

Mother of all Checklists

IMPORTANT NOTICE: We believe that breastfeeding is the ideal nutritional start for babies and we fully support the World Health Organization's recommendation of exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months of life followed by the introduction of adequate nutritious complementary foods along with continued breastfeeding up to two years of age. We also recognise that breastfeeding is not always an option for parents. We recommend that you speak to your healthcare professional about how to feed your baby and seek advice on when to introduce complementary feeding. If you choose not to breastfeed, please remember that such a decision can be difficult to reverse and has social and financial implications. Introducing partial bottle-feeding will reduce the supply of breast milk. Infant formula should always be prepared, used and stored as instructed on the label in order to avoid risks to a baby's health.

Newborn Checklists

Congratulations! Your little bundle of joy has arrived but wouldn't it have been nice if they'd brought a guidebook with them! Don't worry, we've got you covered. Our checklist 101 has been co-created alongside experienced parents to bring you a comprehensive list of every day tasks for those wonderful, often bewildering, first few months.

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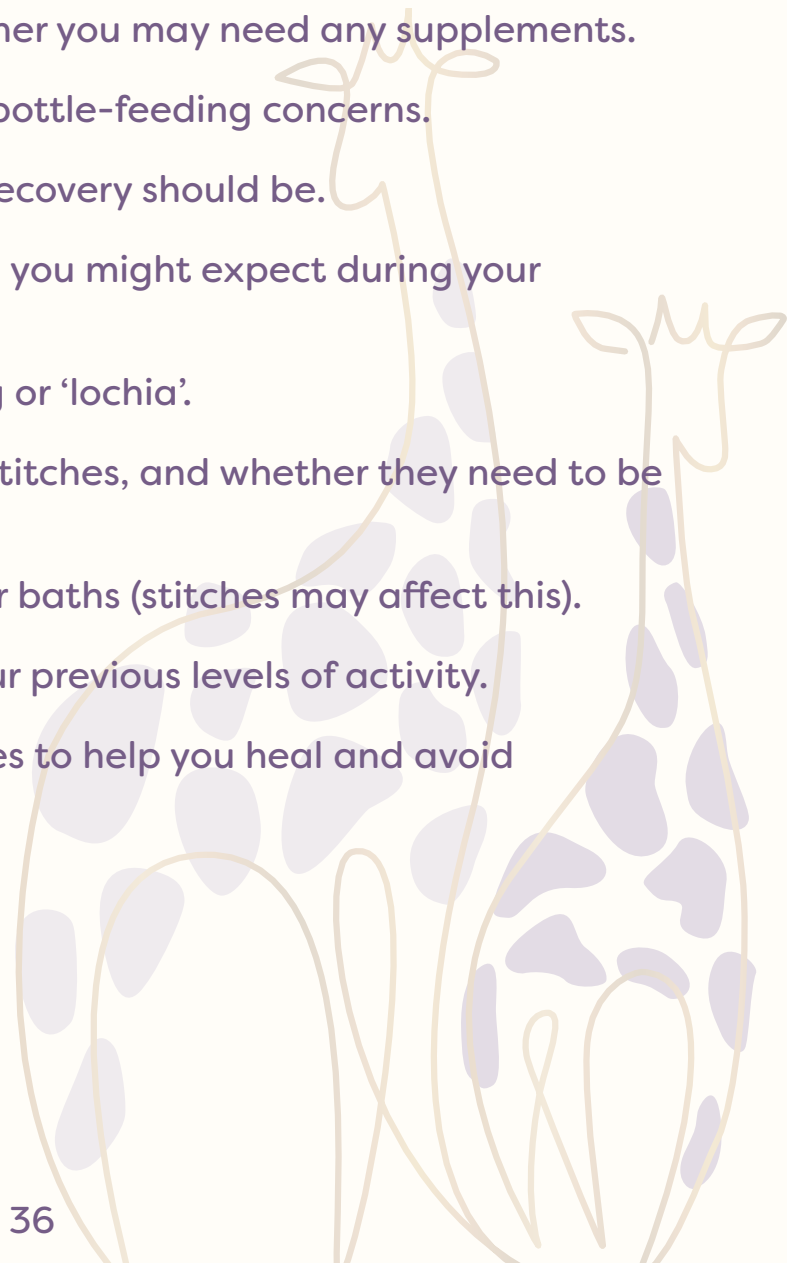
0-3 Months



Postnatal questions to ask before you leave hospital

Stepping outside and away from hospital with your new baby can be as daunting as it is exhilarating. Here's a few postnatal questions to ask before you check out.

- ☐ Ask for any helpful tips on taking care of yourself and your baby once you're home.
- ☐ Ask for tips on establishing a healthy sleep pattern for you and baby.
- ☐ Ask about nutrition and whether you may need any supplements.
- ☐ Discuss any breastfeeding or bottle-feeding concerns.
- ☐ Ask how long your postnatal recovery should be.
- ☐ Ask what signs and symptoms you might expect during your postnatal recovery.
- ☐ Ask about post-birth bleeding or 'lochia'.
- ☐ Ask about looking after your stitches, and whether they need to be removed.
- ☐ Ask if it's ok to take showers or baths (stitches may affect this).
- ☐ Ask when it's ok to resume your previous levels of activity.
- ☐ Ask about pelvic floor exercises to help you heal and avoid incontinence.



Healthy breastfeeding diet

Your breastfeeding diet affects your baby almost as much as you. So, here are a few recommendations to consider including what to eat and what not to eat when breastfeeding.

- ✧ Try and eat a well-balanced diet that includes plenty of fibre.
- ✧ When it comes to fruit and veg, keep eating at least five portions a day.
- ✧ Limit caffeine when breastfeeding as it may keep baby awake.
- ✧ It's best to avoid drinking alcohol and breastfeeding altogether.
- ✧ If you're exclusively breastfeeding you may need up to an extra 330 calories of healthy food a day for the first six months. The exact amount needed will vary from one mother to another.
- ✧ Drink 6-8 glasses of fluids a day. When breastfeeding, have a drink by your side.
- ✧ Eat lots of protein rich food such as lean meat, chicken, eggs, nuts, seeds and pulses which are good sources of iron.
- ✧ Eat dairy or suitable plant-based substitutes, for calcium and protein.
- ✧ Take a daily breastfeeding supplement with 10 micrograms of vitamin D.
- ✧ Avoid eating fish high in mercury such as shark, swordfish and marlin.
- ✧ Oily fish such as mackerel are OK but no more than 2 portions a week.
- ✧ Prepare healthy nibbles before you go to bed to snack on during night feeds.

Tackling breastfeeding problems

Breastfeeding is one of the most natural things, but it doesn't always come easily. With a bit of practice, some perseverance and a few pointers, it can get easier and become an enjoyable experience for mother and baby. Try these steps to help tackle breastfeeding problems.

- ✧ Try to make sure baby is latching correctly. Their mouth should cover more of the areola at the bottom of the nipple than the top.
- ✧ Talk to your midwife or health visitor if feeding is painful. Baby might not be latching properly.
- ✧ Try brushing baby's top lip against your nipple to open their mouth.
- ✧ Use nipple cream or expressed breast milk between feeds to soothe any pain or dryness.
- ✧ Try warm compresses if you have clogged ducts. See your GP, midwife or health visitor for more advice.
- ✧ Try to express by hand before feeding if milk supply is high or breasts are engorged.
- ✧ Try feeding more often if breasts become engorged.
- ✧ Breast milk works on a supply and demand basis. Keep feeding as often as you can early on to boost supply.
- ✧ If inverted nipples are an issue, speak to your midwife.
- ✧ Try and breast pump before nursing if inverted nipples are proving hard to latch on to.
- ✧ Try baby on the fuller breast for a more effective feed if they fall asleep during feeding.
- ✧ Try tickling baby's feet or removing a layer of clothing if they fall asleep too soon during feeding.

- ✧ Wear extra pads if you drop a feed. Breasts take a while to get the memo.
- ✧ Try and feed or breast pump more often, with guidance of a healthcare professional, if mastitis is an issue.
- ✧ Talk to your GP if you feel you have mastitis.
- ✧ Talk to your GP or lactation consultant if you're suffering painful letdown.
- ✧ Try different holds if a fast letdown is an issue or baby seems uncomfortable during feeds.
- ✧ Remember, breastfeeding problems should ease over time.



Bottle-feeding tips

Bottle-feeding looks straight-forward, right? Well, there's a fair bit to swallow so here's a list of bottle-feeding tips.

-  Try different bottle-feeding positions like holding the bottle at an angle to help reduce wind.
-  Consider using expressed breast milk first for a familiar taste.
-  If you're switching from breast to bottle try sharing the first bottle feeds between mum and dad. That way dad gets plenty of baby bonding time, baby learns to feed with someone else, and mum gets a rest.
-  Try different bottle-feeding teats until you find the one that works best.
-  Look out for your baby's 'I'm hungry' and 'I'm full' cues. You'll soon get to know them.
-  For hygiene reasons discard any unfinished feed in a bottle as soon as possible and always within one hour.
-  Whether you're expressing milk or using formula, always sterilise bottles and teats according to manufacturer's instructions.
-  If you're considering formula feeds, discuss which one would be appropriate for your baby's needs with your health visitor first.
-  If you use formula, always follow the manufacturer's preparation and storage instructions.

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Why do babies cry?

Wondering why babies cry? If you're struggling to understand what your baby is trying to tell you, check this list for possible translations.

- ✧ See if baby is hungry or thirsty.
- ✧ Check if baby is tired.
- ✧ Check their nappy.
- ✧ Check if they're too hot or cold.
- ✧ Check if they want a cuddle – sometimes they just need to be held.
- ✧ Consider whether they have constipation, colic or reflux.
- ✧ Check their little fingers and toes. On rare occasions, little hairs can cut off circulation and irritate baby.
- ✧ Try using motion to soothe baby. Swaying cuddles, the sling, the car or the pram.
- ✧ Try winding the baby with several techniques. Babies' burp buttons aren't all pressed in the same way.
- ✧ Try baby massage to help troubled tummies.
- ✧ Try the sound of a Hoover or hair dryer. There are lots of white noise apps too these days.
- ✧ Try a warm bath to relax them.
- ✧ Try to trust your instinct. If their crying is causing concern speak to a healthcare professional.

