Good start to life
First year of life
Birth to 12 months
COOK ISLANDER
The circle of fifteen stars, found in the national flag, represent the unity between all fifteen Cook Island nations. These nations are Tongareva, Rakahanga, Manihiki, Pukapuka, Nassau, Suwarrow, Palmerston, Aitutaki, Manuae, Takutea, Aitu, Mitiaro, Mauke, Rarotonga and Mangaia.

FIJIAN
Masi cloths are deeply embedded in Fijian culture. The distinctive floral decorative patterning can help pinpoint exactly where in Fiji the Masi was created. The cloth itself contains the spirit of the land it comes from and the essence of the people who created it.

FIJIAN INDIAN
Indian heritage and Island living come together through intricate Henna (Mehandi) patterning. The rounded ‘mango’ shape (Ambi) represents Indian origins and is known as the national fruit of India. Mangoes represent abundance, as trees become laden when they come to fruit. Embedded within the Ambi is a shell, representing island life.

MAORI
Kowhaiwhai patterning is often used to enhance the original creator’s story. Inspired by nature, this patterning may be interpreted to represent growth and new beginnings.

PAPUA NEW GUINEAN (PNG)
The distinctive Bird of Paradise features on the PNG flag, representing the country’s independence. In full flight, this beautiful bird suggests freedom.

SAMOAN
The Sennit and talking stick bring with them power, wisdom and blessing from all of the high chiefs across Samoa. Only a high chief (Matai) or their appointed orator have the authority to use them when speaking.

TONGAN
The Manulua symbol has many permutations across Tonga. All are abstract symbolisations of either two birds in flight or the frangipani flower. Both are potent natural symbols in Tongan culture.

The pattern used in this booklet and described below has been developed in consultation with elders and leaders of their respective communities. It is only a symbol of each community and is not a representation of the vast, diverse and rich cultures, languages and values of Maori and Pacific Islander nations.

First year of Life – Birth to 12 months booklet is the third of four booklets in the Good Start to Life series. It outlines important information for Maori and Pacific Islander Mums and Dads to have a healthy baby.

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ISSN 1833-6566
Congratulations! Baby is here

Being a parent is life changing.

Key tips to remember:

» Breastmilk is the only food your baby needs until 6 months of age

» Expressing breastmilk means your baby can have breastmilk even when you are not there

» If your baby is not having breastmilk, give an infant formula

» Don’t start solids too early or too late

» Healthy drinks are just as important as healthy foods

» Dad can help Mum with feeding Baby
Breastfeeding

Until Baby is around 6 months of age, breastmilk is the only food or drink they need.

Breastfeeding is good because:

• Breastfeeding is a special time for Mum and Baby
• Breastmilk is free and is always ready for Baby
• Breastfeeding helps protect Baby from getting sick from infections in their gut, ear and chest
• Breastmilk is even more important to keep Baby healthy if they were born very small or very large
• Breastfeeding can help protect baby from becoming overweight, getting diabetes or other sicknesses when they get older

Dad can help by:

• Bringing Mum a pillow or blanket to make her feel more comfortable
• Bringing Mum water and healthy foods, as breastfeeding can make Mum hungry and thirsty
• Giving Mum love and supporting her to keep breastfeeding
Getting started

Colostrum is the first milk and is very important for Baby.

- Colostrum is thick and often yellow
- After a few days, your breasts will start to make milk. The milk is thinner and not so yellow
- Colostrum gets Baby’s digestion working and helps to fight germs

Newborn babies have little stomachs

It’s normal for newborn babies to need lots of feeds. Don’t worry about how long it is since Baby had their last feed. Feed Baby whenever they are hungry.

Don’t give up

- Learning to breastfeed can take time. It is normal to have some issues during breastfeeding. Most people will need some help to get through the tough times
- Don’t use a dummy. It can make it harder for Baby to start breastfeeding

The more often Baby feeds, the more milk Mum will make.

For breastfeeding support talk to your midwife, lactation consultant or child health nurse
Hunger signs

Early signs that Baby is hungry:
- Moving head from side to side as if looking for Mum’s breast
- Sucking fist, fingers or thumbs
- Turning face into your breast

Late signs that Baby is hungry
- Moving head frantically from side to side
- Crying – once Baby is crying it can be hard to get them to feed properly

Calm Baby by cuddling and talking to them and then feed Baby.
Don't smoke. Don't drink.

**Smoking**

Mum should stop smoking during her pregnancy and after Baby is born. Dad can help her by giving up too. Make sure no one smokes around Baby.

**Alcohol**

The best thing for Baby is for Mum not to drink alcohol at all when she is breastfeeding.

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**Alcohol passes into Mum’s breastmilk. Baby can’t handle the alcohol and will get hurt.**

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If Mum and Dad drink and get drunk, they can’t take good care of Baby

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There are people who can help you drink less. Call the Alcohol and Drug Information Service on 180 177 833 or talk to your doctor.
Expressing breastmilk

Expressing means that Baby can have breastmilk even when Mum is not there.

