



As your baby matures

As your baby grows, they will stay awake longer and become more alert. They might start interacting with you in different ways. Your baby may still be sensitive to things like loud noises or changes around them, but there are many ways you can support them during this time.

Your baby's senses	What you can do to help
<p>Vision</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your baby is still sensitive to bright light • As your baby gets older, they may begin to look briefly at your face • Preterm babies can feel overwhelmed by visual stimulation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect your baby's eyes from bright light • As your baby approaches full-term age, gradually introduce more light • Allow your baby to look at your face without too many distractions, like noise or toys • Limit the use of mobiles or pictures until your baby can handle looking at your face. Remove mobiles during sleep times
<p>Hearing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your baby knows your voice, and your presence will continue to soothe them • Your baby may blink or startle when they hear sudden noises • Now they are in an open cot, noises may seem louder to them 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speak softly to your baby and avoid loud conversations when you're near them • Gently support your baby with your hands if they startle • Keep your baby's environment quiet at sleep time
<p>Communication and behaviour</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your baby will show you what they like and don't like in different ways • As your baby gets older, they will stay awake for longer periods 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Watch for signs that your baby is ready to interact with you - like being awake and alert with clear eyes • Talk to your baby as you care for them. Use a soft, calm voice and change your expressions. This helps your baby learn to communicate. • Read or sing to your baby • Continue to watch for signs that your baby needs a break, like looking away or yawning

<p>Feeding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feeding from the breast or bottle is a skill that many babies need help to learn. • Your baby needs to learn how to wake regularly, breathe well, suck, and then swallow, before they can feed from the breast or bottle. • Each baby will develop these skills at a different pace. • Keep feeding experiences short and positive while your baby practices their feeding skills. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hold your baby in your arms during tube feeding, just like you would if you were breast or bottle feeding. • Offer your baby a dummy during tube feeding. They may also like the taste of milk on it. • For more information, please read the fact sheet 'Helping your baby to breastfeed in NICU' <p>Link - thewomens.org.au/health-information/fact-sheets#helping-your-baby-to-breastfeed-in-the-nicu</p>
<p>Movement and positioning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your baby will likely move when you change their nappy or unwrap them. They may like stretching, kicking or moving their arms around • Your baby may try to bring their hand to their mouth or face or bring both hands together • Sometimes your baby's movements might seem jerky or they may startle easily • Some babies may prefer to turn their head and rest it to one side 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Swaddling can help settle your baby. It keeps them tucked up and brings their hands near their face or together in the middle. A nest can also help with positioning • Until your baby can lie on their back comfortably for longer periods, they will need to lay on their tummy or side • Handle and care for your baby gently and slowly. Give them breaks if they seem to need a rest • Encourage your baby to try different head positions, such as turned to either side or resting in the middle while on their back • Holding and cuddling your baby gives them a chance to experience different positions

Family Violence Support

1800 Respect National Helpline

You can get help if you have experienced sexual assault, domestic or family violence and abuse.

You can call any time of day or night.

1800 737 732 1800respect.org.au

Do you need an interpreter?



You can ask for an interpreter if you need one.

Disclaimer: This fact sheet provides general information only. For specific advice about your or your baby's healthcare needs, you should seek advice from your health professional. The Royal Women's Hospital does not accept any responsibility for loss or damage arising from your reliance on this fact sheet instead of seeing a health professional. If you or your baby require urgent medical attention, please contact your nearest emergency department.
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