What's going on with baby's tummy troubles?

Baby tummy troubles? If only they could tell you what's wrong. Until we invent a translator, here's a few ways you can help an unsettled baby.

- ✧ Try giving them a warm bath.
- ✧ Try clockwise tummy massages after a bath to help move things along.
- ✧ Try 'bicycle legs' to activate their little digestive system.
- ✧ Try feeding baby smaller feeds more often, if they seem colicky or uncomfortable.
- ✧ Try burping baby after every feed until they seem more comfortable.
- ✧ Try burping halfway between feeds.
- ✧ Try different positions for feeding to find out what suits baby.
- ✧ Try carrying baby upright, perhaps in a sling after a feed, if they are colicky or uncomfortable: 15 mins is a safe bet.
- ✧ Try cool boiled water between feeds if they are constipated.
- ✧ Talk to your GP if you think your baby could be reacting to a certain milk.
- ✧ Talk to your GP if you're concerned baby's tummy trouble could be caused by underlying illness.
- ✧ Consider your own diet if you are breastfeeding. Talk to your GP about how it could be affecting baby.
- ✧ Talk to your GP if you're worried your baby might be lactose-intolerant.
- ✧ Consider tongue-tie. Some babies are born with it and it can affect their feeding if left untreated.

When is crying colic and what can you do about it?

Babies cry. Some babies seem to cry more than others. If your otherwise healthy baby is under five months and has repeated and prolonged bouts of crying or irritability, it could be colic. And it can be as distressing for mum and any other carer as it is for the baby. Here is a list of things you can try to help a colicky baby.

- ✧ Hold and cuddle your baby when they're crying a lot.
- ✧ Try to sit or hold them upright during feeds to prevent wind getting trapped.
- ✧ Try winding your baby before feeds if possible, to give any pockets of air in the tummy an opportunity to come up, especially if they have been crying.
- ✧ Wind your baby during and after each feed to avoid colicky pain.
- ✧ Try giving your baby a warm bath.
- ✧ Try a very gentle tummy massage with two fingers in a clockwise motion, using a little olive oil or baby oil.
- ✧ Try gently rocking baby over your shoulder, this can encourage trapped wind to find its way out.
- ✧ Try gentle background noise like a TV or radio.
- ✧ Try rocking your baby in their crib or moses basket.
- ✧ Try pushing your baby in their pram.
- ✧ Bear in mind that colic will usually improve on its own by the time your baby is around three to four months and usually resolves by six months.
- ✧ If you are still worried about how much your baby is crying however, get in touch with your health visitor or GP, as they are best placed to help and set your mind at ease.

Questions to ask at my baby's health check

To ensure your baby's development is on track, a general baby health check will be carried out soon after birth. Here are some questions you might like to ask your midwife or health visitor.

- ☐ Get baby's weight checked and ask if it's as expected.
- ☐ Ask what baby vaccinations are needed and when.
- ☐ Ask if your baby's sleeping patterns are as expected.
- ☐ Ask about safe sleeping.
- ☐ Ask about reducing the risk of SIDS (Sudden Infant Death Syndrome or cot death).
- ☐ Ask about breastfeeding and bottle-feeding.
- ☐ Ask about the heel prick test.
- ☐ Ask about the newborn hearing test.
- ☐ Ask how you can safely bathe your baby and how often.
- ☐ Ask how you safely trim baby's nails.

Coping with postnatal anxiety and/or depression

Once postnatal it's easy to forget about you, but a happy mum means a happy baby. Here're some things you can do to help support your postnatal emotional well-being.

- ✧ It's very common to experience mild mood changes after having a baby. Talk to friends and family, it helps to vent.
- ✧ Sometimes it may be more than the 'baby blues'. Up to 1 in 5 women develop mental health problems during pregnancy or in the first year after birth, including postnatal depression and/or anxiety. If you are struggling then talk to your healthcare professional, they are there to help.
- ✧ Talk to other new parents. They are probably going through something similar.
- ✧ Try a postnatal group to meet parents in the same boat.
- ✧ Try baby-feeding cafes.
- ✧ Try baby activity classes to meet new parent friends.
- ✧ Try apps like PEANUT to meet new parent friends.
- ✧ Try apps like calm or other meditation and mindfulness apps.
- ✧ Get active (Please find more information on how to do so safely in our 'Postnatal exercises for mums' checklist). It's surprising what a bit of exercise can do for your mood.
- ✧ Eat a healthy, varied and balanced diet.
- ✧ As well as having a balanced diet, consider a daily supplement, that contains 10mcg of vitamin D.
- ✧ Try to make time for the normal things like showering and doing your hair. Simple things make a big difference.

- ✧ Write a mood diary. Noting how you feel each day can help you realise what makes you happy and what doesn't.
- ✧ Be kinder to yourself. You can only try your best. Try not to expect everything to be perfect.
- ✧ Ask friends and family to help. A few less errands on your to do list can make all the difference.



Postnatal exercises for mums

Postnatal exercise is important, so when you're ready to ease back into it we have some exercises for new mums listed here.

- ✧ Talk to your GP if you've had a C-section. You may want to wait until after your six week check before doing certain exercises
- ✧ Talk to your GP if you had stitches after birth as this may affect the type of exercise you can do.
- ✧ Start with pelvic floor exercises multiple times a day. Let your midwife advise you on how often.
- ✧ Start walking as soon as you feel ready to, even after a C-section.
- ✧ Try gentle exercise as soon as you're ready if you've had a straightforward birth.
- ✧ It's a good idea to wait for your six-week check before doing high impact exercise.
- ✧ Speak to your GP if you were exercising regularly before giving birth, as you may be able to start aerobic exercise before six weeks. Although it might be best to try specialised post-natal swimming or exercise classes at first.
- ✧ Try to do warm-ups and cool downs.
- ✧ Try push-ups. Your upper body could do with strengthening for all the baby carrying.
- ✧ Try pelvic tilts.
- ✧ Try building your workout slowly over time. Start with walking and build up the duration slowly before you get back to jogging or sprinting.
- ✧ Try to ease slowly into ab workouts.

- ✧ Research diastasis recti and make sure you watch out for signs of it before doing ab work.
- ✧ Consider trying more simple pelvic exercises before your six-week check if you had a C-section.
- ✧ Look for mum and baby exercise classes.
- ✧ Try postpartum or postnatal exercise videos online.
- ✧ Stop exercising if there's abdominal or vaginal pain.
- ✧ Stop exercising if there's heavy bleeding.
- ✧ Stop exercising if you have any worrying symptoms and talk to your GP.

How to bathe a newborn

Washing a newborn for the first time can be a daunting experience, but it can also be a lovely bonding moment. Here are a few tips for how to bathe a newborn safely.

- ✧ You don't need to wash your baby every day; for the first few weeks it may be easier to top and tail instead.
- ✧ A bath two to three times a week is enough to keep your newborn clean.
- ✧ Bath time is also a lovely way to spend time bonding with your little one.
- ✧ Never leave your baby in the bath unattended, not even for a second.
- ✧ Choose a time when your baby is content and awake - avoid when they are tired, hungry or have just been fed.
- ✧ Make sure the room is nice and warm for when baby comes out of the bath.
- ✧ Prep the room beforehand. You will need: baby bath or clean washing up bowl, a clean nappy, clean towels, a bowl of cooled, boiled water, clean clothes, bath thermometer and cotton wool.
- ✧ Fill the baby's bath to about 8-10cm deep, run the cold water first then add hot water and swish the water around to avoid hot spots.
- ✧ Check the baby's bath water temperature using the thermometer, it shouldn't be over 38°C.
- ✧ Wash your hands thoroughly and remove any rings or bracelets.
- ✧ Before putting the baby into the water test the temperature again with your elbow, it should be warm with no hot spots.

- ✧ Undress your baby down to their nappy. Keep them warmly wrapped in a towel while you wash their face and eyes.
- ✧ Use cotton wool balls moistened with cooled, boiled water and check the temperature of the water before. Wipe from the inside of the eye outward, using each piece of cotton wool once only.
- ✧ Hold your baby so that their head is over the bath water and, using your hand or a flannel, massage their scalp with water. Rinse their hair carefully and dry it.
- ✧ Remove your baby's nappy and clean away any mess before putting them in the bath.
- ✧ Lower your baby gently into the bowl or bath using one hand to hold their upper arm and support their head and shoulders.
- ✧ To hold them firmly but gently, place one hand around the back and grip under their arm, with your wrist or forearm supporting their head. Your other hand is then free to wash your baby.
- ✧ Gently swish warm water over their body, keeping your baby's head clear of the water.
- ✧ If your baby still has vernix (the creamy white layer) in their creases, leave it there as it helps the skin barrier to develop.
- ✧ Lift your baby out of the bath, with one hand around the back and the other gripping under their arm. Your wrist or forearm should support their head. Be careful, as they can be quite slippery.
- ✧ Wrap your baby in a towel, remembering to cover their head, and pat dry, including all the creases. Put a nappy on.
- ✧ Now is a good time to massage your baby to help them relax and sleep. Avoid using any lotions or oil until they are over a month old.
- ✧ Dress baby in clean clothes. Newborns lose heat quickly so you may also want to use a blanket. If your baby gets frightened, try bathing together. Just make sure the water isn't too hot and someone is around to hold your baby when you get in and out of the bath. This helps to get baby used to the water and is a lovely bonding moment.

How to top and tail a newborn

Some babies love having a bath, for other babies it can take some time to get used to it. For the first few weeks or so, you may want to top and tail baby instead. Our step-by-step guide to cleaning newborns starts at the top and ends at the tip of their toes.