Mum can express breastmilk by hand or by using a breast pump.

It’s easier for Mum to express if she feels relaxed and comfortable.

Wash your hands first. Have a clean container ready to collect the breastmilk.

Using a breast pump

Always follow the directions that come with the pump. Ask a midwife or the person who gave it to you to show you how the pump works.
Storing breastmilk

- Freshly expressed breastmilk can be stored in a clean bottle or container in the fridge or freezer
- Label breastmilk with the date you expressed it before storing
- Expressed breastmilk can be kept in the fridge for 3 days or in a freezer for 3 months
- Never store breastmilk in the door of the fridge
- Never refreeze breastmilk. Throw any leftovers out

Warming up breastmilk

- Warm up breastmilk by standing it in warm water for a few minutes
- Shake the bottle well before giving it to Baby. This helps to make sure that the breastmilk is heated evenly
- Always test the temperature before giving it to Baby. It should feel warm but not hot when you put some drops on the inside of your wrist
Formula feeding

If your baby is not having breastmilk, give an infant formula.

Before Baby is 12 months old, cow’s milk and powdered milk can hurt Baby’s tummy, make their blood weak and put strain on their kidneys.

How much infant formula does Baby need?
- The amount of formula will change as Baby grows
- Feed Baby when they are hungry and give them as much as they want
- Don’t make Baby finish the bottle if they don’t want to
- Baby can have both breastmilk and formula
- You can add expressed breastmilk to formula
- Always follow what it says on the tin

Water for Baby

Babies on infant formula also need water, especially in hot weather. Between feeds, give baby water that has been boiled and then cooled.

If the formula is made up too strong, it will hurt Baby’s kidneys. If the formula is too weak, Baby won’t grow well.
When is Baby ready to eat solid food?

Don’t start solids too early. Baby is not ready to start solids if the food is pushed back out with the tongue.

Don’t start solids too late. Baby may get weak blood and stop growing well if solids are started too late.

Baby is ready for solids when they are:

- About 6 months old
- Able to sit upright on your lap and hold their head up properly
- Reaching out for food when someone is eating nearby
- Opening their mouth when you put a spoon near it

Don't give Baby solid foods BEFORE 4 months of age because it can make them overweight and sick later in life. About 6 months is best!
How to start solids

- Choose a time when Baby is happy and relaxed
- Help Baby focus on eating by turning off the TV, computer, phone and radio
- Stay with Baby while they are eating, so you can help if they choke
- At first give Baby solid food once or twice a day. When they get used to it, give solid food more times each day
- Baby may only want a little at first. Give more as they get used to it
- Don’t put the spoon or food in YOUR mouth before giving it to Baby

Don’t force Baby to eat or finish food. Babies know when they are full.
What foods to start with

Start feeding baby iron rich foods like:

- Beef, lamb, pork
- Fish (no bones)
- Chicken (no skin)
- Green leafy veggies like taro leaves, pele/aibika, kapisi/cabbage and watercress
- Smooth peanut butter

The iron in lean meat gives Baby strong blood and helps them grow. Minced meat can be cooked so it is soft and smooth so it’s easy for Baby to swallow.
How to make baby food

- Cook the food until soft
- You can mash the food with a fork, push it through a sieve or use a blender to make it extra smooth
- You can add breastmilk or formula to help make the food smooth and mushy

As Baby grows...

- Move from smooth food to foods with lumps. This will help Baby to learn to chew and talk well
- By 8 months Baby can have soft finger foods as well
- Give Baby some soft veggies, fruits, meat, fish, cheese or yoghurt every day
- Include Baby at the table for family meals. Baby will watch you and the rest of the family
What foods are NOT good for Baby?

Don't give Baby:

- Sugar, honey, salt, chicken/beef stock, soy sauce or add other types of sauces to Baby’s food
- Foods that have lots of salt and fat like tinned corned beef and turkey tails
- Foods that might make Baby choke like whole nuts, hard raw veggies or fruit, lollies or large pieces of sausage with skin on

Remember this is the first time Baby has tasted food. New food on its own will have strong flavours for Baby. You don’t need to add extra flavourings.
Healthy drinks for Baby

Birth to 6 months
- Breastmilk is the only food or drink Baby needs from birth until 6 months of age
- If Baby is not breastfed, give an infant formula until they are 12 months old
- The best drink to give Baby, apart from breastmilk or infant formula, is water that has been boiled and then cooled

6 to 12 months
- Baby needs to start having solid food as well as breastmilk
- Continue to breastfeed until Baby is at least one year old. Keep breastfeeding for longer if Mum and Baby want to
- From 12 months old, Baby can be given cow’s milk or powdered milk to drink. Baby does not need to have infant or toddler formula. Spend the money on healthy foods instead
- Baby should learn how to drink water from a cup
Breastmilk is BEST

Using baby bottles

- If Baby uses a bottle, fill it only with expressed breastmilk or infant formula. Give water that has been boiled and then cooled from a cup between feeds.
- Don’t let Baby fall asleep with a bottle – even if it is formula – it can cause ear infections.

