



Growing Up Healthy

A resource booklet about
healthy children for
First Nations and Métis
parents in BC

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How Was This Resource Developed?

This series of resources is a response to a growing interest in parenting information for First Nations and Métis parents in BC. The resources share important parenting information. See the back cover for more themes in the series.

Many people contributed to the development of this resource. They generously took time to share their stories, teachings, ideas and photos. They shared their knowledge and experience, provided advice, developed text and reviewed layout. The National Collaborating Centre for Aboriginal Health (NCCA) and the First Nations Health Authority (FNHA) would like to thank the following people for their role in developing the 2013 resource:

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ma maʔnam
means “mother”
in Ktunaxa

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Introduction



Historically, First Nations and Métis people had good health from an active lifestyle and healthy diets which consisted of traditional foods and medicines. This good health included a close connection with the land, and the food and medicines it provided. Food that was taken from the natural world was honoured and respected. It was not wasted and always shared. This also included ceremonial, spiritual, and physical aspects of health and well-being that were part of the daily lives of First Nations and Métis peoples.

This booklet will help you learn how to help your child grow up in a healthy way. It will help families think about healthy food and being active. Most of the things you can do are low or no cost. Eating well and being active can be fun and budget friendly. Being healthy also means getting regular check-ups and learning about your body.

This booklet also tells you about traditional foods, hearing, dental and eye health, immunizations, sleeping, safety, and more. At the end of this booklet you will find resources and services for your family.



'ama
means "mother"
in Dakelh



Food & You

Over time our situations have changed, affecting what we eat and how active we are in our daily lives. Many families do not have places nearby where they can hunt, gather medicines, pick berries or fish, or they may no longer have this traditional knowledge. Parents and children spend a lot of time sitting, for school and for work.

The words parents say and the beliefs that parents have, come from their past. What you experienced as a child impacts how you parent. What role did food play in your life as a child?

What role did food play in your life?

Were you told you had to eat everything on your plate? YES NO

Did your family share meal times together regularly? YES NO

When you were growing up, did you usually have healthy meals? YES NO

Were you taught about healthy food and about cooking? YES NO

Did you have enough to eat? YES NO

Were there times when you went hungry? YES NO

Did you participate in hunting, fishing or gathering traditional foods as a child? YES NO

These questions help you understand your beliefs about food and that you are teaching to your own children. Think about the difference between emotion and hunger. Ask yourself:

- Am I really hungry? Or am I trying to comfort myself with food?
- Am I giving my children food to make me feel better?

Be careful about using food as a reward, comfort, or threat. Here are some examples:



you may hear or see

try instead

reward

Parents telling their children they can have chips if they stop yelling and running around the house.

Remind your children that yelling and running are for outside play, and provide an opportunity for active play.

comfort

Parents comforting their child with a chocolate bar after a bad tantrum.

Comfort your child by holding them and talking about their feelings.

threat

Parents telling their children they won't get pop if their homework is not done.

Letting your children know that when their homework is done, you will play a favourite game together.

Food & You



Food and how you feel

Think about how you feel after you eat. How long does it take to feel hungry again? With some foods, you can feel hungry shortly after. With other foods, you may feel full for a lot longer. The same will happen with your children. Think about foods that make you feel healthy.

Being a role model

You are a role model for your children. If they see you enjoying healthy food, they are more likely to enjoy it as well. Start with small servings and allow for additional servings as desired. Take note of when you are feeling full and let your children decide when they are full. Family mealtime is an important part of a healthy family routine. It is a time to connect as a family. Turn off the television and phones during meals and focus on your children. As you talk together, you are teaching your children about social skills, family and caring. Try to make the table talk enjoyable by talking about positive and fun things. For more information, see the booklets *Family Connections*, *Fatherhood is Forever* and *Parents as First Teachers*.



In the past there was a deep respect and gratitude to the animals and plants that gave up their lives so that people could live. It was understood that all life had value and spirit. It was the responsibility of the ones who took life to respect it. Ceremonies and feasts were ways to respect and honour this relationship.

Traditional Foods

Traditional foods vary by season and community. They are rich in nutrients needed for good health. Most are low in fat and sugar. Salmon and berries are some of the healthiest foods to eat. Hunting, fishing, trapping, growing, and gathering required communities to work together and be physically active.



Take the time to learn about traditional food protocols such as feasting and sharing. Talk to Elders and Wisdom Keepers in your community.

A return to a more traditional diet (i.e., foods with less sugar, fat and salt) and to a more active lifestyle will help keep you and your children healthy. Healthy food shapes us in more ways than one. Traditional foods and practices allow us to shape who we are as Indigenous people. Teaching and learning with our children are great places to start. Here are some examples of traditional foods:

- Dried and smoked fish
- Fish eggs
- Root vegetables
- Mushrooms
- Berries
- Eulachon grease (the oil from a small fish)
- Seaweed as flavouring or eaten dried and toasted
- Soopolallie berries whipped into a frothy cream
- Roasted sea cucumbers
- Steamed clams
- Roots from yellow glacier lilies and camas
- Moose, elk and other mammals

To learn about traditional foods and protocols, talk to Elders and Knowledge Keepers in your community. They will also know about plants and animals that are safe to eat, and those that are not safe. They will know the locations and protocols for hunting, gathering, etc., and how to prepare the food safely.



For more information on traditional foods and practices, see:

- **Traditional Foods Fact Sheets**
fnha.ca/wellnessContent/Wellness/Traditional_Food_Facts_Sheets.pdf
- **Healthy Food Guidelines for First Nations Communities**
fnha.ca/wellnessContent/Wellness/Healthy_Food_Guidelines_for_First_Nations_Communities.pdf

Healthy Food on a Budget

Feeding your baby

The first food is breast milk. Breastfeeding gives babies everything their growing bodies need and is healthy for mothers too. Breastfeeding is free and healthy. It is the only food your baby needs for the first 6 months, and you can continue to breastfeed for up to 2 years and beyond. Once your baby is 6 months old, you can start introducing solid foods. You can make your own baby food instead of buying it. See section on starting solid foods for more information.

Food from the land

Picking berries is a great way for children to learn about where food comes from and also provides an opportunity to be on the land and stay active. It helps build their confidence. Young children develop coordination and respect for the land as they pick berries and put them in a basket. They learn patience since berry picking is a slow process. Sometimes children pick more berries than adults. Some children eat more berries than they bring home. Either way, children and adults benefit from doing something free and healthy.

A traditional diet can be low cost if fish and wildlife are available. Recent studies looking at contaminants in traditional foods in BC tell us that they are safe to eat. There is some concern about fish being high in mercury, which can affect your child's developing brain. Fish high in mercury tend to be large fish such as fresh or frozen tuna, shark, marlin, swordfish, escolar, and orange roughy. Local fish like salmon, trout and oolichan are typically lower in mercury levels and are good for your brain.

It is important to be aware of how to safely select, prepare and consume fish and wild meat. To learn more about hunting, preparing and eating wild meat and how you can prevent and reduce any risk of disease or contamination, see the following resources:

- **Mercury in Fish**
healthlinkbc.ca/hlbc/files/documents/healthfiles/hfile68m.pdf
- **Toddler's First Steps: A Best Chance Guide to Parenting Your 6- to 36-Month-Old Child** (see page 69)
health.gov.bc.ca/library/publications/year/2017/ToddlersFirstSteps-Sept2017.pdf
- **Diseases You Can Get from Wildlife**
gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/environment/plants-animals-and-ecosystems/wildlife-wildlife-habitat/wildlife-health/wildlife-health-documents/diseases_you_can_get_from_wildlife_field_guide_2017.pdf

Traditional medicine and food gathering help children learn about what is safe to eat and the value of all plants. Community centres, cultural centres, health centres and Friendship Centres often know Elders with traditional knowledge or medicine people who can share this knowledge. These centres may have programs that teach about traditional foods and medicines.

Growing your own food

If you have a window, you can grow an herb garden right in your home. You can also use your porch, deck or backyard to grow vegetables. With a little creativity, growing food can be inexpensive. Use buckets from cafeterias or large scale kitchens, food barrels, or just milk jugs to grow food in. Save on the cost of seeds by sharing one package of each vegetable type amongst several families. Growing food is a great family activity. Children like to see how things grow and to eat foods they have grown. To learn more, contact your local community centre, health centre or Friendship centre to see if there is a community garden program near you.

For more information about growing your own food, please see the following resources.

- **West Coast Seeds Regional Planting Charts**
westcoastseeds.com/garden-resources/west-coast-seeds-planting-charts
- **Gardening Without a Garden: A Beginner's Guide to Growing Food in Containers**
burnaby.ca/Assets/city+services/planning/Gardening+Without+a+Garden.pdf
- **Store it! A Guide to storing fresh vegetables and fruit**
interiorhealth.ca/YourHealth/HealthyLiving/FoodSecurity/Documents/Store%20it.pdf

Canning and freezing

The less food is processed, the healthier it is. Fresh and frozen foods do not contain added salt, preservatives or additives. Foods grown locally are usually healthier than foods grown far away and can be grown without pesticides. Buy or pick fresh fruits and vegetables in season, and then freeze them. Children can help. This is a great way to save money and to eat fresh, healthy foods.

Canning is also a fun and easy way to take advantage of foods in season and preserve many different types of foods with special family recipes and techniques being passed down over generations. Dad's jarred moose meat, Mom's salted fish, and Granny's special jam recipe are all examples of yearly treats that are healthy and keep food fresh through the seasons. Almost any type of food can be preserved, including fish, game, vegetables, jams, sauces, fruits, soups, stews and more.