- ✧ You don't need to wash your baby every day - for the first few weeks it may be easier to top and tail instead.
- ✧ Top and tailing is where you carefully wash the face, neck, hands and bottom.
- ✧ You will need a bowl of cooled, boiled water, a bowl of warm water, cotton wool or cotton pads, a fresh nappy, clean clothes and clean towels.
- ✧ Wash your hands thoroughly and remove any rings or bracelets.
- ✧ Make sure the room is nice and warm - undress your baby, and place them on a clean towel.
- ✧ Topping means washing your baby's face, neck and hands.
- ✧ Babies' eyes can be a little sticky after birth. Dip cotton wool or a cotton pad in cool boiled water and gently wipe your baby's eyes from the nose outwards, using a new piece of cotton wool for each eye.
- ✧ Use a fresh piece of cotton wool dipped in warm water to clean around your baby's ears, avoiding the inside.
- ✧ Wash the rest of your baby's face, neck and hands in the same way.
- ✧ If your baby still has vernix (the creamy white layer) in their creases, leave it there as it helps the skin barrier to develop.
- ✧ Keep your baby's umbilical cord stump clean and dry to avoid infection - wipe it with fresh cotton wool dipped in cooled boiled water each day and gently pat it dry.

- ✧ The umbilical cord stump should drop off after about 10 days - if you have any concerns talk to your midwife.
- ✧ Tailing means cleaning your baby's genitals and bottom.
- ✧ Remove nappy and wash baby's bottom and genital area with fresh cotton wool and warm water.
- ✧ If you prefer use baby wipes, but make sure they are unperfumed and suitable for newborns.
- ✧ Gently pat your baby dry paying particular attention to the skin folds, before putting on a clean nappy.
- ✧ Dress baby in clean clothes. Newborns lose heat quickly so you may also want to use a blanket.

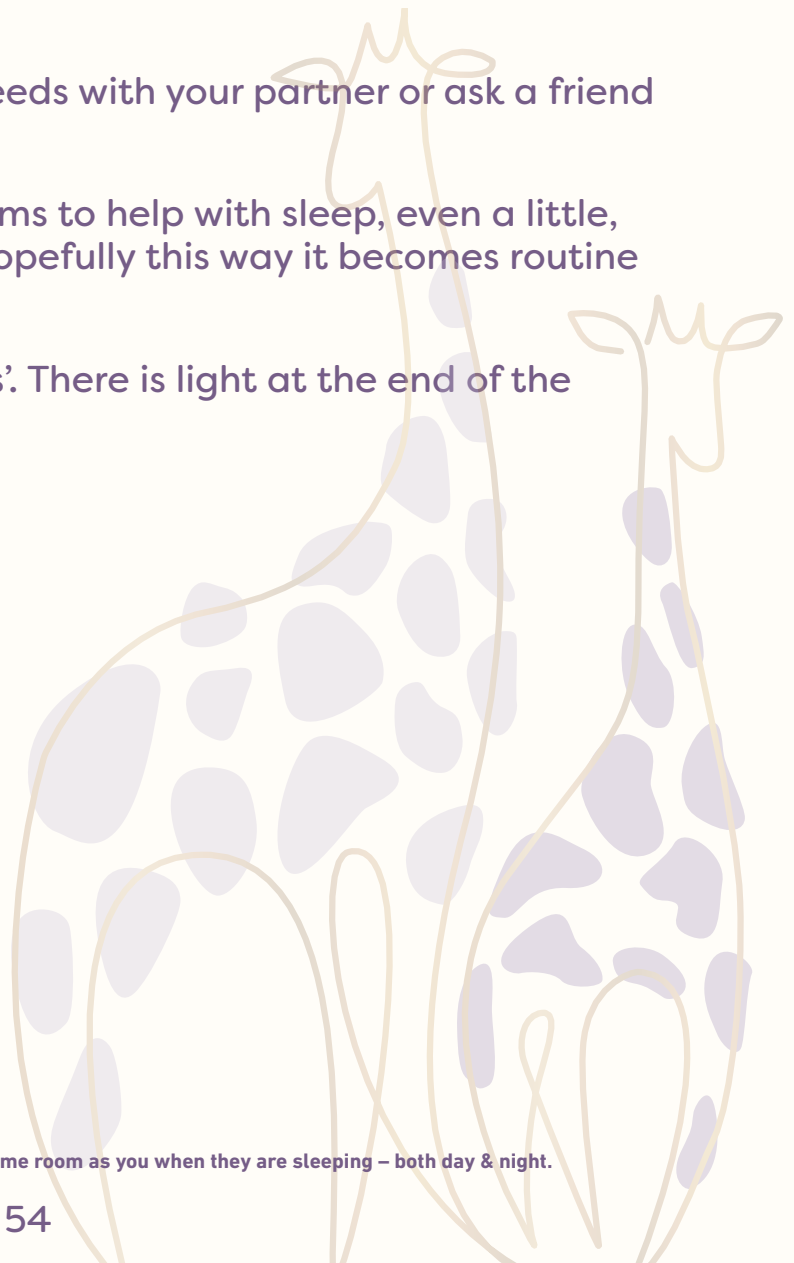
How to help baby sleep... like a baby

Need to help baby sleep? Babies love to sleep, eat, repeat. Right? Except the sleep bit can sometimes take work. There's no perfect formula but try these baby sleep tips from the list below and you might find a solution.

- ✧ Get a baby sleep routine for daytime and night-time. Bright lights and activity in the day and dim lights and baths in the evening. They might not pick up on it right away, but it should help over time.
- ✧ Stick to the baby sleep routine as much as possible. For example, try and do feed, bath, book, bed in the same order each night.
- ✧ Keep loud, fun games for daytime.
- ✧ Try not to overstimulate in the evenings. Use softer voices and make less eye contact during night sleep times. Even if baby wakes up to play.
- ✧ Try not to tiptoe around a sleeping baby. While differentiating between day and night is helpful, silence in the house could turn them into a light sleeper when they go anywhere else for naps.
- ✧ Try to get baby used to napping out and about while young. They have a few years of napping ahead so it will be better if they get used to going with the flow a bit.
- ✧ Consider incorporating a bedtime routine at around three months old if one isn't already established.
- ✧ Get a cool, breathable cover for the buggy for naps on the go.
- ✧ Try white noise. It's said to remind them of the womb and help them relax. Look for apps or go on YouTube.
- ✧ Consider avoiding certain sleep crutches. Rocking might work now, but soon they'll be a lot heavier and might expect it every night.

- ✧ Try gradually weaning them off cuddle/rocking time before a sleep association is established. Go from rocking to a rhythmic pat and 'shhh' to sleep. Once that works, next time decrease the number of pats and 'shhs'. Eventually you will be able to put baby down and walk away with this gradual approach. It's a chance for baby to learn to self soothe.
- ✧ Learn to recognise baby's signs of sleepiness. If they're yawning, stretching, or rubbing eyes and ears, it's probably a good time to try for a sleep.
- ✧ Try blackout blinds for night-time sleeps.
- ✧ Understand that every baby is different. What works for some may not work for others.
- ✧ Talk to someone if things get too difficult. Try the Cry-sis helpline (0800 448 0737). Remember you can only do so much.
- ✧ Talk to your GP or health visitor if sleep deprivation becomes an issue.
- ✧ If it's an option, try and split feeds with your partner or ask a friend or relative for help.
- ✧ If you find something that seems to help with sleep, even a little, keep trying it several times. Hopefully this way it becomes routine and familiar to your baby.
- ✧ Remember, 'this too shall pass'. There is light at the end of the tunnel.

*For the first 6 months, your baby should be in the same room as you when they are sleeping – both day & night.



Baby Massage

Baby massages are a big deal and for good reason. Keep baby calm and ease their tummy troubles with this baby tummy massage breakdown. Now you can put 'baby masseuse' on your CV.

- ✧ Try and choose a time when baby is relaxed. After their evening bath is good.
- ✧ Buy some baby massage oil. When choosing a baby massage oil it's best to use natural, plant based oils, which are the most gentle on the skin. A patch test will help to check that the oil is suitable for your baby.
- ✧ Prepare all your massage equipment before baby's bath, when hands are free.
- ✧ Get a clean, soft towel on top of the baby mat.
- ✧ Make sure the room is nice and warm, 24°C is ideal.
- ✧ Consider dimming the lights if you're going for those extra sleep cues.
- ✧ Consider playing relaxing music or lullabies for added relaxation.
- ✧ Remove any rings or bracelets.
- ✧ Make sure hands are warm.
- ✧ Undress baby and lay them on a soft towel on a baby mat.
- ✧ Pour some baby massage oil on your hands and warm it in palms (using too much may make your baby very slippery to pick up post massage).
- ✧ Start at baby's feet. Stretching and rubbing their toes.
- ✧ Work up baby's legs and gently rub and squeeze their muscles. Support their ankles with one hand.

- ✧ Work your way to baby's arms. Support their wrists with one hand.
- ✧ Finish with a chest and belly rub. Using clockwise circular motions on their tummy.
- ✧ Talk to your baby softly and tell them what you are doing.
- ✧ Try to maintain eye contact as you massage baby.
- ✧ Try not to rub or squeeze baby too hard.
- ✧ Stop massaging if baby doesn't enjoy it. Not all babies do.
- ✧ Stop massaging if baby falls asleep.

Disposable nappy changing routine

Over the next few months, you're going to do a lot of nappy changes. So, here's a helpful nappy change advice list, to make every nappy change smooth like a baby's bottom.

