

# Caring for baby

Information for parents



## Information for parents

Becoming a parent changes your life and can be one of the most wonderful, but challenging, experiences.

It's ok to ask for help if you need it. Seeking support and dealing with any issues or concerns early can stop things becoming worse.

Look under the 'Where to go for help' section on pages 47-53 for a list of contact details of services that are available to support your family.

This section provides information about keeping your child safe including safe sleeping habits, feeding your baby, toddler and preschooler, and settling baby.

For ideas on fun play activities for your child at every age, visit the websites [www.raisingchildren.net.au](http://www.raisingchildren.net.au) and [www.greatstart.sa.edu.au](http://www.greatstart.sa.edu.au)

Most importantly, **ask for help** if you need it.

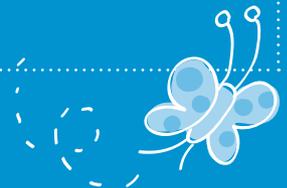
### Postnatal depression

More than 15% of women and 10% of men develop Postnatal Depression (PND). It is one of the possible complications of pregnancy and childbirth.

Signs include sleep disturbances, loss of appetite, feeling sad, unable to cope, irritable and/or anxious, loss of concentration, loss of confidence and self-esteem, feeling guilty and inadequate, or fear of being alone.

If you think you may be experiencing Postnatal Depression, contact your family doctor or the Child and Family Health Service on **1300 733 606**.

**Seek help early.**

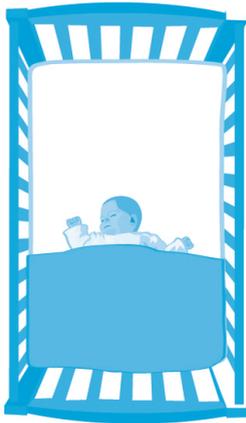


## Sleeping baby safely

New babies spend a lot of their time asleep. Some sleeping arrangements are not safe and can increase the risk of Sudden Unexpected Death in Infancy including SIDS, and fatal sleeping accidents.

Unfortunately, every year some babies still die while sleeping in an unsafe sleeping arrangement and most of these deaths are preventable.

Your Child and Family Health Service nurse/health worker can discuss this further with you. They will work with you to help find safe sleep habits for your baby.



*Diagram developed by SIDS and Kids 2014*

There are a number of things you can do to help your baby sleep safely and reduce the risk of Sudden Unexpected Death in Infancy:

- > put your baby to sleep on their back
- > keep your baby's head and face uncovered (no beanie, no hat, no hooded clothing)
- > keep your baby 'smoke free' before and after birth
- > create a safe sleeping environment for night and day sleeps (safe cot, mattress and bedding)
- > sleep your baby in a safe cot next to your bed for the first 6 to 12 months
- > check that the cot meets current Australian standards
- > check that the mattress is firm, clean, well-fitting and flat
- > make sure there is no loose bedding, quilts, doonas, pillows, cot bumpers, sheepskins or soft toys in the cot
- > where possible, breastfeed your baby.

## Sleeping baby safely continued

Through discussion with you and seeing where your baby sleeps, the Child and Family Health Service nurse/health worker:

- agrees you are doing everything you can to help your baby sleep safely
- suggests some changes for your baby to sleep safely and reduce the risk of Sudden Unexplained Deaths in Infancy.

Date \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

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### More information

#### Red Nose

*(previously SIDS and Kids National)*

Ph: 1300 998 698

[www.rednose.com.au](http://www.rednose.com.au)

#### SIDS and Kids SA

Ph: 8322 1066

1300 799 656 (Emergency Crisis)

[www.sidssa.org](http://www.sidssa.org)

#### Red Nose Safe Sleeping app

(available for iPhone or Android)

#### Child and Family Health Service

Ph: 1300 733 606

[www.cyh.com](http://www.cyh.com)

#### Kidsafe SA

Ph: 8161 6318

[www.kidsafesa.com.au](http://www.kidsafesa.com.au)

#### Parent Helpline

Ph: 1300 364 100

#### Keeping Baby Safe – A Guide To Infant And Nursery Products

[www.productsafety.gov.au](http://www.productsafety.gov.au)

## Child safety

Smoking around your child can damage their health. One of the best things you can do for your child is to avoid exposing them to cigarette smoke, and if you can, to quit smoking. For help call Quitline on 13 78 48.