Tomatoes can be canned with herbs and spices. You can use them in meals that you make over the winter. For example, adding cilantro, green peppers and jalapeños to tomatoes when canning creates a base for all Mexican dishes. Adding oregano, basil, garlic, marjoram, rosemary and thyme to tomatoes when canning makes a spaghetti sauce. Canning is a modern method of preserving which requires following the current guidelines for food safety. Proper home canning will create a tight seal to keep air and microorganisms out, and moisture and freshness locked inside. The key is to ensure you are maintaining a clean workspace, preparing your food safely, using the correct method of canning for your food type, at the correct temperature and time. It should be noted that for food safety, fish should be canned with a pressure canner.

To learn about how to can foods safely, please see the following resources:

- **Home Canning – How to Avoid Botulism**
healthlinkbc.ca/healthlinkbc-files/home-canning-avoid-botulism
- **USDA Canning Guide**
nchfp.uga.edu/publications/publications_usda.html
- **Spirit Magazine Fall 2012, Harvest Issue**
fnha.ca/SpiritMagazine/Spirit_Fall_2012.pdf

Making your own food

Making food from scratch such as oatmeal or spaghetti sauce saves money. Packaging costs money and can harm the environment. Are you looking for healthy recipes for your family that fits your budget, are quick to cook, and kids love to eat? Do a search online using key words such as online recipes, healthy family meals, meals on a budget, etc. You can also include the names of the food items that you have on hand, in your online search.

“We can think of our child as a flower. A flower needs nourishment, love and care. Think of our children as a garden. They need a place to show their beauty and pride.”

– Cowichan Tribes Elder, 2009

Beverages

Water does not cause cavities or contain empty calories. In most communities, tap water is free and safe to drink. If your water is not safe to drink, find out how to access safe water. Sometimes you can boil the water and drink it. Sometimes you will need to drink bottled water. For more information, please see:

- **Drinking water advisories**
fnha.ca/what-we-do/environmental-health/drinking-water-advisories

Children do not need fruit juice. It is much healthier to eat fruit. Encourage them to “chew their juice” instead. If you give fruit drinks to your children, look for 100% juice and give your children no more than ½ cup of fruit juice each day (125 ml or 4 ounces). Pop, fruit cocktails, etc. are high in sugar and low in nutrients and are not healthy choices for you or your children.

For more information about making healthy drink choices, please see:

- **Children’s Oral Health Initiative: Chew your juice!**
fnha.ca/wellnessContent/Wellness/FNHA-COHI-Chew-Your-Juice.pdf
- **Children’s Oral Health Initiative: Providing Healthy Drinks**
fnha.ca/wellnessContent/Wellness/FNHA-COHI-Sugar-In-Drinks.pdf
- **Children’s Oral Health Initiative: Best Choices for Drinks at Home**
fnha.ca/wellnessContent/Wellness/FNHA-COHI-Choices-For-Drinks.pdf



Healthy and Well Families

Wellness includes social, emotional, mental, physical, spiritual and cultural elements. Nourishing the different parts of your well-being and demonstrating this balance to your children should be a part of everyday activities and life. Below are personal examples of how families keep well and how caregivers can role model for their children.

Jennifer Smith

Jennifer's story highlights how a parent or guardian can play a significant role in building your child's self-esteem and demonstrating the importance of taking care of yourself.

"My name is Jennifer Smith and I come from the Tlowitsis Tribe located on Vancouver Island. My ancestral name is "Tla-Tla-Gwotl", which means "Standing Together in Strength." I have two beautiful teenaged daughters, 18 and 15, an exciting full-time career at an organization that I love, and am near completion of a Master's degree in Health-Leadership. My girls are both bright, talented young ladies with the potential to be anything they want to be. The challenge I am having is getting them to believe in themselves. I often feel like I am battling the impact that technology and society has had on them and striving to reinstate the values that I am raising them with respect, optimism, balance and culture. In taking care of themselves, being active comes easy for them. The challenge is learning how to manage their emotions, mind and spirit. Living in the city creates a difficulty with access to our culture and immediate family, but we make time to attend potlatches and other cultural events. We also make time for each other as the one constant my girls can always count on is me.

It is essential for me to be at my personal best because in order to take care of my family, I have to take care of myself. My health and wellness plan is focused on maintaining balance. Regular exercise positively impacts my mental health and outlook. On the days when I struggle, I access my support systems – my partner, my mentors, my counsellor or my friends. This demonstrates to me and my children that everybody needs help sometimes and that is okay. I am trying to lead by example and show them that anything is possible with hard work and the right mind frame."

Monica Pinette

Monica Pinette is a Métis Olympic athlete from British Columbia. She participated in the 2004 and 2008 Olympics. She competed in pentathlon, which includes shooting, fencing, swimming, horseback riding and cross country running. She talks about the change from full time athlete to full time parent.

You don't need to be an athlete to live an active life and to provide opportunities for your child to be active. Being active can be a part of everyday life. Walking your baby in a stroller outside or in a shopping centre is free. Inside the house, everyday chores can include squats, lunges or lifts. Push-ups or sit-ups can be done while facing your baby on the floor. Being active with your child can be as simple as walking or biking to the store instead of driving. It could be playing ball, setting up an obstacle course in your home, or dancing to music on the radio. The most important thing is to just keep moving, have fun and play.

"I planned my retirement from pentathlon a few years in advance. I also planned how I would train once my professional career was over. I would train only twice a day. It would be so leisurely, alternating one day running and one day swimming, and then fitting in fencing and riding. I would be so motivated and have so much energy!

For 9 years I trained 4 times a day with 1 rest day per week. Once a year I had a 5-day break and once a year I had a 3-week break. It was hard-core and I was exhausted from it. I was looking forward to training on my own terms. That was two years ago and the reality is I'm lucky if I get out for a run twice a week. That's because I have a baby now. I got pregnant a couple of months after retirement and from that point on my perspective changed, my motivation changed, and my fitness changed.

I weigh about the same as I did when I was an athlete, but my body looks different. I'm realistic, I know I'm a mom now; I will never be competition fit again.

Every parent knows what sleep deprivation is. This was the biggest challenge for me as a new mom. I thought I knew about being tired from all that pentathlon training, but as an athlete, you can sleep 10 hours a day if you need to. I haven't slept more than 7 hours a night for two years. I have only slept in past 7 am a handful of times, so mornings are tough. I drag myself out of bed to run once a week. I just suck it up and do it, and then I am so glad I did. Running takes the least amount of time, but I find it difficult to get out of bed to go early before my husband goes to work.

Parenting does get easier. I have more confidence now. I have relaxed a bit and Bruno is sleeping well through the nights. I even have moments where I think I could go to the Olympics if parenting were an Olympic sport."

What You Can Do

during pregnancy

If you are planning on becoming pregnant or think that you might be pregnant, connecting with a health care provider as soon as possible is best. It is important to continue to see a health care provider throughout your pregnancy. It is also important to see an oral health care provider (dentist, dental hygienist) before you get pregnant or early as possible once pregnant.

When you are pregnant there is a lot to learn about staying healthy, for you and your baby. Prenatal care is important. Learn more about pregnancy from your doctor, nurse practitioner, midwife or community health nurse. Ask questions and talk about your concerns. There are often many supports available to you through on or off-reserve programs offered through health centres, Friendship Centres and regional health authority public health centres. Go to prenatal classes if they are available. Think about who can give you support during pregnancy, birth and with your new baby. It may be a partner, family or friends.

Alcohol and substance use during pregnancy

Women of childbearing age may be consuming substances such as alcohol or cannabis without knowing that they are pregnant. Alcohol and cannabis are legal in Canada. Legal does not mean that it is safe during pregnancy. We know that alcohol has a negative effect on the growing unborn baby. We are also starting to see more information around the negative effects for the unborn baby when a woman uses cannabis during pregnancy. This applies to all ways of consuming cannabis (e.g., smoked, edible, vaping, cannabidiol (CBD) oils), including medical marijuana.

If you are pregnant or contemplating pregnancy, you are encouraged to stop consuming alcohol, cannabis and other substances not prescribed or approved by your doctor. This can be difficult for someone who uses these regularly. During your goal to abstain, reducing is a good strategy to get started. It can be very helpful to have a partner, friends and/or family to support and encourage your choice to reduce using substances as you move towards abstinence. This will help your goal of having a healthy baby.

Every change that you can make, whether big or small, will help you have a healthier pregnancy and healthier baby.

For more information see:

- **Non-medical cannabis information**
fnha.ca/what-we-do/mental-wellness-and-substance-use/non-medical-cannabis-information
- **National Native Alcohol and Drug Abuse Program (NNADAP)**
canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/substance-abuse/canadian-drugs-substances-strategy/funding/national-native-alcohol-drug-abuse-program.html

Ask questions

Talk to your doctor, nurse practitioner, midwife, dental professional or community health nurse regularly. For example:

- If you are feeling sad or anxious during pregnancy.
- If you have any questions or concerns about your pregnancy or if you feel something is not right.
- If you are having trouble buying the healthy food that you need during pregnancy.
- If it is a struggle not to drink or use drugs. It is safest not to use any alcohol or drugs during pregnancy.
- If you are taking, or thinking about taking, medicines (this includes prescription, over-the-counter and herbal medicines). Some medication can be harmful to your baby during pregnancy.
- If you have any concerns with your teeth or mouth (e.g., pain, bleeding gums, etc.), you need to see your dentist again. It is important to have regular dental check-ups and cleaning, get cavities fixed (as soon as possible), and take daily care of your teeth and mouth to prevent passing cavity-causing bacteria onto your baby.
- If you are trying to quit or cut back on smoking. Smoking is not healthy for you or your baby, but quitting is not always easy.
- If someone in your life is hurting you physically mentally, spiritually or emotionally. This is abuse. It is not your fault.