Gather everything you need before you start:

- ☐ Changing mat
- ☐ Clean towel
- ☐ Clean nappy
- ☐ Cotton wool
- ☐ Cooled boiled water (to dip the wool in), or fragrance and alcohol-free wipes
- ☐ Barrier cream

-  Place the towel on your changing mat, lie your baby on the towel.
-  If you're using a changing table keep your eyes on baby all the time. They can wriggle a lot.
-  Singing or chatting to your baby can help to soothe and calm them.
-  Undo the dirty nappy. If it's full use it to remove most of the mess.
-  Clean your baby's bottom with the wet cotton wool or wipes. Wipe front to back for a girl, back to front for a boy.
-  Pat your baby's bottom dry with the towel.
-  Gently lift your baby's legs with one hand and put the clean nappy (with the tabs at the back) under their bottom with the other.
-  Consider applying a barrier cream if your baby's bottom looks red or sore.
-  Fold the front of the nappy up to their waist and fasten the tabs on the sides.
-  Wash and moisturise your hands after every nappy change.

Taking baby out for the first time

Taking baby out for the first time is a big one. This checklist should help make it easy for all your baby friendly days out. Whether it's a walk in the park, or somewhere else entirely.

- ✧ Packing a baby bag for changes and feeds is essential.
- ✧ Bring your buggy if the destination is step-free.
- ✧ Bring a sling or carrier if you prefer skin-to-skin or in case of hills or stairs.
- ✧ Pack some muslins for after feeding.
- ✧ Pack a change of outfit for baby in case of accidents.
- ✧ Pack a change of top for you just in case. Nobody wants to walk around with baby sick on their shoulder.
- ✧ Pack a modesty cover, if you want, while getting the hang of breastfeeding out and about.
- ✧ Pack some hand sanitiser or wet wipes for yourself.
- ✧ Wear comfortable clothes with easy access if you're breastfeeding.
- ✧ Pack a water bottle for yourself. Mamma's gotta stay hydrated.
- ✧ Pack quite a few nappies and wipes or cotton wool, for nappy changes.
- ✧ Dress baby in weather-appropriate clothes. Layers are a good idea, in case the weather takes a turn.
- ✧ Remember the rain cover for the buggy or an umbrella if you're carrying baby.
- ✧ Try to keep baby out of the sun. New skin can't take all that UV. Sunblock and sunhats are all good, but shade is most important. A buggy parasol might be a good idea.

- ✧ If you formula feed, try to pre-portion any formula for feeds. Or take some ready-to-feed formula.
- ✧ Pack sterile bottles and teats if you're bottle feeding. A flask of boiling water to make powdered feeds is a good idea too.
- ✧ Pack a couple of dummies if your baby already uses them.
- ✧ Remember their blanket or swaddle.
- ✧ Pack a bright pram toy for stimulation.
- ✧ Try hanging rattles or toys from the sling or baby carrier on soother chains.
- ✧ Leave extra time for getting all your baby gear ready before leaving the house.
- ✧ Try to set off shortly after a feed so baby is happy to rest or look around.



3-6 Months



Troubleshooting your baby's reflux

Baby reflux. It's one of the most common symptoms in babies until they're a year old. Here are a few baby reflux remedies to ease the symptoms.

- ☐ Check your breastfeeding technique. Make sure baby is latching on well.
- ☐ Make sure baby's head and body are in a straight line when breastfeeding.
- ☐ Hold your baby fairly upright when bottle-feeding.
- ☐ Try having more breaks, burping baby part way through each feed.
- ☐ Keeping baby upright after a feed can help.
- ☐ If you're formula feeding try giving smaller feeds more often
- ☐ Avoid changing your diet if you're breastfeeding.
- ☐ Make sure your baby lies flat on their back to sleep.
- ☐ Stick to calm cuddles after feeds, save playing airplanes for later.
- ☐ Make sure you've got a clean towel or muslin to hand for clean-ups.
- ☐ Speak to your GP if baby's reflux symptoms do not improve after a couple of weeks or your baby is not gaining weight or is losing weight.

Sleeping like a baby. Top tips for a sound baby sleep routine.

Babies' sleep routines can vary enormously. Working it all out must be the number one baby conundrum keeping parents awake. Here are some tips to help you set up a healthy bedtime routine for your little one.

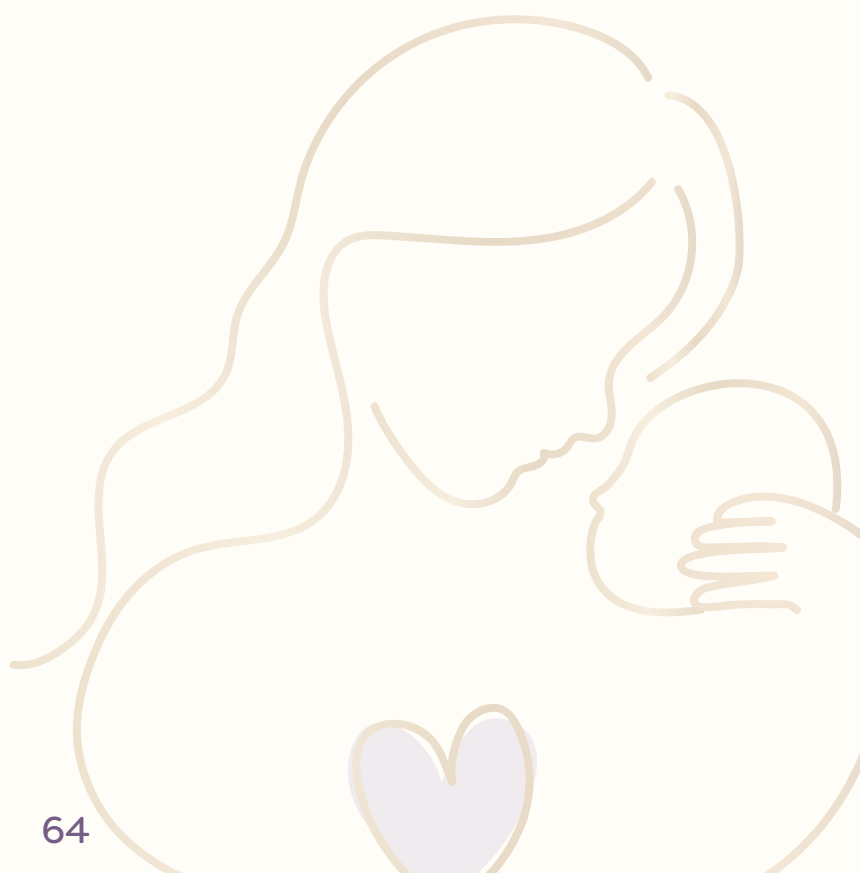
-  Try to read and respond to signs your baby's tired like yawning, rubbing their eyes, flicking their ear or crying and whining.
-  Try to show your baby the difference between day (active, light, noise, excitement) and night (calm, dark, quiet) so they can recognise the cues for bedtime.
-  Try giving baby a warm bath followed by a gentle massage.
-  Change them into sleep clothes and a fresh nappy.
-  Read a bedtime story and maybe sing a lullaby.
-  Say good night to everyone (including teddy) and give them a kiss goodnight
-  Say the same night-night phrase as you put them down to establish a familiar sleep cue.
-  Aim for a calm, quiet half hour before you start your baby's sleep routine and include a feed if possible, hungry babies don't sleep well.
-  Remember the heart of a good routine is consistency, not perfection. You'll get there!

Choosing a nursery

Wondering how to pick a nursery to entrust the care of your baby? We have put together a list of some things to consider when choosing a nursery.

- ✧ Consider that you and your child might need time to adjust to childcare arrangements.
- ✧ Consider the location of the nursery. Will it be more convenient nearer home or your place of work? Try childcare.co.uk to search for nurseries using your postcode.
- ✧ Consider the time it takes you to get there and how you would get there.
- ✧ Talk to other parents using facilities locally to you and find out their experiences.
- ✧ Read OFSTED reports to see if the standards meet your requirements or check out forums to see what local parents think.
- ✧ Make a shortlist of places and try to view as many of them as possible.
- ✧ Consider taking your child on these visits too if you can.
- ✧ Consider how you and your child are greeted at the nursery
- ✧ Observe your child's reactions to the staff, setting and other children.
- ✧ Consider if the other children seem settled and happy.
- ✧ Consider if the staff are attentive to the children and to each other.
- ✧ Ask what activities your child might be involved in during the day.
- ✧ Ask if the nursery keeps records of the children. Could they show you an example?
- ✧ Ask what provisions are made for naps or quiet time.

- ☆ Ask about meals and nutrition and how they deal with fussy eaters or specific dietary requirements.
- ☆ Ask about toileting and potty-training policies.
- ☆ Ask if nappies and formula feeds are included, if you're formula feeding.
- ☆ Ask about settling in periods.
- ☆ Ask about staff ratios. Are they in line with government guidelines? What happens when people are off sick or on leave?
- ☆ Ask what safeguards are in place for other people picking up your child.
- ☆ Ask about the childcare costs and what you may be entitled to under government schemes. Also, check if they accept childcare vouchers.
- ☆ Check the availability of places. Some nursery places need to be booked up to a year ahead.
- ☆ Find out what the nursery's daily hours are and if these apply all year round or just to term times.



Baby Checklists

Just when you think you've got to grips with everything, it's all change. Weaning, new sleeping patterns, more time out of the house... life with a 6-12 month old can feel like an exciting whirlwind! If you're in need of some serious organisation right now, this section of our Mother of all Checklists booklet is just the thing. It's a comprehensive collection of easy-to-use lists of everyday 'to dos' specifically for this period.

IMPORTANT NOTICE: We believe that breastfeeding is the ideal nutritional start for babies and we fully support the World Health Organization's recommendation of exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months of life followed by the introduction of adequate nutritious complementary foods along with continued breastfeeding up to two years of age. We also recognise that breastfeeding is not always an option for parents. We recommend that you speak to your healthcare professional about how to feed your baby and seek advice on when to introduce complementary feeding. If you choose not to breastfeed, please remember that such a decision can be difficult to reverse and has social and financial implications. Introducing partial bottle-feeding will reduce the supply of breast milk. Infant formula should always be prepared, used and stored as instructed on the label in order to avoid risks to a baby's health.

What's in this booklet?