Some drinks are NOT good for Baby

- Baby should not have cow’s milk or powdered milk to drink before 12 months old. Cow’s milk can hurt Baby’s kidneys.
- Tea can cause Baby to have weak blood.
- Sugary drinks like fizzy drink, fruit juice, cordial, flavoured milk, sports drinks or energy drinks will rot Baby’s teeth and can make Baby overweight.

Healthy drinks for Baby are just as important as healthy food.
Mental and emotional wellbeing

Having a new baby is a happy time but sometimes it can be scary and stressful.

After Baby is born, Mum and Dad might feel a bit moody, cranky, tearful or sad. These feeling usually go away after a few days but if they keep going talk to your doctor.

It is important for Mum and Dad to look after their mental health and emotions after Baby is born. This will help to cope with all the changes and help you bond with Baby.
Signs that Mum or Dad need support:

- Feeling sad, ashamed or guilty
- Feeling scared or angry
- Feeling like you want to cry all the time
- Don’t want to hang out with family and friends anymore
- Loss of appetite or eating too much
- Much less or much more sleep than usual
- Have headaches, sweaty hands, your heart beats fast and you start shaking
- Thoughts of hurting yourself or Baby

What might help?

- Get into a routine – do things around the same time everyday
- Eat healthy meals and snacks
- Be active
- Make sure you find time to rest
- Talk to your partner, family, friends and church groups

There are people that can help you get through tough times. Talk to the doctor, call 13 HEALTH or the PANDA Helpline on 1300 726 306.
Growth checks and vaccine shots

Your Baby will need regular checks to make sure they are growing strong and healthy.

Your doctor or midwife will measure Baby’s head, weight and height to check their growth.

Babies get their growth checked at:
• 0-6 weeks and 6-8 weeks
• 4, 6, 9 and 12 months

Vaccine shots can protect your Baby from sickness. This helps protect other babies, kids and adults around them as well.

Babies need their vaccine shots at different times:
• Birth
• 2, 4, and 6 months
• 12 months

Make sure your Baby doesn’t miss their shots and growth checks. Use a calendar or set a reminder on your phone.
Being active

It’s important for Mum and Dad to eat healthy food and be active to be able to cope with all the changes that Baby brings.

Once your doctor or midwife says Mum can be active again, try:

- Walking (push Baby in the pram)
- Swimming
- Yoga or gentle stretching
- Some exercise classes like Zumba and dancing
- Pelvic floor exercises (ask the doctor for more information)

Tips for staying active:

- Find a buddy to join you and make exercise more fun
- Ask your family, friends or church members about making an exercise group

While Mum is exercising, Dad can help to look after Baby. This gives Mum a break and lets Dad spend time with Baby.
Dad time

Spend time with Baby so you get to know each other

These are things any Dad can do:
• Hold and cuddle Baby
• Rock, talk and sing to Baby
• Bath Baby
• Change Baby’s nappies
• Help with feeding Baby

Extra ways to help Mum:
• Go with Mum to Baby’s growth checks and vaccine shots
• Help around the house and with cooking so Mum can rest up

It’s a good idea to have gaps between your babies. It gives:
• Mum’s body time to heal after having Baby
• Time for Mum and Dad to have some one-on-one time with Baby
• Mum’s body time to get ready for the next baby
Acknowledgements

The Good Start to Life series has been adapted from the Growing Strong: Feeding you and your baby resource created by the Queensland Department of Health. The development of *Good Start to Life: First year of life (Birth to 12 months)* has been coordinated and led by the Good Start Program team within Children’s Health Queensland Hospital and Health Service. It was conducted in consultation with a range of stakeholders from the Preventative Health Branch, Metro South Hospital and Health Service, and most importantly the Maori and Pacific Islander community.

It was peer reviewed by Senior Community Nutritionists Andrea Cruickshank, Simone Johnston and Andrew Resetti; and also Lady Cilento Children’s Hospital Director of Dietetics and Food Services Dr Robyn Littlewood.

Consultation was conducted with Maori and Pacific Islander community members Andrew Fa’avale, Toakase Layt, Alofa Magele, Deanne Stevens and Vilisi Waqaliva; and also the University of Auckland and TAHA Well Pacific Mother and Infant Service in New Zealand.

Particular thanks to Ilisapeci Kubunameca and Sarah McNab for the recruitment and photography of families featured in this document. We would also like to acknowledge the members of the Maori and Pacific Islander community who volunteered their time to be photographed including Vilisi Waqaliva, Brian Philitoga, Lorraine Tongia, Clive Kema, Miriama and Epeli Natuikata, Kritika Devi; and Avin, Chandra and Madhup Kumar.

We would like to acknowledge the program’s Tongan Nutritionist/Dietitian Losa Seiler, for leading the development of the resource; and also the invaluable contribution by Maori Nutritionist/Dietitian Kirstine Kira.

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These services are confidential with experienced professionals. They can be contacted 24 hours a day 7 days a week.