For more information about keeping your child safe, contact Kidsafe on 8161 6318 or go to [www.kidsafesa.com.au](http://www.kidsafesa.com.au)

### Babies and toddlers (from birth to 3 years)

#### Sleep

- » See pages 39-40.

#### Falls

- » Never leave babies unattended on the change table, bed, couch or any raised surface – they may roll and fall off.
- » Use a full harness with high chairs, swings and prams.

#### Cars and travelling

- » Use a correctly fitted car restraint for all children on every trip.
- » Watch them in the driveway and garage. Make sure you know exactly where they are before moving the car.
- » Never leave your baby / child unattended in a car, even if only for a short time.

#### Water

- » Watch them at all times when they are near water (including baths, buckets, wading pools, swimming pools).
- » Empty baths, buckets and wading pools after each use and make sure backyard pools are child-safe fenced. A child can drown silently in as little as 5cm of water.

#### Burns

- » Keep hot things such as tea, coffee, heaters and hot appliances out of reach to prevent burns.
- » Use a sunscreen and hat to protect your child from sunburn.

#### Animals

- » Supervise your child with animals and pets. All dogs have the potential to bite a child. Keep cats and dogs out of your baby's bedroom.

#### Home

- » Keep curtain and blind cords and other hazards up and well away from the cot or floor.
- » Keep all medicines and household chemicals (such as those used for cleaning) up high and out of reach in a locked cupboard.
- » Check for items around your home that may contain coin-sized or smaller button batteries and place them out of sight and reach of young children.
- » Secure TVs and heavy furniture such as bookshelves and cabinets so they don't topple on children.
- » Put a safety gate at the top and bottom of stairs to prevent falls and unsafe access.

### Preschoolers (3 to 5 years)

- » Set up play equipment on a soft surface and close to the ground.
- » Teach your child their full name and address and get them to practise it.
- » Always supervise your child crossing the road, in car parks and around garages and driveways – they can move so quickly.
- » Always watch children around dogs (especially when the dog is eating).
- » Supervise children when they are in the kitchen (keep them away from hot stoves, sharp knives, detergents).
- » Make sure your child wears a helmet every time they ride a bike or scooter.
- » Teach your child about safety and explain what it means to be safe and why we all need to stay safe.



## Sleep and settling

Newborns sleep off and on throughout the day and night. As they grow older they will sleep for longer periods at night and will be awake for longer periods during the day.

Responding to your baby's signs of tiredness helps them to learn how to settle themselves to sleep. Look for signs that your baby is tired – these could include rubbing their eyes, closing their fists, yawning, arching their back – and settle them to sleep. Remember to put your baby to sleep on their back, not on their tummy or side (see pages 39-40).

Ways of settling include rocking, patting, singing and walking. Each child is different and you may need to try different settling techniques at different times.

**If wrapping your baby or using an infant sleeping bag to help them settle, make sure there is room for their legs to be able to bend with knees apart. This allows their hips to develop normally.**

For helpful videos on settling your baby to sleep visit [www.raisingchildren.net.au](http://www.raisingchildren.net.au)

If your baby finds it hard to sleep and settle, parents can get overtired, anxious and stressed. If you are feeling tense, frustrated and upset, place your child safely in a cot, take a break and give yourself time to calm down or get someone else to help you.

For more information visit [www.cyh.com](http://www.cyh.com), talk with your Child and Family Health Service nurse or call the Parent Helpline on **1300 364 100**.



# Feeding

## Babies (0 to 12 months)

Until around 5 to 6 months of age, breastmilk or infant formula meets all of your baby's nutritional needs. Even after your baby has started on solid foods, breastmilk or infant formula is still an important source of nutrition.

Feed your baby whenever they seem hungry; this might be between 5-10 times per day. Signs your baby is feeding well include gaining weight, having plenty of wet nappies each day, and being alert and content at least for some of the time.