To learn more and to find the help you need, see the information at the end of this booklet or visit these web links:

- **Baby's Best Chance: Parents' Handbook of Pregnancy and Baby Care**
health.gov.bc.ca/library/publications/year/2017/BabysBestChance-Sept2017.pdf
- **Our Sacred Journey: Aboriginal Pregnancy Passport**
fnha.ca/wellnessContent/Wellness/AboriginalPregnancyPassport.pdf
- **Healthy Start: Public Health Services**
healthyfamiliesbc.ca/healthy-start
- **Children's Oral Health Initiative (COHI)**
fnha.ca/wellnessContent/Wellness/FNHA-COHI-Pregnancy-Oral-Health.pdf

Pregnancy is a good time to get ready for your baby. It is also a good time to learn more about being a parent. Talk to your family, other mothers and parents, Elders and aunties in the community, and your health care providers about caring for a new baby. Learn about breastfeeding. Learn about how to keep your baby safe. Learn about safe baby equipment.

Please see the following resources for some ideas:

Breastfeeding

- **The Creator's Gift to Mothers**
youtube.com/watch?v=rkaxLGI5WBw
- **Pregnancy & Parenting – HealthyFamiliesBC**
healthyfamiliesbc.ca/parenting

Safe Baby Equipment

- **Baby Safety – HealthyFamiliesBC**
healthyfamiliesbc.ca/home/articles/topic/equipment
- **Child Care Seats – ICBC**
icbc.com/road-safety/safer-drivers/Pages/Child-car-seats.aspx



In the past, people needed to be active to live a traditional life. People of all ages worked together to provide for themselves and each other.



Safety Promotion and Injury Prevention

- **Safety at Home in Baby's First Year – Healthy Families BC**
healthyfamiliesbc.ca/home/articles/safety-home-babys-first-year
- **Safety Around The House – Health Canada**
canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/home-safety/safety-around-house.html
- **Child and Infant Safety – St. John's Ambulance**
sja.ca/English/Safety-Tips-and-Resources/Pages/Child%20Safety/child-infant-safety.aspx

Family Violence

- **Commitment Stick Initiative to End Violence Against Women**
fnha.ca/wellness/commitment-stick
- **Ending Violence Association of BC**
endingviolence.org/need-help
- **Moose Hide Campaign**
moosehidecampaign.ca

What You Can Do

0 to 6 months

Breast milk is the first traditional food

Breast milk is the only food that your baby needs between birth and 6 months. You can continue to breastfeed for up to 2 years and longer.

Breast milk is the healthiest food for your baby. It is always the right temperature, and it is always ready and free. It is the first food your baby will have. The first milk is called colostrum. Colostrum is just right for new babies. It includes antibodies that help protect your baby against infections.

For more information on breastfeeding see:

- **Breastfeeding for the Health and Future of Our Nation** – a booklet for Indigenous families and communities in Ontario available through Best Start Resource Centre beststart.org/resources/breastfeeding/BFHFN_sept26.pdf

Breastfeeding has benefits for the mother

- It helps control bleeding after the baby is born.
- It protects against some cancers.
- It reduces the need to buy and measure formula, sterilize nipples or warm bottles. It saves time and money.
- It gives you regular time to relax quietly with your newborn and bond.

Breastfeeding has benefits for the baby

- Babies eat when they are hungry without waiting.
- Babies are more likely to stop when they have had enough.
- It lowers the risk of ear, chest and stomach infections.
- It lowers the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS).
- It lowers the risk of obesity.
- It helps promote healthy brain development.
- It helps with jaw and tooth development.
- It decreases the risk of Type 1 and 2 diabetes in future generations.

Family members can encourage the mother to breastfeed. They can support her by making sure that she has healthy things to eat and drink. They can also help with housework and older children.














Mothers produce what their babies need, as long as they feed their babies whenever they want to be fed. Babies increase the milk supply by feeding as often as they need. Each baby is different. Some need a lot of milk and some need less. Breast size has nothing to do with how much milk you have. As long as your baby is gaining weight and has enough wet and dirty diapers, there is no need to worry. If your baby is very sleepy in the first few weeks of life, you may need to wake your baby for breastfeeding. Many moms find the first 6 weeks of breastfeeding challenging. If you are finding it challenging, speak with a nurse, health care provider, lactation consultant, or attend mother support groups in your community. There are some women who are physically unable to breastfeed. Learn more about formula feeding in the next section.

Your baby will also need 400 IU Vitamin D per day. Babies need Vitamin D for healthy growth and development, and for helping to build strong, healthy bones and teeth. Talk to your doctor, nurse practitioner, midwife or community health nurse about how you can provide your baby with Vitamin D.



Breast milk is the healthiest food for your baby. It is always the right temperature, and it is always ready and free. It is the first food your baby will have.

Breastfeeding my baby

your baby's age	1 week					2 weeks	3 weeks
	1 day	2 days	3 days	4 days	5, 6, 7 days		
How often do i breastfeed? Per day, on average over 24 hours	 I am feeding my baby 8 or more times per day (every 1-3 hours), including 2-3 night time feeds						
How big is my baby's tummy? Approximately	 5-7ml · Size of a marble		 22-27ml · Size of a ping pong ball			 60-80ml · Size of an egg	
How many wet* diapers will my baby have? Per day, on average over 24 hours *Clear pale yellow urine	 At least 1 WET	 At least 2 WET	 At least 3 WET	 At least 4 WET	 At least 5 WET	 At least 6 WET	
How many soiled diapers will my baby have? Per day, on average over 24 hours	 At least 1-2 BLACK OR DARK GREEN		 At least 2-3 BROWN, GREEN OR YELLOW			 At least 2-3 SOFT AND SEEDY YELLOW	
How much will my baby weigh?	Your baby may lose 7-10% of its birth weight in the first 3 days after birth			Your baby gains 20-35 grams (2/3 or 1 1/3 oz) per day and regains his/her birth weight by 10-14 days		Your baby now gains 120-240 grams (4-8 oz) per week	
Other signs	Your baby has a strong cry, moves actively, and wakes easily. Your breasts feel softer and less full after a feeding. After a few weeks it is normal for your breasts to feel soft and still have lots of milk.						

Reference: Our Special Journey: Pregnancy Passport, 2016, perinataleservicesbc.ca/Documents/Resources/HealthPromotion/PregnancyPassport/PregnancyPassport.pdf

Expressing and storing breast milk

Mothers can express and store breast milk for times when they are not able to breastfeed. Feeding babies with expressed milk can provide all family members with an opportunity to be involved in their babies' lives and allow the mother some time away for herself. To learn more about expressing and storing breast milk, talk to your doctor, nurse practitioner, midwife or community health nurse and please see the following sites for more information:

- **Expressing Breast milk**
healthyfamiliesbc.ca/home/articles/topic/expressing-breast-milk
- **Storing Breast milk**
healthlinkbc.ca/health-topics/ue5301

To warm up saved breast milk, put the container of breast milk in a bowl of warm water. Do not heat breast milk on the stove or a microwave.

Formula feeding

While there are many benefits to breastfeeding, some women will make an informed decision to feed their baby formula for medical or personal reasons. For women who decide to formula feed, bottle feeding can be done with love. It is also important to learn from your doctor or community health nurse how to safely prepare, feed and store formula. Bottle feeding requires that you hold your baby while feeding. Be mindful of mixing the formula according to the directions on the can or bottle and properly preparing bottles in a hygienic way. Further information is available at:

- **Feeding your baby formula: Before you start**
healthlinkbc.ca/healthlinkbc-files/formula-before-you-start
- **Feeding your baby formula: Safely making and storing formula**
healthlinkbc.ca/healthlinkbc-files/making-storing-formula

What You Can Do

0 to 6 months

Alcohol, substance use and breastfeeding

It is best not to drink alcohol or consume substances when you are breastfeeding. Alcohol and substances such as street drugs or prescription/over-the-counter medications pass through the mother's bloodstream and into her breast milk and can affect the baby. You want to give your baby the best chance possible for a healthy start. Talk with your doctor, nurse practitioner, midwife or community health nurse before using any medications.

Only time will reduce and remove the alcohol from breast milk. If you decide to occasionally have a drink, allow enough time for the alcohol to be eliminated from your body before the next feeding. On average, it takes up to 2 hours for one alcoholic drink to be eliminated. Strategies such as drinking more water; eating, pumping and discarding the milk; and exercising do not help the body remove the alcohol from breast milk any quicker.

If you do want to drink alcohol at a special event:

- It is best to avoid breastfeeding for at least 2 hours after drinking one alcoholic beverage.
- Limit the amount you drink to 1 or 2 drinks per occasion.
- Drink alcohol after breastfeeding, not before or during breastfeeding.
- Pump and store your breast milk before having a drink so that your baby can continue to receive breast milk.
- Invite your partner to limit their alcohol use to support you.

To learn more:

- **Best Start: Mixing Alcohol and Breastfeeding**
beststart.org/resources/alc_reduction/breastfeed_and_alcohol_bro_A21E.pdf



Cannabis

THC (an active ingredient in Cannabis) can accumulate in breast milk in high concentrations. Your baby can be more sleepy, have less muscle tone and a poor suck, all things that can make breastfeeding less successful. In the first several months of your baby's life, their brain grows in important ways. Since we don't know all the effects of cannabis on your baby, it is recommended not to use it (including medical marijuana) while breastfeeding. Make sure you are informed about the effects that all substances, including prescriptions, have on your body and your baby.

Resources:

- **Motherisk: Alcohol and Substance Use Helpline**
[1-877-327-4636](tel:1-877-327-4636)
- **Alcohol & Drug Information and Referral Service, BC**
[1-800-663-1441](tel:1-800-663-1441)

Smoking and breastfeeding

Using commercial tobacco (cigarette smoking and chewing tobacco) is not recommended if you are breastfeeding. "Nicotine and other harmful ingredients in cigarettes pass through your breast milk and can affect your baby. Smoking can also reduce the amount of milk you produce and can make your baby fussy and irritable. However, because breastfeeding is so good for your baby, it is better to breastfeed than not, even if you do not stop smoking" (Healthy Families BC).

