle and settle
- carry the baby in a sling or carrier
- tummy time

## Getting help from family and friends

Some cultures encourage mothers to stay at home for 40 days after birth. So it is really important that you receive help and support from family, friends and other sources.

Tips on how to get help:

- ask family to help around the house such as meal preparation, laundry or shopping
- join online parenting blogs to connect with other mums (e.g. Raising Children Network Forum)
- call Australian Breastfeeding Association
- watch videos on feeding and playing with your baby (e.g. Raising Children Network, ABA)
- call parent help lines Karitane or Tresillian

# WHAT TO CONSIDER DURING YOUR BABY'S FIRST MONTH



## YOUR BABY'S HEALTH

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



## YOUR HEALTH

- Healthy eating
- Breastfeeding and nutrition
- Physical activity
- Emotional health



## SOCIAL SUPPORT

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



## HOME, FAMILY AND WORK

- Infant CPR
- Creating a safe environment for your baby



Next Booklet

## 2-4 MONTHS

### CONTACT

HB

**Healthy Beginnings**  
[www.healthybeginnings.net.au](http://www.healthybeginnings.net.au)

HD

**Health Direct Australia**  
[www.healthdirect.org.au](http://www.healthdirect.org.au)

**Acknowledgements:** The Healthy Beginnings program was funded by the NSW Health Translational Research Grant Scheme 2016 (ID number: TRGS 200) and NHMRC Partnership Project 2019 (#APP1169823). We sincerely thank participating partners of the project from the Sydney, South Eastern Sydney, South Western Sydney and Southern NSW Local Health Districts, and members of the advisory committee and project management team. This resource was part of the Healthy Beginnings program developed by SLHD Population Health and Community Health Services. The information for this resource was obtained from NSW Health sources, National Health and Medical Research Council, Australian Breastfeeding Association and Raising Children Network. The information in this resource is for general guidance only and should not be a substitute for professional advice