Baby

6-9 Months

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6-9 Months



Immunisations – what to expect

Immunisation time – gulp! Your baby's first injections can be an upsetting time for parents and baby. If you are anxious, your baby may pick up on your feelings so try to stay calm. Read our helpful guide on what to expect.

- ✧ Once your baby is registered at your local doctors, you should receive reminders for baby's immunisations.
- ✧ Baby's vaccinations are given at 8 weeks, 12 weeks, 16 weeks, 1 year, 2 years and 3 years.
- ✧ Your child will be given vaccinations against the most common infectious diseases such as: diptheria, flu, haemophilus influenzae type B (Hib), hepatitis B, measles, meningitis B, meningitis C, mumps, pneumococcus, polio, rotavirus, rubella, tetanus, whooping cough (pertussis).
- ✧ You will need to take your red book to each appointment so the nurse can record details of which vaccinations your baby has had. [UK only]
- ✧ Dress your baby in loose fitting clothes that are quick and easy to remove and put back on again.
- ✧ If your baby is under 12 months the injection is usually administered in the thigh, so loose fitting trousers or a dress is ideal.
- ✧ Leave plenty of time to get to the clinic, as you don't want to be rushed or stressed.
- ✧ Make sure you tell the nurse if your baby has been unwell with fever, vomiting or diarrhoea as the immunisation may be delayed for a few days.
- ✧ In the appointment the nurse will take you through the immunisation programme and answer any questions you may have. So write a list of questions to take with you.

- ✧ You will be asked to sit with your baby held close on your lap, keeping the legs as still as possible.
- ✧ The injection is given with a small needle - your baby will probably cry straight away so a breastfeed or a bottle can provide comfort, or distract with a small toy.
- ✧ Immunisations are delivered by either injection, nasal spray or oral drops depending on the type of vaccine.
- ✧ All medicines including vaccines can occasionally cause side effects - these are likely to be mild and can include a slight fever and some swelling and redness around the site of the injection. Speak to your doctor if you are concerned about any symptoms.
- ✧ Your baby may have more than one injection at each appointment depending on the immunisation schedule.
- ✧ The doctor or nurses generally work well together to ensure the injections are given as quickly and painlessly as possible.
- ✧ You will probably be asked to stay at the clinic for about 10 minutes after the immunisations just to make sure baby is fine and hasn't had any major side effects.
- ✧ If your baby develops a fever, treat it straight away with plenty of fluids, keeping them cool and bring the temperature down with infant paracetamol. The nurse will give you guidance on this.
- ✧ The menB vaccination is given at eight weeks, 16 weeks and one year. Your baby is more likely to get a fever from this vaccination so the NHS (HSE for ROI website) recommend giving your baby infant paracetamol after this injection.
- ✧ Some babies may feel off colour after vaccinations and will need soothing at night. Try to ensure you have nothing planned for the rest of the day to give extra attention and cuddles.



Can't sleep, won't sleep

Chances are your baby's getting more sleep than you realise and probably more sleep than you are. But with things constantly changing, it can help to have some tricks up your (pyjama) sleeve to help everyone get the zzz's they need.

- ✧ Try to keep your baby's room at a steady temperature, around 16-20°C (61-68F) is ideal. Too hot or too cold could disturb their sleep.
- ✧ If baby wakes in the night make sure you keep things calm and quiet. Keep lights low, and noise to a minimum. This may make it easier to soothe them back to sleep.
- ✧ Try to stick to your sleep routine (bath, massage, change, story, lullaby etc.) as much as possible.
- ✧ Try not to settle baby, give them the chance to settle by themselves. If you rock or feed your baby to sleep, they may come to expect it.
- ✧ Bear in mind that as your baby grows you'll probably need to adjust your routines to suit their changing sleep requirements.
- ✧ Talk to your partner to plan sharing where possible, so that you can get some sleep too. For instance, they could take over the winding and changing after an early morning feed, so you can get back to sleep.
- ✧ If you're bottle feeding, try to share the night feeds with your partner.
- ✧ Avoid setting your expectations too high! All babies are different, and some wakeful nights are perfectly normal.
- ✧ If you are struggling with lack of sleep do ask for help either from friends, family or healthcare professional. There's no right answer but a little support can go a long way.

Teething action plan

Teething can be a distressing time for baby and parents alike. We've put together some teething tips so you can both get through it without gritting your teeth.

- ✧ Try taking your baby's mind off troublesome teeth with play or a change of scenery.
- ✧ A teething ring can provide relief from the pain.
- ✧ Try cooling a teething ring in the fridge but never in the freezer.
- ✧ If your baby is six months or older chewing a bread crust or bread stick, under supervision of course, can help.
- ✧ A piece of raw apple, cucumber or carrot, cooled in the fridge, can work well too.
- ✧ It's best to avoid rusks or biscuits because of the sugar, which can cause tooth decay.
- ✧ There's no evidence to support that teething gels are effective, but if you decide to try one, make sure it's specially designed for babies.
- ✧ The same goes for homeopathic teething gels, though again, if you decide to try one, make sure it's licensed for use in the UK. Some unlicensed products have been linked to serious side effects.
- ✧ Paracetamol and ibuprofen can be given as pain-relief to babies three months or older. Follow the instructions on the medicine pack or speak with your GP or pharmacist if you're unsure.
- ✧ As soon as teeth appear brush them with a fluoride toothpaste.

Coping with separation anxiety

Clingy Baby Syndrome or separation anxiety as it's better known, is a real thing. Here are some tips to help both you and baby stay happy together and apart.

- ✧ Start with short separations, leaving your baby with someone they know while you nip out for a few minutes.
- ✧ Try turning it into a game like peek-a-boo.
- ✧ Make goodbyes positive. Your baby can pick up on your anxiety or distress.
- ✧ Talk about what you'll do together later.
- ✧ A positive goodbye followed by a happy reunion can be an important life lesson.
- ✧ Give your baby a scarf, muslin or toy with your scent on while you're away.
- ✧ Don't leave your baby when they're hungry, tired or feeling unwell, or any time you feel they genuinely need you there.
- ✧ Ask your health visitor for advice on separation anxiety if your baby continues to be distressed when left with others.

How to start weaning

Baby weaning is an exciting time. Here are our top tips on how to start weaning from our resident dietitian.

- ✧ Wait until around 6 months as your baby will need good eye, hand and mouth co-ordination to be able to stay in a sitting position and hold their head steady.
- ✧ Whether you decide to start on pureed food, finger foods (also known as baby-led weaning) or a combination of both - variety is key so baby gets the nutrients they need.
- ✧ Feed your baby on solid food only once a day initially, gradually increasing the amount and variety of food, being responsive to baby's cues.
- ✧ A rough guideline is to start with about 5-10 teaspoons of food (about 30g) at one meal. You can then increase it to two meals a day, and then up to three meals per day.
- ✧ For the first feed make sure baby isn't tired - it may take a while for them to get used to food from a spoon, so patience is key.
- ✧ Your baby is hungrier and more alert first thing, so it's a good time for new foods.
- ✧ Sit baby upright in a high chair with no distractions, like TV, mobiles or tablets.
- ✧ Give them a little of their usual milk first to relax them and take the edge off their hunger
- ✧ For the first feed, try vegetables. There is recent evidence that weaning with veggies helps set up healthy food preferences later on.
- ✧ Try to introduce a new single bitter vegetable every day for one week e.g. broccoli, parsnip, beetroot or courgettes. Keep a camera ready - you may get some funny faces.

- ✧ Repeat this process for the second week to get baby used to bitter vegetables.
- ✧ Remember it can take ten tries or more for your baby to accept a new flavour so don't give up!
- ✧ Keep a feeding schedule stuck on the fridge to track what your baby has tried, and how often.
- ✧ Only try one new food at a time, combining flavours after a couple of weeks.
- ✧ Praise baby when they try something new.
- ✧ Baby's weaning diet should include the essential food groups – fruits and vegetables, bread and starchy foods, dairy, meat and proteins, and fats.
- ✧ Variety is key to ensure baby is getting the right nutrients for growth and development such as iron, calcium, vitamin C, vitamin A, vitamin D and omega 3 fatty acids.
- ✧ Vegetarian or vegan? That's fine just include a variety of foods such as eggs, ground nuts or seeds, soy products (tofu), cereal foods, pulses such as beans, peas and lentils to ensure they get all the nutrients they need.
- ✧ If giving baby a vegetarian or vegan diet they may need additional supplements so speak to your healthcare professional for advice.
- ✧ Babies can eat nuts from about 6 months as long as they are crushed, finely ground or in smooth peanut butter. Whole nuts and peanuts should not be given before the age of 5 years. If your baby has eczema or you have a history of allergies in your family speak to your GP first.
- ✧ Foods to avoid? Whole nuts and grapes are a choking hazard; ensure they are chopped up. Pâté, raw shellfish and mould-ripened or unpasteurised cheeses carry a small risk of food poisoning so are not suitable under the age of two.
- ✧ Shark, swordfish and marlin contain high levels of mercury and honey may contain bacteria that can lead to infant botulism so should be avoided.
- ✧ Remember to give your baby lots of encouragement. Babies are curious so if you're enjoying food on your plate they are likely to be more eager to have some.

A guide to solid food frontier with baby-led weaning

Wondering when to start weaning your baby on to solid foods? From around six months old your baby should be able to start trying. Baby-led weaning is a great way to help them discover and experience new flavours and textures at their own pace. Here are some tips to get your baby started on their weaning food adventure.