If you can, try to cut down on smoking or quit. To reduce harm to your baby, "smoke right after you have breastfed, to give your baby the least exposure to the harmful chemicals" (HealthLinkBC). Family members who continue to smoke should avoid smoking near the baby and inside the home.

To learn more:

- **Baby's Best Chance: Parents' Handbook of Pregnancy and Baby Care**
health.gov.bc.ca/library/publications/year/2017/BabysBestChance-Sept2017.pdf
- **Healthy Families BC, Alcohol and Smoking After Pregnancy**
healthyfamiliesbc.ca/home/articles/alcohol-and-smoking-after-pregnancy
- **HealthLink BC, Breastfeeding: Tobacco, Alcohol and Drugs**
healthlinkbc.ca/health-topics/hw129516

Hearing and talking

Babies hear loud and soft sounds. By 2 months, a baby will turn toward a sound. Whisper in your baby's ear. Does your baby turn to you? Try the other ear. You can also stand behind your baby, out of sight, and softly say your baby's name. Does your baby look to see where the sound is coming from?

BC Early Hearing Program (BCEHP) offers hearing screening for all infants. If your baby was not tested at birth, contact BCEHP. Hearing loss can be caused by family history of hearing loss or diseases during pregnancy. It can also happen if your baby is very sick, has ear infections or a head injury. It is best if hearing loss is identified as early as possible.

If you have any questions or concerns about your baby's hearing, contact:

- **BC Early Hearing Program**
Toll-free: 1-866-612-2347
phsa.ca/our-services/programs-services/bc-early-hearing-program
- **BC Family Hearing Resource Society**
Toll-Free: 1-877-584-2827
bcfamilyhearing.com



What You Can Do

0 to 6 months

Healthy teeth

Caring for your baby's oral health can begin before the first tooth arrives. Clean your baby's gums with a soft wet cloth wrapped around your finger, twice a day. Starting this habit before your baby has teeth will help your baby to be more accepting of you cleaning their mouth and teeth. Your baby may fuss or be resistant, but don't get discouraged! You are helping them develop healthy habits. Begin using a soft toothbrush when the first tooth arrives.

To learn more:

- **Children's Oral Health Initiative – Tooth brushing tips for parents**
fnha.ca/wellnessContent/Wellness/FNHA-COHI-Brushing-Tips-For-Parents.pdf
- **HealthLinkBC, Dental Care for your Infant and Toddler**
healthlinkbc.ca/healthlinkbc-files/dental-care-infant-toddler

Healthy eyes

At birth, your baby will not see very well, although they can see light, shapes and movement. Your baby can't see far but that doesn't matter. Your face is the most interesting thing to your baby. It is normal for your baby's eyes to roll away from each other occasionally when they are young. Your child's eyes should be examined at all well baby visits. If you see anything about your baby's eye development (eg. lazy eye) that concerns you, please talk with your doctor, nurse practitioner, midwife or community health nurse.

Enroll your child in the Medical Services Plan (MSP) and First Nations Health Benefits (FNHB)

Newborns will receive MSP coverage under the same MSP account as their mothers. It is important to enroll your child under their own Personal Health Number (PHN). Your child may also be eligible to receive health benefits through the First Nations Health Authority. If you are a FNHB client, your child can access health benefits through you until the age of one. Children one and older must have their own Status Number to be eligible for coverage under FNHB.

You can speak to your health care professional for assistance or to learn more:

- **Health InsuranceBC**
gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/health/health-drug-coverage/medical-services-plan/bc-residents/managing-your-msp-account/adding-and-removing-dependents/enrolling-your-newborn-msp.pdf
- **Eligibility and MSP**
fnha.ca/benefits/eligibility-and-msp

Visiting the doctor, nurse practitioner, midwife or community health nurse

Your doctor, nurse practitioner, midwife or community health nurse will check your baby when they are about 1 week old and then possibly at 2 weeks old. Babies should visit at 1 month, 2 months, 4 months and 6 months for routine check-ups. This is an opportunity to find out how your baby is doing and ask questions. At each of these appointments your baby will be weighed, measured, have a physical examination and may receive an immunization (vaccines). Immunizations are important and help your baby avoid serious illnesses. Talk to your doctor, nurse practitioner, midwife or community health nurse if you have any questions about immunizations.

Sleeping

Young babies sleep about 16 hours a day for 2 to 4 hours at a time. Babies should always be placed on their back to sleep. Talk to your doctor, nurse practitioner, midwife or community health nurse about safe sleep practices.

Safe sleep environments include:

- Putting your baby to sleep on their back every time (at night and for naps).
- Placing your baby on a firm surface that is free of hazards (no toys, animals, bumper pads, etc.).
- Not smoking around your baby.
- It is best to not share a bed with your baby for sleeping. Lying in bed with your baby to breastfeed is different – you are awake and you can move the baby to their own sleep area once finished.
- Sharing a room with your baby (baby is on their own sleep surface, for example, bassinet, crib, laundry hamper, drawer).

- Keeping your baby warm but not hot (avoid hats, blankets, or swaddling indoors).
- Not using alcohol or drugs.

To learn more:

- **New Safe Infant Sleep Toolkit: Honouring Our Babies Safe Sleep Cards and Guide**
fnha.ca/about/news-and-events/news/new-safe-infant-sleep-toolkit-honouring-our-babies-safe-sleep-cards-and-guide
- **HealthLinkBC: Safe Sleeping for Babies**
healthlinkbc.ca/healthlinkbc-files/safe-sleeping-babies
- **HealthyFamiliesBC: Risk and concerns around bedsharing**
healthyfamiliesbc.ca/gsearch/bedsharing
- **Safer Sleep for my Baby: Helping Parents and Caregivers Create a Safer Sleep Plan**
health.gov.bc.ca/library/publications/year/2017/safer-sleep-for-my-baby.pdf

Being active

Find time to be active for your health and introduce the joy of movement to your baby. Here are some ideas:

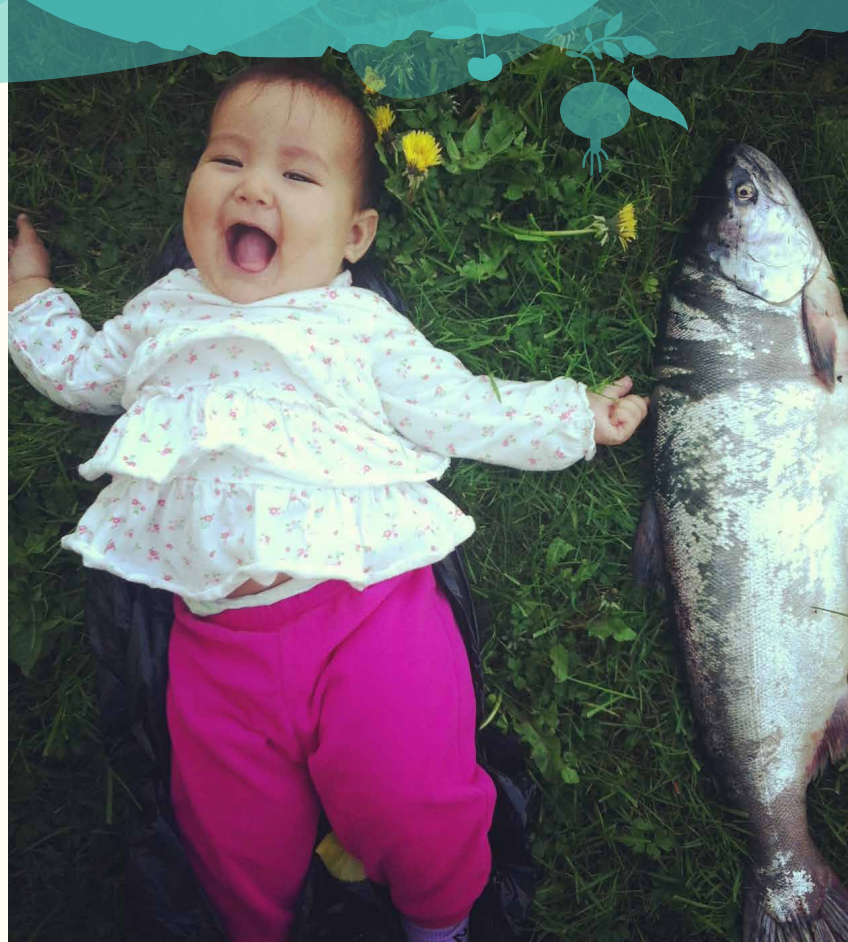
- Dance with your baby.
- Pick berries with your baby in a carrier.
- Walk or run with your baby in a stroller.
- Be active with other members of the family.

Make sure your baby has time to play on their tummy each day; during “tummy time”, babies should be awake and monitored by an adult.

Keeping safe

There are many ways children can be harmed. Some examples are pet bites, things falling on them, an unsafe sleeping place, motor vehicle collisions, drowning and burns. In order to keep your baby safe, think about what your baby can reach and what they can do as they grow.

- Stay near your baby when they are in the tub, even if they are in a tub chair or support.
- If you have to do chores or are busy, put your baby in a safe place, such as the crib.
- Many children and babies are hurt every year by pet bites. Stay with your baby if there is an animal nearby. Keep animals away from sleeping babies.



- Do not leave your baby on a change table, couch or bed unattended. Even small babies can move and fall.
- Pads, pillows, comforters or toys are not safe in a baby's bed. Babies can suffocate on soft things.
- Put your baby to sleep on their back.
- Keep your baby in the same room with you at night, in their own crib or sleep surface.
- Children should be placed in age appropriate car seat while in a vehicle.
- Putting babies to bed with a bottle can be a choking hazard. It is best to avoid putting babies down with a bottle. If your baby does have a bottle, only put water in it to prevent cavities.

