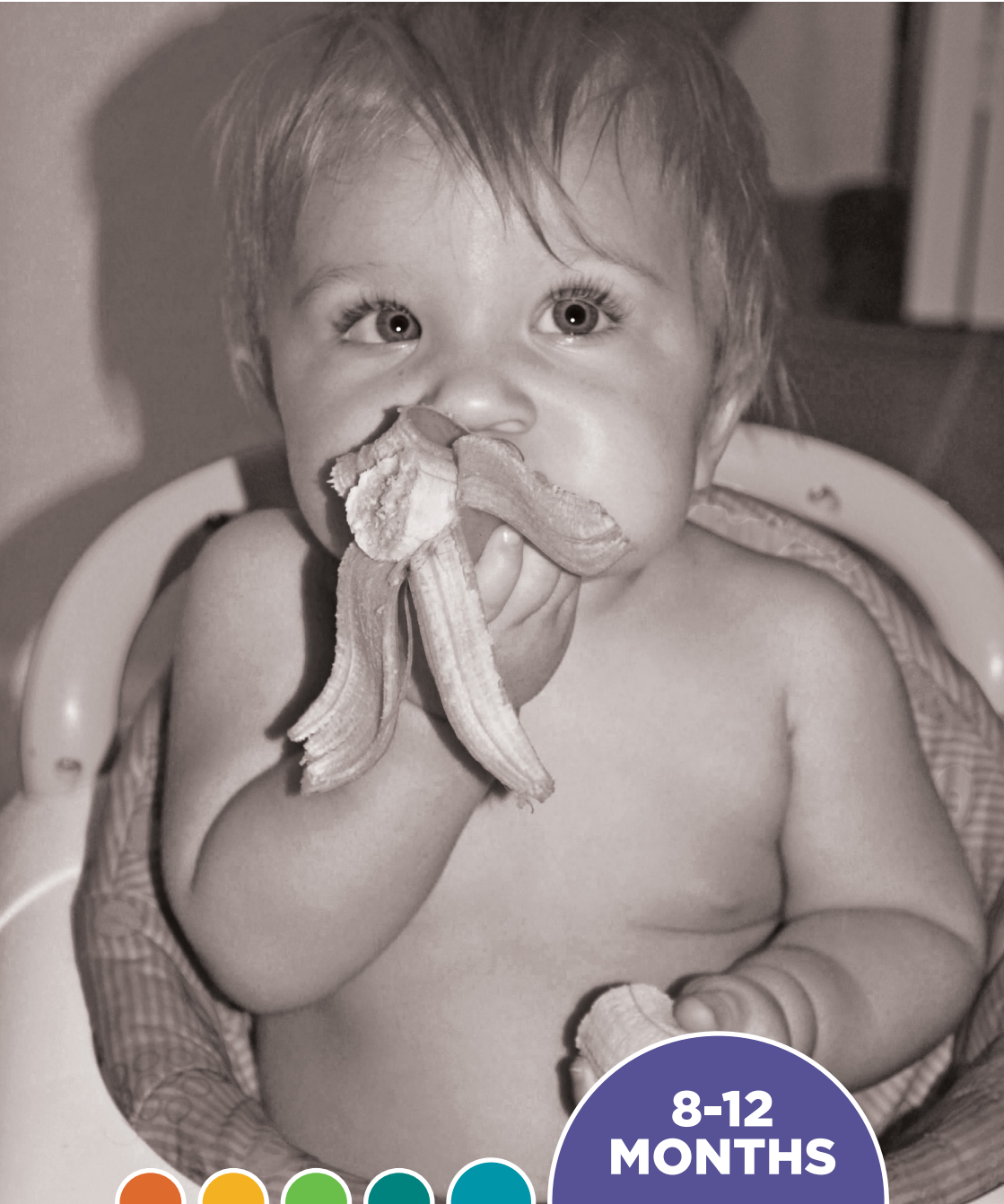


# 8-12 MONTHS

Your baby from eight to twelve months  
Supporting your family during your baby's first year



**8-12  
MONTHS**





## YOUR BABY AT 8 - 12 MONTHS

Healthy eating and active play are important for your baby.