- ✧ Aim for 'finger food'. A piece your baby can hold in their fist with a bit sticking out.
- ✧ Avoid hard food such as raw carrots to begin with.
- ✧ Aim for foods that break up easily in the mouth to reduce the risk of choking.
- ✧ Try to offer your baby a variety of weaning food suitable for their age. This can include fruit (soft or cooked without added sugar), vegetables (soft cooked), boiled eggs, cooked starchy foods such as potatoes, pasta, rice or noodles. Go for pulses such as beans and lentils. Try meat or fish without bones and sticks of pasteurised full-fat hard cheese.
- ✧ Babies do occasionally gag when they move on to solid foods. This is different to choking, so it's important to know the difference, what signs to look out for and what to do in case of either. The risk of choking is no higher with baby-led weaning than spoon feeding.
- ✧ Don't leave your baby to eat on their own.
- ✧ Try to incorporate their food explorations into family mealtimes so they can take part and copy what the rest of the family is doing.
- ✧ Be prepared for the mess. Some parents find placing a non-slip wipeable tablecloth, or floor mat under baby's highchair can make clearing up a little easier.
- ✧ Remember it's all about exploration and discovery, let your baby lead the way!

Baby food allergies vs intolerances – telling them apart and tackling them

An allergy is our immune system's reaction to a substance it perceives as harmful. The severity of the reaction can vary greatly from person to person and can also increase or decrease over time. A food intolerance does not involve the immune system, may have less severe reactions than an allergy but can be harder to diagnose. Here are some things to bear in mind.

- ✧ Be aware of the main allergenic foods like: cow's milk, nuts, legumes (incl. peanuts, broad beans and other pulses), eggs, gluten, soya, fish and shellfish.
- ✧ Remember these foods can be introduced at around six months when you start weaning your baby.
- ✧ Try to introduce allergenic foods one at a time and in small amounts so you can spot an allergic reaction more easily.
- ✧ Once introduced and shown to be tolerated, try and include them in your child's usual diet, as this can minimise the risk of a future allergy.
- ✧ Don't delay the introduction of peanuts and hen's eggs until after 6-12 months, as evidence has shown this may increase the risk of an egg allergy or peanut allergy developing.
- ✧ Signs of allergies in babies can occur straight after a food is eaten, or several hours later.
- ✧ Be aware of the common allergy signs like: Swollen lips or tongue, wheezing or difficulty breathing, itchy skin, throat, tongue or eyes, rash/hives, coughing, diarrhoea, vomiting and a runny or blocked nose.
- ✧ A severe allergic reaction, or anaphylaxis, is serious so it's essential to know what to do next.

- ✧ If you suspect your baby is having an allergic reaction, try to stay calm and seek medical help as soon as you realise something is wrong.
- ✧ If your child is showing signs of a severe allergic reaction or anaphylaxis call 999 immediately.
- ✧ If your child has a food allergy make sure you read food labels carefully and avoid any foods where the ingredients are unclear.
- ✧ A food intolerance is not an immune system reaction. It usually means that the food cannot be easily digested.
- ✧ Remember that signs of intolerances in babies can appear more slowly, making it harder to diagnose.
- ✧ Look out for intolerance signs like: stomach cramps, diarrhoea and bloating.
- ✧ The best thing to do if you're concerned that your baby may have a food allergy or intolerance is to speak to your GP or health visitor.

Weaning shopping list – must have items to start baby weaning

Now the fun really starts! Weaning your baby is a lot of fun as they adjust to new tastes and textures and you discover lots of new facial expressions you didn't know your baby had. We have put together a handy weaning shopping list for all things weaning.

- ☐ Consider buying a blender or hand held blender – great if you decide to start with purees.
- ☐ Hand held masher and sieve are great for purees – will also give you a great work out!
- ☐ Colourful plastic bowls ideally with suction cups on the bottom – this will cover off the food-throwing phase.
- ☐ Small, smooth round-tipped plastic or rubber spoons – these are gentle on your baby's delicate mouth and gums.
- ☐ Consider buying a spoon with a long handle for getting into jars.
- ☐ If you want to get techy get spoons that change colour if the food is too hot – although always check the temperature first.
- ☐ Baby bowls with tight fitting lids are essential for when out and about with baby.
- ☐ Wipe clean plastic bibs are invaluable. Weaning is messy – babies like to play with food, it's all part of the fun.
- ☐ Cloth bibs are handy to wipe up messy chops – buy a few though to rotate with the laundry.
- ☐ Reusable pouches are great for when you're out and about – fill them with your own homemade purees. If using pouches, always squeeze the contents onto a spoon. Sucking straight from a pouch may contribute to dental decay.

- ☐ Ice cube trays to freeze portions of purees and freezer bags to store the cubes – great for batch cooking.
- ☐ Baby cup or beaker. Free flowing spouts (without a valve) help to protect teeth. Be prepared for little spillages – did we mention that weaning is messy?
- ☐ Larger plastic bowls for stage 3 weaning – ideally get a couple with dividing compartments.
- ☐ Baby highchair – ideally get one with strong straps, easy to fold away, easy to clean removable tray covers and cushions and adjustable height settings for when your baby grows.
- ☐ Baby booster seat. For when your baby is older, a baby booster seat ties to your own chairs meaning you can enjoy mealtimes together.
- ☐ Messy mats or a shower curtain. Not essential but if your baby is fond of throwing food, you may be thankful for one of these. After all, weaning and mess go hand in hand!

Top Tips

- ★ Make sure all plastic weaning bowls are suitable for the dishwasher, microwave and freezer.
- ★ Try second hand. There are loads of high quality barely used weaning items on local Facebook groups or Freecycle.
- ★ An apron is useful for feeding times to keep your clothes nice and clean.
- ★ Make use of a feeding schedule stuck on the fridge... to track what your baby has tried, and how often. It can take up to ten tries or more for your baby to get used to a new flavour, so don't give up.

Baby sign language – your baby’s trying to tell you something

From the moment they’re born your baby has a lot to say. Whether they’re crying when they’re hungry, or holding up their arms to be picked up, they’ve got ways to get their message across. Here are a few baby signs for you to keep in mind.

- ✧ Find out if baby’s tired. Look out for a slow build-up of grunt-like cries and rubbing eyes.
- ✧ Work out if they’re in pain. Often signalled with a sudden high-pitched shriek followed by a big breath and another shriek.
- ✧ Find out if it’s colic. Watch out for regular inconsolable crying in the late afternoon or evening for up to a few hours. Their face may become flushed, scrunched up and they may clench their fists, draw their knees up to their tummy, or arch their back.
- ✧ Could baby be angry? Look out for loud crying while going red in the face.
- ✧ Remember they might feel ignored. Yelling and shouting could be a hint.
- ✧ Keep an eye out for fear. Baby may freeze on the spot.
- ✧ Find out if they’re hungry. They might be hunting for the breast or fidgeting and sucking fingers, your shoulders, or even your face.
- ✧ Remember they’re learning to talk. Regular babbling means they probably just want a chin wag.
- ✧ See if they want something. Once they learn to point they may get good at giving instructions.
- ✧ Find out if they just want a cuddle. Baby will soon start to raise their arms to let you know.

- ✧ See if they want to play. Hiding their face behind their hands could be a good time for peekaboo.
- ✧ Look out for your baby's content face. You'll probably see an angelic little face smiling back at you.



Simple tips for an eco-friendly baby

There you were, quietly doing your bit to save the planet, and along comes a teeny bundle of mess-creating, gadget-needing joy. But worry not. We've got a list of easy eco-friendly baby tips to help you carry on living a greener life.

- ✧ Try to choose eco toys made of wood, natural rubber or plant-based bioplastic.
- ✧ Consider shopping for bamboo baby bowls, spoons and cups. Eco-friendly and beautiful.
- ✧ Try swapping to biodegradable bin bags and nappy bags.
- ✧ Try cotton wool or flannels for changing time at home (it may be harder to avoid using wipes out and about so biodegradable baby wipes will come in handy).
- ✧ Have a go at mixing up your own cleaning products using things like vinegar and bicarb of soda.
- ✧ Avoid too much screen time, particularly towards the end of the day.
- ✧ Adjust your lighting according to the time of day.
- ✧ Aim for bright, open curtains and blinds in the daytime, dim at night – it can help get baby into a good sleep routine.
- ✧ Go for a stroll in your local park.
- ✧ Take a trip to the farm – urban farms are fun too.
- ✧ Explore your garden (if you're lucky enough to have one!)
- ✧ Aim to shop from your local butcher, baker, greengrocer and farmers' market.
- ✧ Try growing your own! Even a window box of tomatoes is a great start.

- ✧ Swap to a milk delivery service – it's local and avoids plastic bottles.
- ✧ Check out your local charity shops. They're a treasure trove of everything from clothes to books and furniture.
- ✧ Upcycling can be a fun family project.
- ✧ Consider switching to eco nappies, biodegradable nappies or washable/reusable nappies.

9-12 Months



Next steps in baby's weaning food adventure

Now that you've introduced baby to some new tastes and textures, you can start broadening their taste buds' horizons even further with a variety of weaning food.

- ✧ Go at your own pace. Every child is different and you'll be able to see what works best for your little food explorer.
- ✧ Try different textures and flavours to broaden your baby's taste.
- ✧ Cook the same ingredients in different ways to see what goes down the best.
- ✧ Baby see baby do, so let baby join in with family meals. Watching you will arouse their curiosity and encourage them to copy you and join in.
- ✧ Watch out for allergies. Common food triggers include: celery, cereals containing gluten, cow's milk, crustaceans (shrimps, prawns etc.), eggs, fish, lupin, nuts, sesame seeds, soya and sulphites.
- ✧ Variety is the thing. Focus on the main food groups: dairy (always full-fat and pasteurised), starchy foods (rice, pasta, potatoes), protein (meat, fish, eggs and pulses). Also nuts (crushed, ground or as a smooth butter), fruit & veg (fresh, frozen or canned, but no added sugar or salt).
- ✧ Try to limit foods that are high in salt, sugar and saturated fat. Avoid raw shellfish, shark, swordfish and marlin (which contain too much mercury). Whole nuts and peanuts are not suitable under 5 years of age, whilst honey should not be given before 1 year of age.

Toddler birthday parties - easy party ideas for you

Planning a one-year old's birthday party can be surprisingly tricky. Here are some toddler birthday party ideas to get their celebrations off with a baby-friendly bang.

