

Maternity services help new parents

If you are expecting a baby or have just become a new parent, the Maternal and Child Health Service can help you. The service can provide support and information. It is available for families with children aged 0-6 years.

Support when you go home

Your local Maternal and Child Health service will be a great source of support after your baby is born. The hospital will notify your local service and the nurse will contact you during your first days at home to arrange a visit. This is usually a visit in your home.

A free service

The centres are staffed by Maternal and Child Health nurses who will provide you with free help and advice. Staff will:

- Monitor your child's growth and development
- Provide support and advice on parenting
- Help with sleeping, feeding and behaviour problems
- Offer advice on immunisation
- Organise mothers' groups
- Tell you about other local support services.

Looking after mothers

The Maternal and Child Health nurse can also help you with issues such as:

- Breastfeeding and breast self-examination
- Tiredness and trouble coping
- Physical and emotional changes that are common after childbirth
- General health advice
- Family planning.

Keep a record of your child's health

Parents of all babies born in hospitals are given a free booklet called the 'Child Health Record'. Always take it with you when you go to the health centre, doctor's surgery or dentist, and get health professionals to complete entries after each visit. Immunisations should also be recorded. If you keep the Child Health Record up-to-date, it will be an important document of your child's development from birth to adolescence.

Where to get help

- Your local council
- Victorian Aboriginal Health Service (Koori families)
- The Maternal and Child Health Line is available 24 hours a day Tel: 132 229 for the cost of a local call throughout Victoria.

Things to remember

- The Maternal and Child Health service is available to all families with children under six years of age.
- Don't be afraid to ask for help. No one is born with parenting knowledge; parenting skills are learnt.
- Your maternal and child health nurse can help you in a crisis.
- Your Maternal and Child Health service can organise an interpreter.

- Advice and support is also available from the 24-hour Maternal and Child Health Telephone Service on 13 22 29 for the cost of a local call throughout Victoria.

This page has been produced in consultation with, and approved by:

Department of Education and Early Childhood Development

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