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

### RECOMMENDATIONS



#### Baby nutrition

- **6 - 12 months**  
Continue breastfeeding and at around 8 - 12 months babies should now be offered finger foods or family foods
  - Offer cooled boiled water in a cup
  - If not breastfed, start using a cup instead of a bottle aiming to stop all bottle feeds by 12 months
- **12 months and beyond**  
Continue breastfeeding up to 2 years of age and beyond



#### Active play

- **Encourage free movement**  
Supervised active play time is encouraged for as long as possible every day. Aim for at least 2 - 3 sessions daily
- **Limit inactivity**  
Children aged 0 - 5 years shouldn't be still for longer than an hour at a time, unless they are sleeping
- **No screen time**  
Children under 2 years should have no screen time including no TV, DVDs, using computers, iPads, tablets, smart phones or any other electronic devices



#### Immunisation

- At 12 months your baby is due for immunisations to protect against influenza, meningococcal, measles, mumps and rubella
- At 12 months your baby is due for a physical and developmental check (See your Blue Book)

# FEEDING YOUR BABY



## SOLIDS AND MILK FEEDING

Milk feeding whether from breast, bottle or cup would have been your baby's main source of nutrition until around 6 months of age.

At 8 - 12 months milk feeding might happen about 4 times a day between feeding them solid foods. By 12 months, your baby should be eating about 3 small meals a day and healthy snacks.

### Continue breastfeeding

Breastfeeding is still very important for your baby and combined with family foods it provides them with the nutrition they need. Although you may find that the time your baby feeds is less now, they are still getting the amount that their body needs.

Through your breastfeeding journey it is common to experience ups and downs. These may be due to life events including starting childcare, illness, teething, developmental change or breast refusal. If you need support during these challenges speak to your Child and Family Health Nurse (CFHN), Australian Breastfeeding Association or GP.

Check out the Healthy Beginnings booklets for more support.

### Family foods

At 8 - 12 months babies are still exploring the different types of foods flavours and textures. There is no need to cook 'special' foods for them as they should be eating the same food as the rest of the family.

In particular, babies need foods that are high in iron and calcium for their growth and development.

### Family foods can help your baby:

- learn how to chew
- eat by themselves
- accept new foods

Boiled or steamed vegetables: pumpkin, potato, carrot, asparagus strips

Boiled pasta

Cooked lean meat cut up into cubes or strips

Raw food: tomato slices, whole small banana, small ripe pear

Cheese sticks, sandwiches



## Practical tips

- Always watch your baby while they are eating to avoid choking accidents
- You might have to try lots of times before your baby accepts and enjoys different foods and textures
- When offering family foods do not add salt, sugar, or other additives to their food (e.g. stock or soy sauce)
- Make sure the temperature of the food is not too hot
- Enjoying healthy meals together as a family can help your baby to develop healthy eating habits
- Processed foods with fat, sugar or salt are not recommended for babies (e.g. cakes, biscuits, chips, fried foods)
- Learning to eat can be messy and slow, try to stay calm and patient during this process as it will help your baby enjoy mealtimes

## FEEDING YOUR BABY WHEN YOU'RE OUT AND ABOUT

There are plenty of finger foods or cooked meals that you can prepare before going out with your baby. See the Family foods section for ideas on healthy snacks.

Commercial baby foods can be useful and convenient, however:

- most foods marketed for babies (e.g. custard, yoghurts or pureed fruits) offer no added nutritional value compared to regular products
- they don't give your baby the opportunity to learn how to eat different textures or flavours of food that the family eats. If babies are given these regularly this can affect or delay speech
- the "squeezezy" food pouches don't allow your baby to explore, play and chew the food. Babies suck the food which can also cause teeth to decay and affect your baby's speech development
- they are more expensive than home cooked food

## HOW MUCH FOOD?

Every baby is different with the way they eat, what they enjoy eating and how much they eat. It is important to keep offering a variety of healthy foods and you will learn when your baby is hungry or full, not interested or tired.

### Signs of hunger

- Getting excited and making noises when they see you with food
- Placing their hands in their mouth
- Grabbing or leaning towards you when you have food
- Opening their mouth as you feed them

### Signs of fullness

- Turning their head
- Pushing your hand or the food away
- Crawling or walking away
- Pressing their lips tightly together

## CUP DRINKING

- By 12 months it is recommended that all bottles are stopped and that your baby drinks milk and water from a cup
- Offer cooled, boiled water in a cup to your baby
- From 12 months you can offer full cream cow's milk in a cup
- Toddler follow-on milks are not necessary
- Stopping all bottles and drinking only from a cup will reduce the chance of ear infections and tooth decay

Remember: Fruit juice, soft drinks, flavoured milk and other sweetened drinks aren't healthy or recommended. They have a lot of sugar and this can cause tooth decay.