- ☐ Choose a venue that can handle the mess of a baby and toddler takeover.
- ☐ Consider a house party if you're only inviting a few guests and want to keep costs manageable.
- ☐ Look at local leisure centres or halls if you want a bigger affair (with less clearing up to do).
- ☐ Do book well in advance (and before you send out invites).
- ☐ Do make sure you put an 'RSVP by' date on the invite.
- ☐ Consider things like parking and toilet/baby-changing facilities.
- ☐ Straight after baby's regular nap time is a good choice for kick-off.
- ☐ Keep it short – for everyone's sake. A couple of hours should do it.
- ☐ A few toys, some soft playmats and lots and lots of colourful balloons should do the trick.
- ☐ Choose a playlist to get everyone in the mood. With a couple of adult-friendly tunes thrown in too.
- ☐ Keep the music low, to protect little ears.
- ☐ Consider giving your little guests a party bag with a small book or toy to take home.
- ☐ Healthy snacks and finger foods will keep everyone happy.

- ☐ Consider pizza or small sandwiches/canapes for older siblings and adults.
- ☐ Put out lots of water.
- ☐ Keep less healthy treats out of reach so parents can control quantities.
- ☐ Do ask if any of your guests have allergies.
- ☐ Invite the people you know will share in the joy of the celebration.
- ☐ Consider the cake. Homemade or shop-bought?
- ☐ Remember cakes are usually high in sugar so cut slivers rather than slices for younger guests.
- ☐ Consider looking for low and sugar-free cake recipes online.
- ☐ Remember those grabby little hands and keep eyes peeled when the candle is lit.
- ☐ Baby might be a bit overwhelmed when everyone's singing. Hold them for reassurance.
- ☐ If at home make sure it's safe for all ages attending, whether old or young.
- ☐ Out of home make sure the venue is aware of the age groups attending and will have appropriate health and safety provisions in place.
- ☐ If people ask about gifts, things they can grow into are good (clothes, books), otherwise practical items (toothbrush, bath towel, dining sets).
- ☐ Consider asking for donations to a charity instead of gifts.
- ☐ Ask a friend or relative to take lots of photos, you will probably have your hands full.
- ☐ Make sure cameras and phones are standing by and ready if you're doing candles.
- ☐ Remember that party photos make great thank-you cards, printed or sent as digital messages.

Toddler Checklists

You blinked and your baby is now a toddler. Welcome to a new parenting stage, where reason can seem to go out of the window. With the help of experienced mums and dads, we've developed a comprehensive checklist, all in one handy place, to help make parenting that little bit easier during this exciting stage.

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Toddler

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12-15 Months



Action list for children's dental care

Looking after your teeth is a lifelong undertaking so it helps to get off to a good start. Brush up on our top tips for children's dental care, including when to take your baby to the dentist, to keep your mini-me's cheeky smile healthy and bright.

- ☐ Consider taking your baby with you to the dentist as soon as their first teeth appear. It helps them get used to the sights and sounds.
- ☐ Start brushing your child's teeth as soon as they come through.
- ☐ Sit them on your knee and use a smear of fluoride toothpaste on a baby toothbrush.
- ☐ Try letting your baby watch while you brush your teeth.
- ☐ Get into a twice daily brushing routine with a children's fluoride toothpaste (a pea-sized amount is ideal).
- ☐ To help, stand behind them and gently tilt their head backwards. Look in the mirror so your child can see while you are brushing.
- ☐ Brush in small circles covering all surfaces of the teeth.
- ☐ Let your toddler spit the toothpaste out but don't rinse with water.
- ☐ Supervise brushing until your child is around 7-8 years old.
- ☐ Talk to your kid's dentist about tips and advice on how to keep your child's teeth clean and healthy.

Dealing with your toddler's sleep problems

You know they're tired, they know they're tired, and still the land of nod seems a distant dream. Here are a few tips and tricks to help your toddler's sleep problems and bed them down for the night.

- ☐ Try to keep your baby's room at a steady temperature, around 18°C (65F) is ideal. Too hot or too cold could disturb their sleep.
- ☐ Changes to the bedtime routine, however small (e.g. their first time in a toddler bed, or cot without bars) will have some effect. Don't worry. It's temporary and the novelty will soon wear off.
- ☐ Aim for regular bedtimes and naptimes.
- ☐ Try letting them choose their bedtime story.
- ☐ Try a baby nightlight or leaving the door ajar to soothe fear of the dark.
- ☐ Try white noise or a soothing selection of sounds for your toddler.
- ☐ Try letting them settle themselves to sleep.
- ☐ Be nearby to assure them but avoid picking your mini-me up or taking them out of their room if they cry or fuss.
- ☐ Make sure they're as comfy as can be. Adjust their bedding and nightclothes for changes in temperature, tuck their favourite toy in with them.
- ☐ Try a snack before bedtime if hunger is waking them up. Some milk, or a banana before they brush their teeth may help keep their tummy happy and their heads firmly on the pillow.
- ☐ Don't despair. It can take time to master the art of sleeping, but you'll get there eventually.

Toddler tummy troubles

Poo. Where there's a toddler there's lots of it, especially if your toddler's tummy problems are present. Here's a list of things to help you keep your toddler's upset stomach under control.

- ✧ Frequent watery poo is a sign your toddler has diarrhoea, so ask your GP for advice.
- ✧ Wash hands often and practice good hygiene to stop it from spreading.
- ✧ Rehydrate your toddler after every bout of watery poo with 100-200ml of fluid.
- ✧ Avoid sugary drinks. Drinks with artificial sweeteners aren't allowed in foods for children under three years old.
- ✧ Dark, strong smelling wee can be a sign of dehydration.
- ✧ Ask your pharmacist or GP if a rehydration solution is advisable.
- ✧ Only give your toddler anti-diarrhoea medicine as recommended by your GP.
- ✧ Keep your toddler home from nursery while ill and up to 48 hours after their last bout of diarrhoea.
- ✧ If your toddler doesn't poo at least three times a week it could be a sign of constipation.
- ✧ Give your toddler more fluids, ideally water or diluted fruit juice.
- ✧ Make sure they're getting plenty of fruit and veg in their diet.
- ✧ Being active can help the bowels keep moving.
- ✧ A gentle toddler tummy massage – moving hands clockwise – after a warm relaxing bath can help constipation to pass.
- ✧ Avoid over-the-counter medication for toddler constipation unless recommended by your GP.

Coping with a fussy eater

Wondering how to help a fussy eater? Developing a palate takes time. So we've prepared a menu of ingenious ways to help turn your fussy eater into a food lover.

- ✧ Set regular mealtimes. Routine is reassuring for young children.
- ✧ Large portions can be overwhelming. Keep it small and offer more later.
- ✧ Use colours and shapes to make the food fun and attractive.
- ✧ Try to make mealtimes fun by letting your toddler help with meal prep or chatting with them about the colours and textures of the food.
- ✧ Be positive. Praise your toddler when they're eating well, don't criticise or punish when not.
- ✧ Try to offer new tastes gradually. One at a time and in small amounts.
- ✧ Try not to rush mealtimes as some toddlers eat very slowly.
- ✧ Try to eat together as a family. Toddlers learn just as much by watching what you do, from table manners to savouring food and trying different things.
- ✧ Encourage them to feed themselves, it might help finger foods be accepted more easily. You can deal with the mess later.



Family meals for a toddler

Family mealtimes can be a lovely way to bring everyone together - in theory. Throw a toddler into the mix and your family feast can turn into a food fight in the blink of an eye. Here are some family meal ideas with toddlers to keep dinnertime a drama-free zone.

- ✧ Toddlers are little mimics and you are their idol, so show them how it's done.
- ✧ Try giving them smaller portions on (unbreakable) plates.
- ✧ Ignore silly behaviour (throwing food around, shouting, banging on the table).
- ✧ Praise good behaviour (eating, enjoying, trying to use spoons and forks).
- ✧ Talk to them about the meal, its taste, colours, smells and textures.
- ✧ Don't focus all your attention on them – it's a family meal after all.
- ✧ Don't worry if they don't clear their plate.
- ✧ Don't offer alternatives if they refuse what's on the table.
- ✧ If eating out, take some of their favourite things to keep them busy until the food arrives. Books, a favourite toy or colouring work well.
- ✧ Make sure the restaurant is child-friendly with highchairs, child-sized meals and child-friendly plates and cutlery.
- ✧ If they have a tantrum in a restaurant or café try taking them outside or to a quiet corner for a moment. They could just be overwhelmed by the sights, sounds and smells of a busy environment.

Toddler meal ideas to make them go mmm...

Planning toddler meals alongside family ones can be time-consuming. We've put together a simple menu checklist to give you inspiration and tips for delicious and healthy toddler breakfasts, lunches and dinners. Aim for three balanced meals and two snacks a day. Try not to stress if your little one sticks to a few favourites to begin with. Always follow NHS guidance on preparing and serving foods safely to reduce the risk of choking.

- ☐ Porridge with banana or fruit compote.
- ☐ English muffin with tomatoes and scrambled eggs or sardines.
- ☐ Cheese on toast with mushrooms.
- ☐ Omelette with chopped veggies.
- ☐ Jacket potato with tuna and sweetcorn.
- ☐ Boiled rice with chicken and pepper skewers.
- ☐ Pasta with tomato sauce and cheese.
- ☐ Avocado on toast with a dash of paprika.
- ☐ Hidden veg lasagne.
- ☐ Shepherd's pie using sweet potato mash.
- ☐ Mild korma curry and rice.
- ☐ Meatballs and pasta.
- ☐ For sweet snacks try fruit scones, frozen yoghurt-coated blueberries, fruit.
- ☐ For savoury snacks try rice cakes, veg sticks with hummus or yoghurt dip, breadsticks and olive dip (tapenade).
- ☐ Remember to give plenty of drinks. Milk or water.

Magical moments and memorable toddler milestones

There are a lot of exciting firsts coming up between day one and age three. We've put together a list of things to be on the lookout for between those ages. All kids are different though, so don't worry what anyone else is doing and when. Just grab the camera ready for those big milestones whenever they do spring up.