### Breast feeding

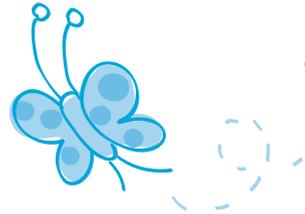
- > Every extra month that you feed your baby breastmilk is a bonus for their health and yours.
- > Breastmilk is easily digested, safe and always ready when your baby needs it. It contains ingredients that lower the chance of your baby getting sick.
- > For information and advice about breastfeeding, talk to your midwife, lactation consultant, Child and Family Health Service nurse or family doctor.
- > If you are breastfeeding, avoid drinking alcohol.

For more information visit: [www.cyh.com/breastfeedingservices](http://www.cyh.com/breastfeedingservices), [www.breastfeeding.asn.au](http://www.breastfeeding.asn.au)  
or call 1800 686 268.

### Bottle feeding

- > If your baby is not drinking breastmilk, the only other safe choice is infant formula as the main drink for the first 12 months of life. Your Child and Family Health Service nurse can provide individual advice about formula preparation.

For more information visit: [www.cyh.com/nutrition](http://www.cyh.com/nutrition).



## Solids

At around 5 to 6 months of age solid foods are needed to meet your baby's increasing nutritional and developmental needs.

Signs that your baby is ready to start solid foods include:

- > able to hold their head up and sit with support and control their tongue
- > being interested in what others eat (looking, reaching and grabbing for food)

Learning to self-feed is an important but messy step in your baby's development. Playing with food is part of the way babies learn about different foods.

Choking is a risk at any age. Children under 4 do not have back teeth to chew and grind food. It is important to supervise your child when they are eating. Make sure they don't eat when they are running or playing, laughing or crying.

For more information visit [www.cyh.com/nutrition](http://www.cyh.com/nutrition) (look under 'Safety and First Aid' for information on choking).

## Starting with small tastes of food

- > It's important to include at least 1 iron-rich food regularly in your baby's first foods to prevent iron deficiency. Iron-rich foods include iron-fortified cereals (eg baby rice cereal), pureed meat and poultry dishes, cooked pureed tofu and cooked pureed legumes, lentils and beans.
- > There are no strict rules on the order in which foods should be introduced or the number of new foods that can be introduced at a time. Aim to offer your child a variety of foods from all the food groups.
- > Gagging is a normal part of learning to eat and it usually frightens the parents more than the baby. Keep offering lumpy foods to your baby, even if they gag, so they can learn how to eat them.

Eat with your baby as much as you can - babies learn by watching what you do.

## Toddlers

- > After 12 months your toddler can be offered modified versions of family foods and meals.
  - > Toddlers have small tummies and appetites so need to be offered small regular meals and snacks. Offer 3 meals and 1 or 2 snacks each day.
  - > Children are good at knowing when they are hungry and full. They can easily lose this skill if they are pushed to eat more than they want to or are forced to finish everything on their plate.
  - > Toddlers like to do things for themselves – let them use their fingers or cutlery to feed themselves, even if it makes a mess.
  - > Most toddlers are easily distracted – turn off the television, put pets outside and tidy away toys so they can focus on the meal.
  - > Enjoy family meals together. Your toddler will learn by watching you eat and enjoy a healthy range of foods.
- > The best drinks for toddlers are breastmilk, water, or full cream cow's milk from a cup.
  - > Drinking too much milk will take up the tummy space they need for healthy food so limit their intake to no more than 500ml (about 2 cups) per day.
  - > At the age of 2 your child can be offered reduced-fat milk if you choose. Offer water from a cup as their main drink.
  - > Avoid fruit juice, cordial and other high-sugar drinks as they can cause tooth decay and excess weight gain. Tea and coffee should not be given to children as these drinks are low in nutrition and high in caffeine.
- > Try to include foods from each of the 5 food groups in your child's diet every day:
    - » grain (cereal) foods – mostly wholegrain and/or high-fibre varieties
    - » vegetables
    - » fruit
    - » milk, yoghurt, cheese and/or alternatives, mostly reduced-fat (after the age of 2)
    - » lean meats and poultry, fish, eggs, tofu, nuts and seeds and legumes/beans.



**Try to keep relaxed at mealtimes and remember a food may need to be offered as many as 10 times before it is accepted.**