## DENTAL CARE FOR BABY TEETH AND GUMS

### 3 easy steps to keep your baby's teeth and gums healthy



#### Put your baby to bed without a bottle

Stop the bottle at around 12 months of age



#### Start drinking from a cup at around 6 months of age

Cooled boiled tap water until 12 months of age



#### Start brushing when your baby gets their first tooth

Until your baby is 18 months, use only water on their toothbrush, after then start using a low fluoride toothpaste

## YOUR BABY'S SLEEP

- At 8 - 12 months most babies sleep about 9 - 12 hours at night and may need to sleep around 1 - 4 times a day
- Babies commonly wake at night for reassurance and care
- At this age babies are developing and learning new skills which can affect their ability to sleep including:
  - crawling: they can move around more
  - memory development: they can now remember things that exist, including that you're around and cry for you after waking up
  - separation anxiety: when your baby gets upset because you're not around or they cannot see you
- Try to settle your baby to sleep without milk feeding: aim for feed-play-sleep routine
- Keep trying to support your baby to settle themselves to sleep. The more you practise this, the less time it will take overall to calm your baby

## YOUR BABY'S PLAY

Playing helps your baby with brain growth and physical development. Your baby needs plenty of opportunities for free movement in a safe place.

Try inside or outside play for your baby to develop skills.

### Activities babies may enjoy

Swimming or water play, baby gym, exploring swinging and climbing at the park, rolling balls, little push cars or trolleys, organised music groups for babies, playgroups or baby soft play areas in shopping centres.

### Tips for outdoor play

- Sun safety: hats, sunscreen with SPF 30+ or more, avoid the heat in the middle of the day, loose clothing, try to cover arms and legs
- Pack water to drink and healthy snacks or lunch for yourself, the family and your baby



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## LOOKING AFTER YOURSELF

The Healthy Beginnings booklets have provided you with practical information and tips on how to look after your physical and emotional health. It is always useful to keep setting new goals for yourself to keep on top of your health.

Check out the Healthy Beginnings booklets for more support.

### Physical activity for the family

Along with eating healthy family foods, being physically active is important for the whole family. There are many health benefits including general fitness, managing stress levels, improving wellbeing and energy levels, helping with weight control and improving bone strength.

Family activities can include:

- playing in the park (e.g. ball games, sand play or tips)
- flying a kite
- bike riding
- swimming
- bush walks
- outing with family or friends (e.g. picnic or barbeque)

# WHAT TO CONSIDER WHEN YOUR BABY IS AT 8 - 12 MONTHS



## YOUR BABY'S HEALTH

- Continue breastfeeding, aim to continue up to 2 years or beyond
- Introduce a variety of foods to your baby especially high iron and calcium foods
- Offering your baby family foods
- Drinking water from a cup
- Feed, play, sleep cycle
- Clean baby's teeth twice a day
- Keep up to date with immunisations
- Encourage your baby to have plenty of active play for their physical and mental development
- Plan a Personal Health Record check for your baby at 12 months with your CFHN or GP



## YOUR HEALTH

- Aim for healthy eating including 2 fruits and 5 serves of vegetables every day
- Drink water
- At least 30 minutes of physical activity every day
- Take some time for your self-care and be aware of your emotional health
- Seek support if needed
- Join Get Healthy Information and Coaching Service and call 1300 806 258



## SOCIAL SUPPORT

- Attend an Australian Breastfeeding Association Support Group- information/support and socialising [www.breastfeeding.asn.au/contacts/groups](http://www.breastfeeding.asn.au/contacts/groups)
- Make social connections with family, friends and neighbours
- Visit: [www.resourcingparents.nsw.gov.au](http://www.resourcingparents.nsw.gov.au) for other groups in your area
- Join a play group - check out: [www.playgroupnsw.org.au](http://www.playgroupnsw.org.au)
- Try your local library for rhyme time or story time and other free activities
- Try an online parenting forum to stay connected with other mums



## HOME, FAMILY AND WORK

- Create a home environment that is safe and ready for a baby on the move
- Eat meals together as a family as often as possible



## CONTACT



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



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

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