

2 - 4 MONTHS

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



2-4
MONTHS





YOUR BABY AT 2 - 4 MONTHS

Healthy eating and active play are important for your baby.

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

RECOMMENDATIONS



Nutrition

0 - 6 months

- Breastmilk only
- No solids until 6 months

6 - 12 months

- Continue breastfeeding and 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)

12 months and beyond

- Continue breastfeeding up to 2 years of age and beyond



Active play

Tummy time

- Supervised tummy time increases to 10 - 15 minutes 3 times a day

No screen time

- Children under 2 years should have no screen time including, no TV, DVDs, using computers, iPads, iPhones or any other electronic devices



Immunisation

- At 4 months your baby should receive immunisations to protect against diphtheria, tetanus, whooping cough, influenza, hepatitis B, polio, and also pneumococcal disease and rotavirus

FEEDING YOUR BABY



By this stage we hope you are feeling more comfortable and confident with breastfeeding. If you are experiencing any breast or nipple pain or are concerned about your milk supply, talk to your Child and Family Health Nurse (CFHN), Lactation Consultant/breastfeeding support clinic, GP or check out the Healthy Beginnings 0 - 2 Months booklet to find other services.

Benefits of exclusive breastfeeding

Exclusive breastfeeding is recommended until your baby is 6 months old. You may have seen food or nutritional products advertised for babies at 4 months. Food other than breastmilk is not necessary unless you have been advised by a health practitioner.

Breastmilk contains all the protective nutrients your baby needs including prebiotics, probiotics, and antibodies.

Exclusive breastfeeding until 6 months and continued breastfeeding beyond 12 months has health benefits for your baby at different ages and stages, including:

- developing their digestive system
- their immune system becomes stronger
- it can protect against ear infections
- it can protect against and reduce allergies
- they will have learnt to listen to their appetite including hunger and fullness cues
- their mouth, lips, tongue and jaw muscles develop which is important for speech development

Breastfeeding in public

Now that you and your baby have the skills and confidence in breastfeeding there will be times when you are out of your home and you will need to feed your baby in public.

Tips to help you with breastfeeding in public include:



Remembering that it is your legal right to breastfeed in public anywhere in Australia



Wearing buttoned down tops or dresses that are easily lifted



Using a wrap or scarf across your shoulders for your own comfort



Feeding your baby before they get too hungry and upset



Finding out if there is a baby care room available near where you are visiting



Choosing a quiet spot in a public space



To find a baby care room, Australian Breastfeeding Association has a list of breastfeeding friendly locations. Check their website www.breastfeeding.asn.au/advocacy/welcomelist.asp for more information.



BABY FEED, PLAY AND SLEEP CYCLE

As your baby grows their feed and sleep cycle also changes and you will get to learn their signals and know what they need.



FEED

- At 4 months they can feed up to 6 - 8 times in 24 hours
- They will know when they are hungry and full so keep watching their cues
- As they grow, feeds will be shorter and your breasts will adjust to their needs
- Offer both breasts during feeds by starting with one breast until it becomes softer and lighter. If your baby is still showing hunger cues then switch breasts

How to know if your baby is getting enough breastmilk:

- nappies:
 - heavy, clear-coloured wet nappies 5 times in 24 hours
 - baby's poos are soft and yellow-mustard in colour
- growth:
 - baby is gaining weight, growth in length and head circumference
- skin:
 - baby's skin colour looks healthy and their skin springs back when gently pressed
- alertness:
 - baby is alert and mostly happy when awake



PLAY

As your baby grows you will see them develop physically and mentally at different ages and stages. At 2 - 4 months some common developmental signs include:

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

Activities that you can do to help your baby's development at this age:

- supervised tummy time for 10 - 15 minutes 3 times a day
- walks in the pram
- storytelling using soft books
- joining a parent group
- joining Playgroups NSW: Play Baby



SLEEP

- Babies can go through developmental stages and may be more fussy at around 4 months
- They may be more clingy, cry more, need more comfort, are difficult to settle or wake more often
- If your baby does experience a fussy developmental stage, this is usually temporary and resolves in a few days
- Tips for settling:
 - rhythmic, gentle patting
 - going for a walk in the pram or sling
 - giving them a bath or massage
- For ongoing difficulties with managing your baby's sleep behaviour contact your CFHN or GP

LOOKING AFTER YOURSELF

Your baby's feed and sleep cycle may be more predictable now so make sure you schedule in time to look after yourself and do activities you enjoy. Asking close family or friends to help with jobs around the house such as laundry, cleaning or shopping can give you time to yourself.



Your emotional wellbeing

Meeting the demands of being a mother, partner, family or friend can be challenging and overwhelming so it is important to take care of your emotional wellbeing.

Some ways to do this include:

- practising mindfulness
 - living in the moment rather than thinking about the past or worrying about the future
- muscle relaxation
 - physically relaxing your body can help you feel calmer and can be great for stress relief
- breathing exercises
 - focusing on your basic breathing exercises helps release muscle tension
- social interaction
 - catching up with friends and family which helps you feel connected
- physical activity and nutrition
 - 20 - 30 minutes of physical activity per day
 - eat a variety of the 5 recommended food groups
 - join the free Get Healthy Information and Telephone Coaching Service to help you with your healthy eating and physical activity goals

Your relationships

The wellbeing of parents has a great influence on their children. Looking after your relationships with your partner, family and friends will benefit the whole family.

Relationships can change when you are a parent as you may have less sleep, more demands and less time to be with and talk to others.

If you have a partner, a close family member or friend, talking regularly and openly to them can help you stay connected and feel supported. Communication is best if it is face-to-face but if you don't have time you can use Skype™, phone or text messages.

If you are not enjoying your usual activities or feeling overwhelmed and have persistent low mood, talk to your CFHN, GP or one of the services below. These services provide confidential counselling and peer support to parents who have experienced perinatal anxiety or depression during and after birth.

Service contact details

Perinatal Anxiety & Depression Australia (PANDA) - 1300 726 306

beyondblue - 1300 224 636

Pregnancy, Birth & Baby - 1800 882 436

Get Healthy - 1300 806 258

Parenting challenges

Parenthood is a time of great change. Receiving different advice on how to look after your baby from family, friends or even social media can make it difficult to work out what is best for your baby, yourself and the family. It takes time to develop the confidence and know what information is helpful.

Helpful tips:

- be realistic with parenting expectations and do not let parenting information on media set your standard
- try not to overwhelm yourself with parenting information, choose 2 or 3 trusted sources such as a GP or CFHN and non-judgemental supportive family or friends
- look after your own health

WHAT TO CONSIDER WHEN YOUR BABY IS 2 - 4 MONTHS



YOUR BABY'S HEALTH

- Continue exclusive breastfeeding
- Active play: supervised tummy time, floor time, interaction by reading, singing, talking and cuddles
- Immunisation
- Feed, play, sleep cycle
- Sleep and settling



YOUR HEALTH

- Healthy eating
- Breastfeeding and nutrition
- Confidence to breastfeed in public
- Active lifestyle : physical activity
- Emotional health and wellbeing: relaxation



SOCIAL SUPPORT

- Connecting with Early Childhood Health Centres
- Joining parent groups, Playgroups NSW: Play Baby
- Australian Breastfeeding Association
- Keep connected with other mums: parenting forums, friends and family



HOME, FAMILY AND WORK

- Infant CPR
- Creating a safe environment for your baby
- Become an active family
- Regular family meal time
- Connect and express how you are feeling with a close family member or friend



Next Booklet

4-6 MONTHS

CONTACT



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