

Advice for Mothers on Caring for their Baby



BREAST FEEDING

- This is the best feed.
- Breast feeding has many benefits for both you and your baby and this includes having a healthier baby who is bonded well with you.
- Start as soon as the baby is born if you and your baby are well enough.
- Start solids at 4-6months of age and NOT before.
- You do not need to give water in the first 6 months as the water content of breast milk is more than sufficient.
- The more baby breast feeds, the more milk is produced.
- Introducing formula milk will cause baby to breast feed less, therefore less breast milk is produced. Over time, the breast milk supply will further diminish, thus making the baby hungry and you end up losing confidence in your ability to breast feed.
- Often having both breast feeding and bottle feeding would cause the baby to prefer the plastic teat and the breast milk supply dries up.
- Breast feeding is a good time to talk and bond with your baby.
- If you are to return to work, you can breast feed during breaks where possible or you may express breast milk and keep it in the fridge (but not for longer than 24hrs)
- Aim to breast feed until at least 12months of age
- Seek help from your district health nurse/midwife or doctor as soon as possible, if you have any difficulties about breast feeding
- You can successfully breast feed your baby even if you did not breast



Ministry
of Health
TONGA

FORMULA FEEDING

- ONLY use this if you cannot breast feed
- It will cost you about \$800-\$1200 to provide appropriate formula feed for the first 6 months alone
- Only humanised formula milk is acceptable in children under 12months. For example S26, SMA and Karicare in NO particular preference order.
- The formula feed must be made according to instructions.

OTHER MILK-NOT ACCEPTABLE

DO NOT give sweetened condensed milk(Carnation), milo, anchor milk, cow's or goat's milk, tapioca starch etc to any baby under 12months of age.

TRADITIONAL AND HERBAL TREATMENT

1. This approach is NOT safe for children.
2. There is a high risk of poisoning, severe diarrhoea and dehydration, oral thrush and herbal solution spilling into the lungs causing pneumonia. Some babies even die as a result of these adverse effects.
3. Very often, it distract or delay seeking proper diagnosis and treatment.
4. So called conditions like Mavaeua, Tapitopito, Pito Popo, Pito Ava, Mui kula, kilivao, fiho are either misconception, false or inappropriate diagnosis. For example: Mavaeua...is referring to the Anterior fontanelle which is the soft spot at the front part of the head. This is a completely normal finding that does not need treatment. It will close by itself at 9-14mths, yet it's being mistakenly blamed and treated for baby being unsettled or unwell.

GENERAL ADVICE

1. If your baby is feeding poorly, lethargic, vomiting, has distended abdomen, not passing stools within 48 hours of birth or passing blood in stools, please return straight away to see the doctor.
2. If your baby's colour changes eg becomes dusky, pale, yellow(especially affecting the eyes), mottled, developed rash, has cold hands and feet, please see your doctor immediately.
3. Similarly, if your baby's breathing is fast, noisy or laboured see your doctor immediately.
4. If your baby is not responding to sound, eyes not focussing and not smiling by 6 wks of age or floppy, your baby needs to be referred to a children doctor at the hospital.
5. When sleeping, do not share your bed with the baby or sleep baby facing down as this would increase the chance of baby dying unexpectedly. Put baby to sleep on the back on his or her own cot or bassinet.
6. Smoking during pregnancy or around baby, can cause your baby to have unhealthy lungs with breathing difficulties.
7. If you are still concern with your baby after consulting at the hospital outpatient or health centre, you can ask to have your baby referred or



Ministry
of Health
TONGA

IMMUNISATION

1. Ensure baby had received vitamin K, hepatitis b, BCG vaccination by the end of first week of life
2. Make sure your baby gets the 6, 10 and 14 weeks immunisation. Your district nurse would guide you with the rest of the schedule.
3. High immunisation coverage means high level of protection from 9 preventable diseases.

FAMILY SIZE

1. This is rightfully parental choice
2. We can help you with your choice.
3. There are various contraception methods to suit



you and your beliefs

4. Having some form of contraception would be particularly desirable, if you have had difficulties with your previous pregnancy or child-birth.
5. Pregnancy is a choice. We are here to help and give you options.

ANY QUESTIONS?

Please contact closest Reproductive Health Clinic, Health Centre, or the closest hospital.

Should you need more information, please contact the Children's doctors in Vaiola Hospital

Phone: 7400242, 7400243, 7400244, 7400156 during business hours.

Dr George Aho, Head of Paediatrics, Vaiola Hospital
Paediatric Team