For more information on making your home safe for your baby:

- **Give your Child a Safe Start, BC Children's Hospital**
bcchildrens.ca/Child-Safety-Site/Documents/GiveYourChildSafeStartBrochureBW.pdf
- **Child Safety, BC Children's Hospital**
bcchildrens.ca/health-info/healthy-living/child-safety

The most important things you can do to keep your baby safe are:

- Make your home or the home you are visiting as safe as possible.
- Stay close to your baby (see *Family Connections* booklet).

What You Can Do

7 to 12 months

For the first 6 months, the only food your baby needed was breast milk. At around 6 months, your baby is ready to begin eating solid foods. Continue to breastfeed as well, up to 2 years of age and beyond.

It is important to start your baby on solid foods by or at 6 months of age because:

- Your baby may be slower to accept solid foods.
- Your baby may have a harder time learning to chew foods.
- Your baby may not get enough nutrients (iron) for growth.

Try foods like:

- well-cooked, finely minced meat, chicken, turkey or fish (moistened with breast milk or cooking water)
- iron-fortified baby cereal
- mashed cooked egg
- mashed legumes such as beans, lentils

Your baby can enjoy mashed foods and soft finger foods before teeth appear. At 6 months, you can offer well-mashed or finely chopped foods. Between 7-8 months, you can give your baby mashed and small pieces of soft foods, and by 9-12 months, your baby can eat soft foods and cut up table foods.

For more information on starting solid foods, see:

- **Starting Solid Foods: Fraser Health**
fraserhealth.ca/health-topics-a-to-z/pregnancy-and-baby-life-with-your-toddler-6-24-months/healthy-eating-for-toddlers/introducing-solid-foods
- **Baby's First Foods**
healthlinkbc.ca/healthfiles/hfile69c.stm
- **Best Chance BC**
healthyfamiliesbc.ca/home/articles/starting-solids



Between 6 to 9 months, most of your baby's nutrition still comes from breast milk or formula feeding.

Foods to avoid

There are some foods to avoid feeding your baby. These include unpasteurized cheese (e.g., Brie), unpasteurized juice or milk, raw alfalfa or bean sprouts, and uncooked deli meats. Honey can cause food poisoning in babies under 12 months old. Do not feed your baby honey or foods containing honey.

If you have questions, you can call or visit your local health unit. You can also call HealthLink BC (8-1-1) and ask to speak with a dietitian.

Grandparents and others who love your baby may worry that they are not getting enough to eat. Babies are ready at their own pace. Here are some signs that your baby is ready for solid food:

- Your baby is able to lift their head and sit up without help, in order to eat safely.
- Your baby can pick things up and put them into their mouth.
- Your baby is able to let you know when they are full (usually by turning their head away).

Start with baby foods that are rich in iron such as finely chopped or ground meat, poultry or fish, or iron fortified infant cereal. These foods can be mixed with breast milk. Infants should be offered foods that are rich in iron two or more times each day. You can also feed your baby mashed fruits and vegetables. Try only one new food at a time and wait one to two days before trying another. That way you will know how your baby responds to each new food and whether your baby is allergic to this food.

Babies stop eating when they are full. Babies tell you they are full by turning their head away or by closing their mouth. Babies may eat only a few teaspoons of food at a time. Stop feeding when your baby is full. Between 6 to 9 months, most of your baby's nutrition still comes from breast milk or formula feeding.

Baby food does not have to be bought at the store. Babies can start eating what the family is eating. Food from your meals can be mashed with a fork for baby. It can also be chopped with a food chopper, ground with a grinder or grated. Home-prepared foods have less salt, sugar and preservatives than baby food from the store. You do not need to add sugar or salt. Plain food is best.

Choking

Babies can choke on food or toys. Learn what to do if your baby chokes. It could save your baby's life. Find an Infant CPR class near you. Here are some things you can do to avoid choking:

- Toys and other items that fit inside a toilet paper tube are too small for your baby to play with.
- Balloons are not safe for babies and young children.
- Babies should not eat nuts, popcorn or candy.
- Bottles in bed, even when filled with water, can be a choking hazard.
- Carefully remove bones from fish.
- Remove pits and seeds from fruit.
- Cut up round foods such as grapes.
- Grate raw vegetables such as carrots.
- Cook fruits and vegetables to make them soft.
- Spread a thin layer of sticky foods like peanut butter on a cracker or toast (not on bread).
- Cut or chop meat into small pieces (about the texture of cooked ground meat) and add water, broth or breast milk.

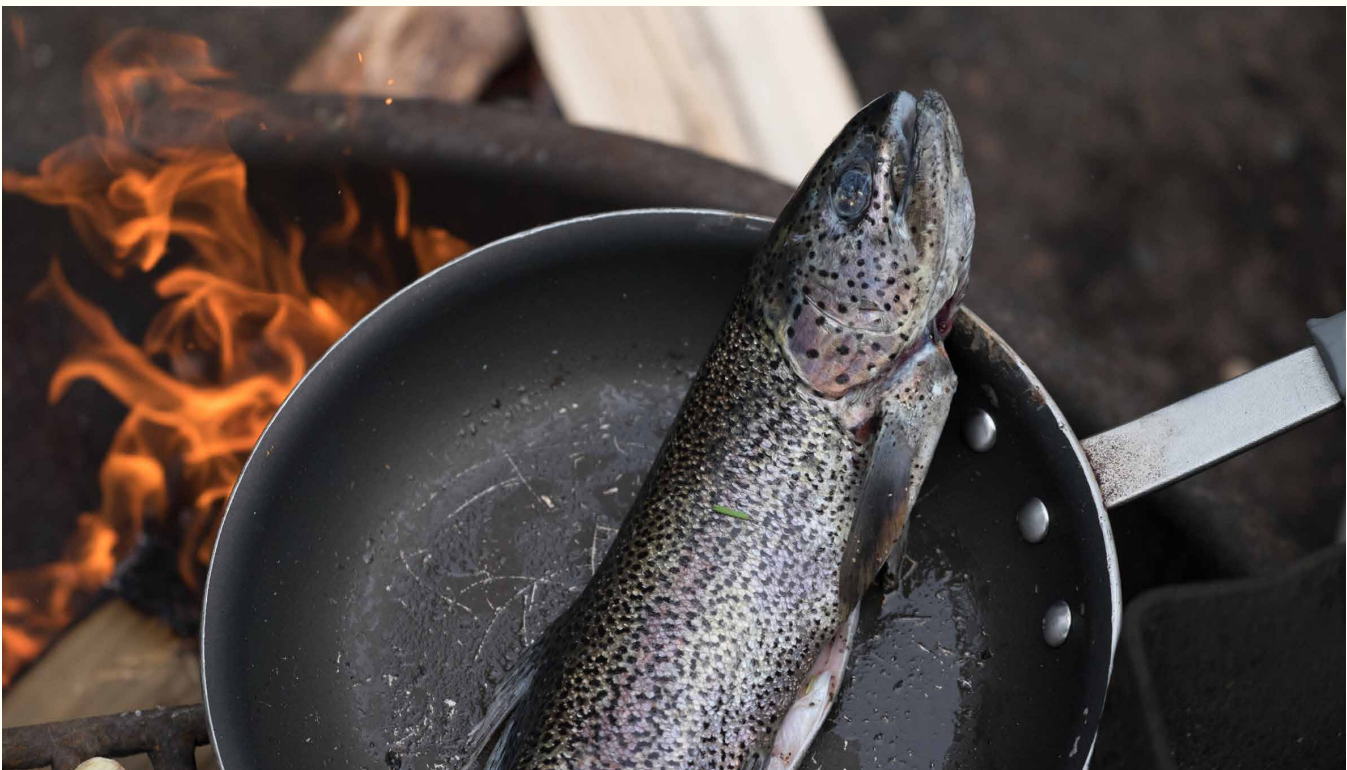
Food Allergies

A food allergy is an immune reaction to a food protein. Foods that may result in allergic reactions in some babies (such as eggs, milk, fish or nuts) can be offered from 6 months. Talk to your doctor or community health nurse if you think your baby has a food allergy. An allergic reaction can be mild like itchy eyes, stuffy nose or a skin rash. It can also be more serious, such as stomach pains, cramps, diarrhea or vomiting. The most severe reaction is swelling of the throat, difficulty breathing and shock. Luckily, this is very rare. Call 911 or get medical help right away if your baby is having trouble breathing.



maama

means "mother" in Michif



What You Can Do

7 to 12 months

In the past, some health professionals recommended delaying the introduction of fish, eggs and foods that contain milk, peanuts and tree nuts to help reduce the risk of allergies to these foods, but this practice has not proved to be effective. Research does not show that delaying these foods for longer than 4 to 6 months prevents food allergies.

Foods such as peanuts, tree nuts, egg, milk, wheat, soy, sesame and seafood can be introduced starting at about 6 months of age. Offering these foods one at a time may make it easier to identify the culprit food should an allergic reaction occur. It is important to note that incorporating tree nuts, peanuts, and globs of peanut butter need to be done safely as these foods can cause choking for children under 4 years of age. Do not give whole nuts or pieces of a nut; they need to be ground up, chopped fine and best incorporated with other foods. Peanut butter (smooth not crunchy) must be spread very thinly.

The following are guidelines for introducing foods containing peanuts:

- **Guideline 1:** As early as 4-6 months for those at high risk (severe eczema and/or egg allergy). Evaluation with testing is strongly recommended to determine if peanuts should be introduced and the preferred method. Parents are advised to consult with their physician.
- **Guideline 2:** Around 6 months for those with mild to moderate eczema.
- **Guideline 3:** For infants with no eczema or food allergies, these too can be introduced freely in diet with other solid foods in accordance with family preferences and cultural practices.

For more information on food allergies, see:

- **Food Allergy Canada**
foodallergycanada.ca



You can encourage language development with your baby by talking and reading to them.

