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Baby Massage

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Touch is the most powerful of all interactions between a parent and child. Your baby will sense what you are feeling by the way they are touched. This is why it's important to have a gentle, calm and nurturing touch, which will enable your baby to feel a sense of trust, kindness and security. If you are feeling stressed or overtired, it's best not to massage your baby until you are in a more positive, calm state.

Benefits of baby massage

- Establishes and regulates healthy sleep patterns
- Can help your baby into a state of calm
- Improves parent-infant interaction, sleep and relaxation
- Reduces crying, lowers cortisol levels and increases serotonin levels – all of which helps to make your baby feel happy
- Improves weight gain and development
- Parents who massage their babies are better able to understand their baby's communication signals and their babies are more socially alert
- Can assist a child's muscle tone, sleep patterns and bowel movements

The best time and place to massage your baby

- The best time to massage your baby is when you and your baby are both in a calm state. This can be at any time of the day. Ideally, your baby should be quiet and alert.
- You can massage your baby when they are fully, partially clothed or undressed.
- The massage can go for as little as a minute or as long as you are both enjoying the time together.

Preparing for the massage

- Before you attempt to massage your baby, check that it is a good time for you to massage i.e. you are feeling calm
- Take some deep breaths and relax your shoulders
- Dim overhead lighting
- Turn off the phone and remove distractions
- Ensure the room is warm and free of draughts
- Remove your jewellery and watch
- Wash your hands
- Place a towel or a bunny rug under your baby to keep them warm
- Place a pillow under your baby's head and upper torso if desired
- Play some gentle, relaxing background music

Choosing oils for massage

- Avoid using essential oils including lavender or eucalyptus oil, for infants under two years of age
- If you have a known peanut allergy do not use refined peanut oils as they may contain traces of peanut protein and could cause a reaction to you or your baby
- Whatever oil you decide to use, always check the ingredients on the label

How to massage your baby

- Your baby is happy about the massage if your baby has relaxed hands, gentle fluid movements and is making eye contact
- To start place your hands gently on your baby's legs
- Commence massage from the thigh and work down through the body using firm, gentle, smooth and rhythmic strokes, glide over skin, maintaining skin contact at all times throughout the massage
- Watch and monitor your baby's reaction throughout the massage
- If at any time your baby is showing clenched fists, grimaces, hiccoughs, sneezing, red blotchy skin, turning eyes away from you; then slow down your movements or stop the massage. Your baby is letting you know that now is not the best time for massage and that they would rather be feeding or sleeping.



Book a visit to Tresillian:

Visit tresillian.org.au, fill in the short online contact form and one of our Nurses will call you back

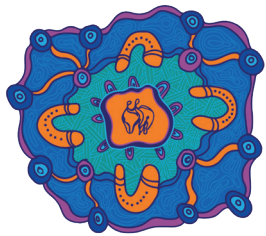


Ask your local Health Professional, Child & Family Health Nurse, GP or early parenting support service to refer you and your child



Tresillian Parent's Help Line
FREECALL 1300 272 736

In Tasmania
FREECALL 1300 827 282
1300 TAS BUB



Acknowledgement of Country

Tresillian acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People as the First Peoples of Australia, the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the land in the countries on which we live and work in NSW, the ACT and TAS. We pay our respects to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders past and present and acknowledge all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in the communities we serve.

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