- ★ First words
- ★ First steps
- ★ Independence
- ★ Health check at 12 months
- ★ Improved dexterity using cutlery and cups.
- ★ Drawing... or scribbling.
- ★ Eating finger foods.
- ★ Their first dental check
- ★ Biting and chewing (fingers, toes, toys, your hair etc.)
- ★ Saying 'no'
- ★ Pointing
- ★ Vaccines incl. MMR, Hib/MenC, pneumococcal
- ★ Fussy eating
- ★ Putting words together to make short sentences
- ★ Tantrums
- ★ Restless sleeping
- ★ Stacking (building towers with blocks etc.)

- ✧ Feeding themselves
- ✧ Repeating themselves
- ✧ Running and climbing
- ✧ Pushing and pulling
- ✧ Dressing themselves
- ✧ Independent play
- ✧ Longer simple sentences
- ✧ Running confidently
- ✧ Potty training
- ✧ Building friendships
- ✧ Improved balance and agility
- ✧ Changing appearance
- ✧ Using a fork
- ✧ Copying you
- ✧ Storytelling
- ✧ Fears (animals, noises)
- ✧ Self-care
- ✧ Opinions
- ✧ Motor skills

Remember, every child will develop at their own pace but if you do have concerns about your toddler's development, speak to your health visitor or GP.



15-18 Months



Baby's first steps? Walk this way

It's both thrilling and terrifying watching your baby take those tentative first steps. Here are a few ways you can help them learn to walk and make that giant leap for toddler-kind.

- ✧ Tempt them with an interesting toy placed on a sturdy/heavy chair or sofa.
- ✧ Encourage them to pull themselves up to reach it.
- ✧ Standing up is often followed by a sudden bum-plonk back down so stay close by (though nappies do absorb quite a lot of impact!)
- ✧ If your baby's standing confidently holding onto furniture, try holding their hand to see if they'd like to try walking.
- ✧ Alternatively, you could encourage them to 'cruise' along holding on to (fixed, stable) furniture.
- ✧ A push-along toy can help them start to move away from the furniture.
- ✧ Try offering a hand for them to walk with you.
- ✧ Smile and give lots of praise and cuddles for all their attempts, successful or not.
- ✧ When you think they might be ready you can kneel a couple of feet away from them and call them to you, holding out your arms and smiling encouragingly .
- ✧ Once they're walking fairly confidently make sure you re-check your home to make it safe from obstacles as well as things that were not in reach before.
- ✧ Check: stability of furniture, rugs (non-slip), stair gates are properly installed and used.

Baby's first words. It's the chitter-chatter of tiny peeps

They're full of wonder at the world and can't wait to explore it. Here's some tips to encourage your baby's first words and sentences (and the torrent of questions that follow soon after).

-  Try to teach your baby to talk about the things you see and do.
-  Try to describe things as you're doing them (I'm cooking dinner, I'm calling mummy, I'm packing your bag).
-  Try to read to your child every day and describe pictures in books too.
-  Singing and acting out songs and nursery rhymes makes learning words fun.
-  Try to expand on what your child is saying e.g. if they say "tree" you can say "Yes it's a tall tree"
-  It helps if your toddler can clearly see your face and mouth when you're speaking so they can copy the shapes your lips and mouth make.
-  Ask them to make choices like 'banana or apple' to encourage them to speak rather than point.
-  Repeat words back to them correctly, but don't focus on any words they may get wrong.
-  Turn off the radio, TV or tablet so there's fewer distractions and you can spend time focusing on talking to each other.

Healthy toddler diet

The sooner we start building a healthy toddler diet the better. Here are some nutrition building blocks for a bright and healthy child.

- ✧ Avoid too much sugar, salt or saturated fats, and too many wholegrains (it's best to gradually introduce more wholegrains after 2 years of age).
- ✧ Offer a variety of foods, to train your toddler's taste buds.
- ✧ Aim for 2-3 portions of milk and dairy (or suitable plant-based substitutes) a day.
- ✧ Aim for 5 portions of fruit and veg a day. They can be fresh, frozen, raw, cooked, canned, juiced or even dried.
- ✧ Aim for 2-3 portions of lean meat, fish or vegetarian alternatives for toddlers a day.
- ✧ Aim for 5 portions of starchy carbohydrates a day. Keep the portions toddler-sized to avoid over-filling your little one.
- ✧ Choose unsaturated fats from vegetable sources (e.g. rapeseed or olive oil) instead of saturated fats from meat and dairy products.
- ✧ Growing minds and bodies use up their reserves quickly. Keep your toddler topped up with 2-3 healthy snacks a day.
- ✧ Aim for 6-8 drinks a day. Water and unflavoured milk (or unsweetened calcium-fortified plant-based alternatives like soya or oat milk) are best.
- ✧ It's recommended that all children (from 6 months of age) have a daily supplement with vitamins A, C, and D until they're five years old, unless they're having more than 500ml (about a pint) of formula per day.

Toddler tantrums.

How to keep calm and carry on

With their newly minted skills of walking and talking, your toddler's appetite for self-discovery is getting stronger every day. Here are some tips on how to deal with toddler tantrums to help you navigate the ups and downs of their growing independence.

- ✧ Aim for simple rules and stick to them.
- ✧ Try to praise when they get it right, ignore when they get it wrong.
- ✧ Try giving them simple tasks they can do by themselves (putting on their wellies, tidying toys away).
- ✧ Try offering simple choices (red or blue shirt, teddy or train, banana or apple).
- ✧ Avoid saying no too often. Try rephrasing refusals. E.g. "Why don't we instead?" "Let's see if you can finish the peas while I count to 10 then I'll get your yogurt."
- ✧ Aim for a daily routine with regular meals, naps, playtime and quiet time.
- ✧ Make sure their bedtime routine is calming and consistent.
- ✧ Keep shopping trips short to avoid boredom and (very public) meltdowns.
- ✧ Try distraction when you see something brewing. Timed right, a silly noise, funny face, or toy-swap can stop a tantrum in its tracks.
- ✧ If it's too late and the fireworks begin, try to stay calm.
- ✧ Cuddles can crack the toughest nut. Sometimes a little security is all they need.
- ✧ Don't give in – your toddler's pretty smart and if they think it's worked they'll try it again.
- ✧ Hug it out when it's over. Tantrums are a normal healthy sign of development and they won't last forever.

Travelling with toddlers

Given the amount of accessories you need, preparing to travel with your mini-me can feel daunting. Here are some ways to journey like a pro when you've got a toddler in tow.

- ✧ Try to break up the journey into chunks of activities to keep boredom at bay.
- ✧ Pack a bag of tricks such as a sticker book, favourite toys and some crayons and paper.
- ✧ Audiobooks are great in the car. Pick a classic the whole family will enjoy with a great narrator. It might even lull your mini-me to sleep!
- ✧ Have a little walk down the plane or train aisle if you can.
- ✧ Short bursts of screen time on a tablet can give you a break during long journeys.
- ✧ Pack toddler-appropriate headphones too or you'll have the whole plane singing along to Postman Pat.
- ✧ Bring healthy snacks to minimise boredom and hunger.
- ✧ Pack bibs and travel spoons, bowls and beakers.
- ✧ If you're staying away overnight aim for a home-away-from-home feeling. Pack their favourite cuddly toy, comforter, a soft blanket that squishes down for easy packing and a teeny toddler pillow.
- ✧ Remember their dummy (if using one) as dummies can also help to relieve pressure on little ears during take-off and landing).
- ✧ Consider bringing a portable kids bed for weekend visits or when you want your toddler in the same room as you.
- ✧ Don't forget a stocked baby bag with nappies (one for every hour you'll be travelling, to be safe), nappy sacks, baby wipes, travel changing mat, tube of nappy rash cream and spare clothes.

Exercise with toddlers: hacks for hectic lives

Some days you probably feel the last thing you need to do is any sort of structured exercise. But carving out some time to move purposefully can work wonders for your physical and mental health. Here are some tips for exercise with toddlers that can help get you strong and fit without too much stress.

- ✧ Fit exercise into small chunks of time. Even ten minutes a day is a great start.
- ✧ Many apps and online videos offer short exercise routines you can squeeze in whenever suits you.
- ✧ Walk or ride a bike whenever you can.
- ✧ Do squats while you're picking up toys.
- ✧ Do calf raises while you're chopping veg.
- ✧ Avoid lifts and walk up and down escalators.
- ✧ Join in during playtime, there's nothing like a game of chase to get your heart rate going.
- ✧ Check if your local gym offers childcare or a creche – many do.
- ✧ Go for buggy walks with other parents. Choose hilly areas for a more intense work-out.
- ✧ Participate in a mum and toddler workout by incorporating your baby into your exercises.
- ✧ Find toddler exercise routines on YouTube for you both to try.

24-27 Months



Potty training toddlers

Wondering how to potty train or when to start potty training? Potty training toddlers is all about aiming the number 1s and 2s in the right place. Our list of potty training tips should help your toddler hit the spot.

- ✧ Go at your own pace. Every child is different and you'll be able to see what works best for your little food explorer.
- ✧ Look for signs that your toddler is ready to try potty training. This will be somewhere between 2-3 years.
- ✧ They tell you as they're weeing or pooing in their nappy. Nice.
- ✧ They may fidget with their nappy or go somewhere quiet when they need to wee.
- ✧ Avoid starting toilet training when your toddler may be unsettled (e.g. house move, new sibling).
- ✧ Let them have nappy-free time during the day, with the potty close at hand.
- ✧ Invite your toddler to sit on the potty for a few minutes at set times each day (after meals, before bath time).
- ✧ If your mini-me won't sit still, try giving them a book to flick through.
- ✧ If they won't have a go at all, try them on a grown-up loo with a child's toilet training seat. If they're not quite ready yet, try again soon.
- ✧ Accidents are inevitable so praise the successes, with lots of encouragement.