Healthy teeth

Keeping teeth clean is important for preventing tooth decay and gum disease. Once your baby's first tooth comes in, you can do the following to help your baby have healthy teeth:

- Brush their teeth two times a day. Use a soft baby's toothbrush and a rice grain size of children's fluoridated toothpaste. Wipe off any excess after brushing.
- With the arrival of your baby's first tooth, schedule an appointment with a dental professional for a first visit. This will help your child get used to the office, and the dental professional can make sure the teeth and gums are healthy and clean.
- Giving a bottle at bedtime/naptime is not recommended as it can be a choking hazard. Provide a soother instead. If you do provide a bottle, only put water in the bottle. When milk sits in the mouth for a long time, it can lead to cavities. After nursing or drinking milk, have your child drink water to rinse their mouth.



- When your baby has teeth that touch each other, start flossing their teeth.
- Babies 6-12 months should not eat candy, cake, cookies and sweetened drinks. They are not healthy for your baby and they are not good for your baby's teeth. Hard cheeses and vegetables are healthier options for the mouth and body.
- By one year of age, your child should stop using a bottle and use a two-handed open cup. Limit juice to no more than a ½ cup each day (125 ml or 4 ounces). Beverage containers with lids should be limited to water only. This will help with tooth and jaw development.

For more on keeping teeth healthy see:

- **FNHA's Children's Oral Health Initiative (COHI) information/resources**
fnha.ca/what-we-do/maternal-child-and-family-health/childrens-oral-health-initiative
fnha.ca/wellnessContent/Wellness/FNHA-COHI-Bottle-Feeding.pdf

Hearing and talking

Your baby will start talking by hearing others talk and learning to make sounds, then words. Your baby will begin talking by using their tongue, lips, palate, and any emerging teeth to make sounds (cries at first, then "ooh's" and "ahh's", and babbling). Your baby will practice talking, even before you understand the words. You can encourage language development with your baby by talking and reading to them.

Healthy eyes

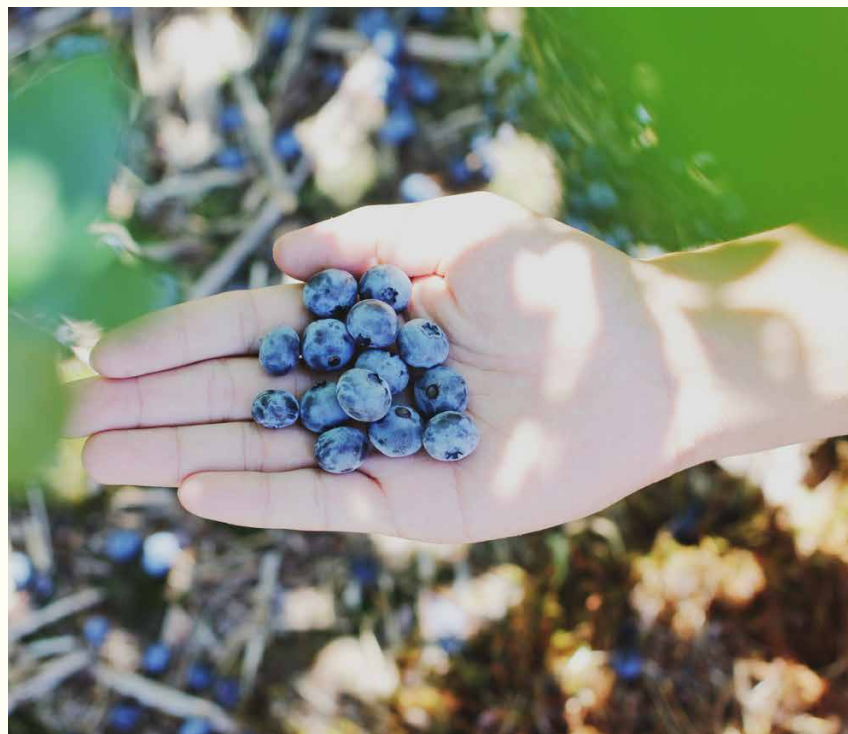
By 1 year your baby's vision is almost as good as an adult's. Your baby can tell the difference between near and far. Your baby will be able to recognize people from a distance. If you see anything about your baby's eye development (e.g., lazy eye) that concerns you, please talk with your doctor, nurse practitioner or community health nurse.

Visiting the doctor, nurse practitioner, or community health nurse

Babies should visit the doctor, nurse practitioner or community health nurse at 9 and 12 months of age for a check-up. At each of these appointments, your baby will be weighed, measured, and have a physical examination, and during the 12 month visit, they will also receive immunizations (vaccines). Immunizations are important and help your baby avoid serious illnesses. Talk to your doctor, nurse practitioner, or community health nurse if you have any questions about immunizations.

Sleeping

Sleep affects baby's moods, behaviours and learning abilities. It also helps baby's bodies heal and grow. Your baby should begin sleeping through the night when they are about 7 to 12 months. Most babies need about 10 to 13 hours of uninterrupted sleep each night. In addition to night-time sleep, babies under 12 months need between 1 and 4 naps throughout each day. Each nap should last between 30 minutes and 2 ½ hours.



What You Can Do

7 to 12 months

Being active

Babies under the age of 1 should be active several times each day. Find time to be active together. Play with your baby every day. Here are some ideas:

- Crawl races or catch me if you can. You can crawl around the house racing your baby. Take turns trying to catch each other or race to a place. Let your baby win. Cheer for your baby. Clap your hands. Teach your baby to clap and cheer.
- Make music together using rattles, drums, pots and plastic serving spoons. Choose objects that can be safely chewed on.
- Listen to music and dance together. This is a great time to share cultural music and teachings with your baby.
- Have your baby put toys in a container. Take them out, and then put them in again. Speak your First Nations or Métis language to say the name of the toy. Cheer when all the items are in or out.
- Begin walking around with baby holding both their hands.

Television, computers and electronic games are not recommended for babies under the age of 2. Limit sitting to no more than 1 hour at a time, for example, in a stroller, high chair or car seat.

For more information on screen time and young children, refer to the guidelines produced by the Canadian Paediatric Society:

- **Screen time and young children: Promoting health and development in a digital world**
cps.ca/en/documents/position/screen-time-and-young-children

Keeping safe

- Babies put everything in their mouths. Clear the area of anything that a baby shouldn't have.
- Store all household chemicals, medicines, knives and other harmful items where your baby can't get them.
- Be careful of electric cords, wires and things that dangle. As babies start to move, they will reach and grab.
- Use a word like "danger" to tell your baby to keep away from things that are harmful. Always use the same word and sound alarmed.
- Keep your baby away from cooking and hot food. Many babies are burned by hot food or drinks.
- When walking with your baby, leave your headphones at home. Be aware of things around you.
- Clean your home and your baby's toys regularly to help your baby stay healthy.
- Babies should be placed in an age appropriate car seat while in a motor vehicle.
- When visiting other homes with your baby, make sure they are also baby proofed.



'abux^o

means "mother" in Haisla

1 to 3 years

Healthy eating

Support healthy eating at different ages and stages. Give your toddler a variety of healthy foods. Meals should include foods from 3 or 4 food groups in Canada's Food Guide. Snacks should include foods from 2 food groups. Family mealtime is an important part of a healthy family routine. It is a time to connect as a family.

To learn more about the food groups and serving sizes, see:

- **Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide – First Nations, Inuit and Métis**
canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/food-nutrition/canada-food-guide/eating-well-with-canada-food-guide-first-nations-inuit-metis.html

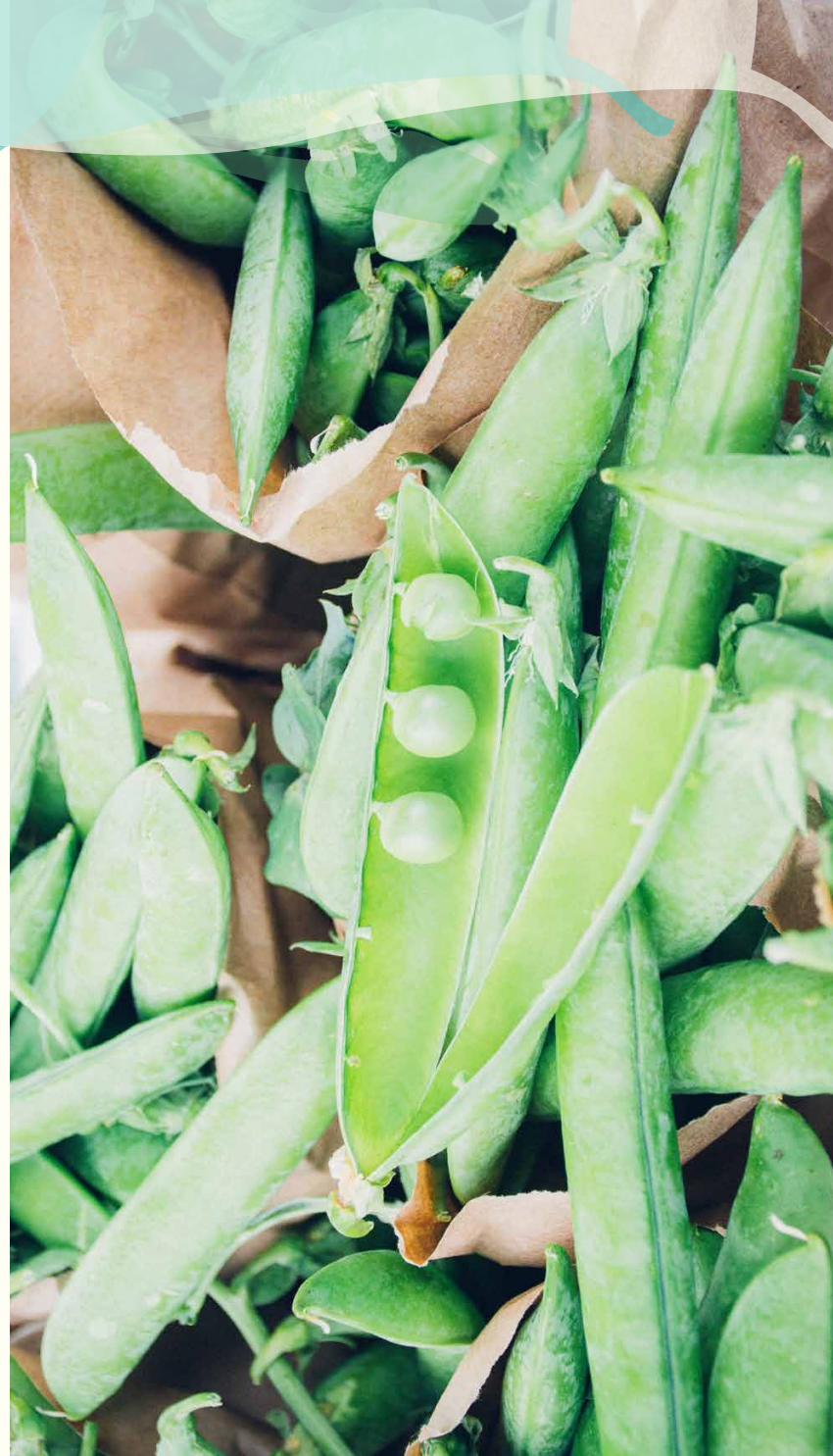
This table shows you the number of servings of food a toddler can be offered from each of the food groups each day:

food group	servings per day
Vegetables and Fruit (for example, berries, apples, carrots, spinach)	4
Grain Products (for example, bread, cereal, bannock, rice, pasta)	3
Milk and Alternatives (for example, milk, yogurt, cheese, soymilk)	2
Meat and Alternatives (for example, fish, meat, eggs, nuts, beans)	1

Feed your baby the same food that you have prepared for yourself. For more information about healthy recipes for your family and sample menus for your baby, please see the following link:

- **Vancouver Coastal Health: Feeding Your Toddler 1-3 Years**
vch.eduhealth.ca/PDFs/GK/GK.260.F44.pdf

Toddlers have small stomachs and portion sizes need to be small. They need to eat often. Every toddler is different, and at times your toddler may be hungrier or less hungry than usual. Let your toddler decide how much to eat.



When toddlers are hungry, provide healthy finger foods such as cut up fruit, slices of pita bread with hummus, or cut up vegetables. You and your toddler will eat healthy foods if they are always available and prepared. Sitting down to eat, especially at the table, is a healthy practice that will also reduce the risk of choking. Foods should be cut into thin, small pieces to help prevent choking. This includes food such as grapes, carrots, meats and cheese. There are other foods to be cautious with.

To learn more, see:

- **HealthLinkBC: Helping your 1 to 3 year old child eat well**
healthlinkbc.ca/healthlinkbc-files/helping-your-1-3-year-old-child-eat-well

What You Can Do

1 to 3 years

Healthy teeth

Brush your toddler's teeth twice a day with a rice grain size amount of children's fluoride toothpaste, ensuring plaque and food are removed, especially at the gumline. Most toddlers will have gaps between their teeth but can practice flossing with floss picks. If teeth are close together, help them to floss, making sure all the surfaces of the teeth are clean from debris. Your toddler should start regular visits to the dental professional at 1 year of age.

By 2 years, children tend to want to do things themselves, including brushing their teeth. Children can start brushing at this age but you should also brush them afterwards. There are many songs you can sing that will help your child understand how long to brush their teeth (that are about 2 minutes long).

For more information, see:

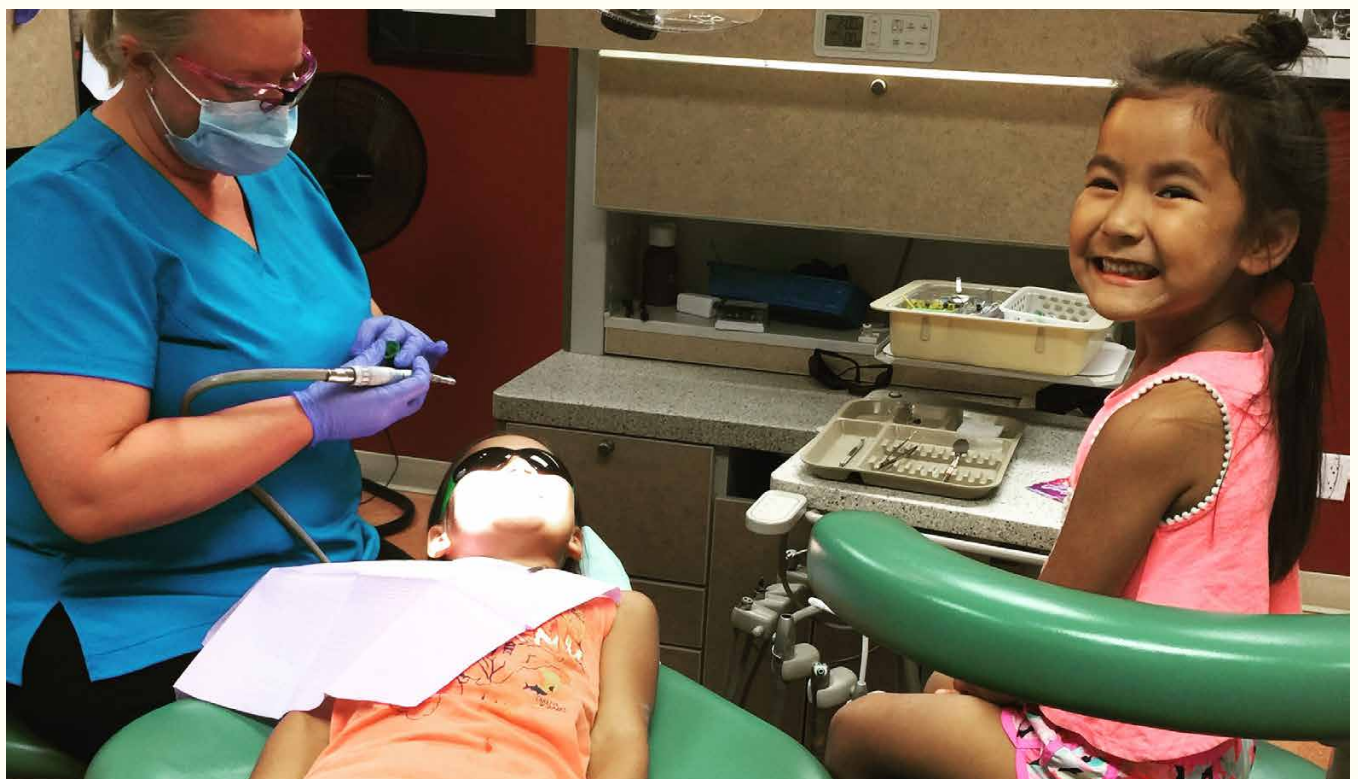
- **Children's Oral Health Initiative: Teeth at Two**
fnha.ca/wellnessContent/Wellness/FNHA-COHI-Teeth-At-Two.pdf

Hearing and talking

As your toddler hears and learns more words, they should start combining words into sentences as they grow and develop. Your toddler will begin communicating their likes and dislikes, thoughts or feelings, and may likely understand more than they can communicate. The skills that children gain at different stages are called developmental milestones. Children may have a developmental delay if they do not develop skills within the same age range as other children. Talk to your children's doctor or community health nurse if you are concerned about their development.



There are many songs you can sing that will help your child understand how long to brush their teeth.





You can help your toddler settle down to sleep by doing something peaceful like reading a book or listening to calm music together.

Healthy eyes

It is estimated that 80% of learning is based on vision. Toddlers develop, explore and learn about the world by using their eyes. One way to protect a toddler's eyes and vision is through healthy foods and healthy choices. Eat dark green and orange vegetables, fresh fruit and regular servings of fish to keep eyes healthy. It is also important for toddlers to avoid second-hand smoke.

As your toddler grows and starts to explore their world, serious eye injuries can occur. This can happen when toddlers play with sharp objects like scissors, pens and sticks. Tell your toddler not to run with sharp objects. Arrange to have your toddler's eyes examined at 3 years of age.

If you see anything about your toddler's eye development (e.g., lazy eye) that concerns you, please talk with your doctor, nurse practitioner, midwife or community health nurse.

Visiting your doctor, nurse practitioner, or community health nurse

Remember to take your toddler to the doctor, nurse practitioner, or community health nurse when they are 18 months, 2 and 3 years old for a check-up. At 18 months, your toddler will also receive some immunizations.

Sleeping

Toddlers need 10 to 13 hours of sleep, including their afternoon nap. Toddlers get grumpy and begin having tantrums when they are tired. Toddlers may be afraid they will miss something exciting if they sleep. They want to learn and explore as much as they can. A routine will help your toddler sleep. You can help your toddler settle down to sleep by doing something peaceful like reading a book or listening to calm music together.

Being active

Toddlers need at least 3 hours of physical activity every day. Playing games and going outside to play are great ways to have active minds and bodies. Activities can focus on movement. Here are some ideas:

- Do the hokey pokey. Teach children how to move right, left, up, down and get their bodies moving.
- Play outside in the snow, sand or water to learn about fluids, solids, changing shapes and volumes.
- Pretend to be different animals. For example, fly like an eagle high in the sky, pretend to be a salmon swimming in the water, or a moose walking through the forest.

Help your toddler build coordination and skills:

- String large beads on a shoelace.
- Colour with a large crayon; draw large circles, vertical and horizontal lines.
- Kick or roll a large ball to each other.

Toddlers should not be expected to sit more than 1 hour at a time, for example, in a stroller, high chair or car seat. Television, computers and electronic games are not recommended for children aged 2 years and under. For children over two years, screen time should be limited to less than 1 hour per day.

For more information on screen time, see:

- **Canadian Paediatric Society - Screen time and young children: Promoting health and development in a digital world**
cps.ca/uploads/about/CPS_ScreenTime-EN.pdf

Keeping safe

Toddlers are very active and curious. They move quickly. It is important to keep a close eye on your toddler at all times. Your toddler can open doors and drawers, take things apart, and open some containers and/or bottles, so use safety caps on all medicines and toxic household products. To prevent serious falls, lock the doors to any dangerous areas, use gates on stairways, install window guards, and remove sharp-edged furniture. Toddlers who are learning to walk will grab objects around them to help steady themselves, so put away objects that should not be touched or put a barrier around them out of their reach. NEVER leave your toddler alone in or near a bathtub, pail of water, wading or swimming pool, or any other body of water (lake, river, beach, etc.). Finally, always have your toddler in a safe car seat while in a motor vehicle.

What You Can Do

4 to 6 Years

Healthy eating

Children will make healthy food choices if you have healthy food in your home. Children love to help in the kitchen and are more likely to eat food that they pick out and prepare. Try something new. Lettuce wraps are a fun way to eat tuna. Children may need to be offered a new food several times before they eat it. So keep trying! For tips on picky eaters and ideas for healthy food options see:

- **Tips on feeding your picky toddler or preschooler**
dietitians.ca/Your-Health/Nutrition-A-Z/Toddlers/Tips-on-Feedy-Picky-Toddler.aspx
- **Children's Oral Health Initiative: Creating healthy lunches**
fnha.ca/wellnessContent/Wellness/FNHA-COHI-Creating-Healthy-Lunches.pdf

Continue to serve a variety of healthy foods from all 4 food groups of Canada's Food Guide for First Nations, Inuit and Métis:

- **Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide - First Nations, Inuit and Métis**
canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/food-nutrition/canada-food-guide/eating-well-with-canada-food-guide-first-nations-inuit-metis.html

Take children to the grocery store. Show them healthy foods. Have your child pick out 1 new fruit and vegetable. Choose a different colour each time. Choose a recipe and make it together.

The following table shows the number of servings of food a young child needs to be offered from each of the food groups each day.

food group	servings per day
Vegetables and Fruit (for example, berries, apples, carrots, spinach)	5
Grain Products (for example, bread, cereal, bannock, rice, pasta)	4
Milk and Alternatives (for example, milk, yogurt, cheese, soymilk)	2
Meat and Alternatives (for example, fish, meat, eggs, nuts, beans)	1

Feed your child the same food that you have prepared for yourself.

Young children have high energy levels and need to eat often. They are all different. Let your child decide how much food to eat from the healthy choices you offer. To learn more, see:

- **Healthy Eating for Children**
healthlinkbc.ca/health-topics/tn9188

Keeping safe

Teach your child safety rules for their new skills, such as riding their bike and wearing a helmet, crossing a street, using an age appropriate car seat, and getting off the school bus, etc.



Make healthy eating fun and you build a lifetime of good eating habits.

Healthy teeth

- Help your child to brush their teeth twice a day for 2 minutes each time. Teach them to do some brushing. You can finish up, making sure their teeth are clean.
- Floss your child's teeth every day.
- Start using toothpaste. Use a pea-sized amount of toothpaste. Teach your child to spit rather than swallow after brushing.
- Ask your dental professional if your child needs sealants. Sealants are most often recommended once the adult teeth start coming in, around age 6.

Hearing and talking

Your child may know 1,500 or more words and may be able to speak in sentences of 6 to 8 words. Most children speak clearly enough to be understood by strangers. If you are concerned about your child's hearing or speech development, please talk with your doctor, nurse practitioner, or community health nurse.



Healthy eyes

Arrange to have your child's eyes examined before they start school. If you see anything about your child's eye development (e.g., lazy eye) that concerns you, please talk with your doctor, nurse practitioner, or community health nurse.

Sleeping

Young children need 10 to 13 hours of uninterrupted sleep each night. Developing a healthy sleep pattern for your children is important for their learning and healthy development. The most important part of creating a healthy sleep pattern for your children is having a bedtime routine that is the same, every day. For example, their bedtime routine could include a warm bath, getting into pyjamas, reading or telling one story, then dimming or turning off the lights for sleep. Take electronic devices away from your children an hour before their bedtime.

Visiting your doctor or community health nurse

Your child should see the doctor, nurse practitioner, or community health nurse each year. Remember to have your child immunized at 4 to 6 years of age.

Being active

Find time to be active together. Teach new skills and build imagination:

- Put on plays from books or traditional stories. They are lots of fun for children and parents.
- Choose games that focus on cooperation and sharing. Taking turns and waiting are important things to learn.
- Play freeze tag. The only way that someone can get unfrozen is if someone crawls under their legs.



Your job is to decide what, when and where to offer food. Your child's job is to decide if they want to eat and how much to eat.

How You Can Learn More

Crisis intervention and mental health supports

Aboriginal Crisis Line (KUU-US Crisis Line Society)
Phone: 1-800-588-8717

Crisis Centre BC
Phone: 1-800-784-2433
crisiscentre.bc.ca

Northern BC Crisis Centre
Phone: 1-888-562-1214
BC Wide Line Phone: 1-800-784-2433
Youth Line Phone: 1-888-564-8336
northernbccrisissuicide.ca

Alcohol & Drug Information & Referral Service
Phone: 1-800-663-1441

Indian Residential School Crisis Line
Phone: 1-866-925-4419

Motherisk Alcohol and Substance Use Helpline
Phone: 1-877-327-4636

Prenatal and maternal health

Canada Prenatal Nutrition Program provides support to improve the health and well-being of pregnant women, new mothers and babies facing challenging life circumstances.
cpnp-pcnp.phac-aspc.gc.ca/en

First Nations Health Authority Maternal, Child and Family Health programs include programs such as the Prenatal Nutrition Program and Aboriginal Head Start for families living on-reserve.
fnha.ca/what-we-do/maternal-child-and-family-health

The BC Association of Pregnancy Outreach Programs (BCAPOP)
Phone: 604-314-8797
bcapop.ca/POP-Programs

Infant health

HealthLink BC Safe Sleeping for Babies
healthlinkbc.ca/healthlinkbc-files/safe-sleeping-babies

Healthy Baby Healthy Brain is a parent website about early brain development.
healthybabyhealthybrain.ca

La Leche League Canada encourages, promotes and provides mother-to-mother breastfeeding support and educational opportunities. For information on breastfeeding: lllc.ca

Early childhood development

Aboriginal Infant Development Program works together with families to support the growth and development of young children.
Phone: 250-388-5593
Toll-Free: 1-866-338-4881
aidp.bc.ca

Aboriginal Supported Child Development is a program for children with developmental delays or disabilities and their families.
Phone: 250-388-5593
Toll-Free: 1-866-338-4881
ascdp.bc.ca

The **Aboriginal Head Start Association of British Columbia (AHSABC)** provide programs that support early childhood development, school readiness, and family health and wellness for children from birth to six years old.
ahsabc.net

Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines for the Early Years – 0-4 give some guidelines for physical activity for children.
csepguidelines.ca/early-years-0-4/

Community Action Program for Children promotes the healthy development of young children (0-6 years) who are living in conditions of risk.
capc-pace.phac-aspc.gc.ca/en

Preschoolers: Building a Sense of Security fact sheet by BC HealthLink.
healthlinkbc.ca/health-topics/ta7012



Parenting never ends. You will always be someone's mother, father, grandparent, auntie or uncle from the day your loved one is born.

Family health resources

First Nations Health Benefits

General Questions/Benefits Support Representative
Toll-Free: 1-855-550-5454
fnha.ca/benefits

HealthLink BC is a health information and advice phone line to find health information and services or connect with a registered nurse, a registered dietitian or a pharmacist.

Phone: 8-1-1
healthlinkbc.ca

HealthLink BC Dietitian Services can answer your questions about food and nutrition.

Phone: 8-1-1
healthlinkbc.ca/healthy-eating/email-healthlinkbc-dietitian

Immunization Schedule

bccdc.ca/health-info/immunization-vaccines/immunization-schedules

Jordan's Principle

fnha.ca/what-we-do/maternal-child-and-family-health/jordans-principle

British Columbia Drug and Poison Information Centre

(BC DPIC) – call immediately if you think that your child has been exposed to poison.

Phone: 604-682-5050
Toll-Free: 1-800-567-8911
dpic.org

Parenting and family resources and supports

BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres (BCAAFC) often have programs for pregnant women, parents and children.

Phone: 250-388-5522
bcaafc.com

BC Council for Families is a source of dependable, current information and advice including parenting programs, online information, and online discussion groups for parents.

bccf.ca

First Nations Parents Clubs help support parents to help with educational success.

Phone: 604-925-6087 or
Toll-Free: 1-877-422-3672
fnsa.ca/parentsclub

HealthyFamilies BC – Parenting is an online resource for all British Columbians with information about pregnancy and parenting.

healthyfamiliesbc.ca/parenting

Public Libraries will have books about parenting and child development.

gov.bc.ca/gov/content/sports-culture/arts-culture/public-libraries

Métis Family Services provides services for parents.

metisfamilyservices.ca/programs-services

The **National Collaborating Centre for Aboriginal Health (NCCAHA)** is a source of reliable, current information on First Nations, Inuit, and Métis child, youth, and family health.

nccah.ca

The booklets in this series include:



Fatherhood is Forever

This booklet about fathering is for First Nations and Métis parents in BC.



Growing Up Healthy

This booklet about healthy children is for First Nations and Métis parents in BC.



Family Connections

This booklet about bonding with your child is for First Nations and Métis parents in BC.



Parents as First Teachers

This booklet about how children learn is for First Nations and Métis parents in BC.

You can view all of the English booklets online at nccah.ca or at fnha.ca

Aussi disponibles en français: ccnsa.ca

For more information:



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Health through wellness

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