

Achieving Resilient & Inspiring Families (ARIF)

# Your Guide to Maternal & Child Health



KK Women's and  
Children's Hospital  
SingHealth



Majlis Ugama Islam Singapura  
Islamic Religious Council of Singapore

AMP  
SINGAPORE



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Request for permission should be addressed to:  
Dr Nur Adila Ahmad Hatib  
Department of Paediatrics  
KK Women's and Children's Hospital  
100 Bukit Timah Road Singapore 229899  
Email: [nur.adila.ahmad.hatib@singhealth.com.sg](mailto:nur.adila.ahmad.hatib@singhealth.com.sg)

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# Foreword & Introduction

Project ARIF (Achieving Resilient & Inspiring Families) was piloted in September 2020 as a collaboration between Temasek Foundation, KK Women's and Children's Hospital (KKH) and the Islamic Religious Council of Singapore (MUIS). It is an initiative under the M<sup>3</sup> Focus Area 1, an extension of the Registry of Muslim Marriages' (ROMM) Bersamamu programme where Naib Kadis (marriage solemnisers) introduce Project ARIF to couples during their first 2 years of marriage. In 2023, the Association of Muslim Professionals (AMP) became a partner to provide Master Trainer Naib Kadis to train and increase the capabilities of the other Naib Kadis in journeying with newlywed couples. In 2026, we were privileged to have Wee Foundation as an additional funder for the Project ARIF pilot programme.

Project ARIF's overarching aims are to empower Naib Kadis and mosques to provide better support to Muslim couples in preparation for marriage and family life, and to optimise maternal wellness and child health and development for the next generation. 'Your Guide to Maternal and Child Health' was first published by Project ARIF in February 2021 for couples to easily access curated, expert information on family health and wellness.

Since then, Project ARIF has come a long way in making an impact on thousands of newlyweds, supporting them as they embark on their journeys through marriage, pre-pregnancy, pregnancy and parenthood. Our guidebook and website resources have benefitted numerous couples in various stages of their family lives – whether for quick advice on relationship building, family planning, pregnancy wellness, labour, or guidance on child health, nutrition, and development.

In June 2026, ARIF will become a permanent component of the Bersamamu Programme as part of the Bersamamu Family Development Cluster under the Ministry of Community, Culture and Youth (MCCY). As ARIF continues to spread our wings wide under this national framework, we bring to you an updated version of our guidebook in a new digital format. We hope that with this e-book, you will be able to easily access verified information on-the-go, whenever you may need it.

To Temasek Foundation, Wee Foundation, KKH, MUIS and AMP, thank you for allowing us to dream big and envision what we have achieved today. To our collaborators who have contributed to this guidebook, thank you for your expertise and willingness to share. We would also like to express our heartfelt appreciation to the mosque teams, especially the dedicated Naib Kadis, who play a pivotal role in supporting all newlyweds. To each member of the ARIF team, we salute you for your tireless efforts and sacrifice in this mission for our nation. We thank every one of you for sharing our dream and supporting us in one way or another, big or small.

This is for you. This is for our community. Happy reading!

A/Prof Suzanna Sulaiman  
Dr Nur Adila Ahmad Hatib

Editorial Team

May 2026



**Akhir Riwayat Cinta**

*Kalau suatu hari sampai harinya  
Aku jadi tua renta  
Setua akar cemara  
Kaki tak mampu berdiri  
Tangan terketar tak henti  
Kuminta kau pimpin aku berlari  
Tanganmu dan tanganku berselang jari.*

*Andai suatu waktu tiba waktunya  
Aku jadi tua renta  
Setua tanah pusara  
Mata tiada terang  
Rabun segala pandang  
Kumohon kau tunjukkan aku keindahan Matamu dan mataku bertentang bertatapan.*

*Jika suatu saat kunjung saatnya  
Aku jadi tua renta  
Setua bulan gerhana  
Mulut tak mampu bicara  
kelu lidah tanpa kata  
Kuharap kau lanjutkan bicara  
Bibirmu dan bibirku bertutur bahasa jiwa.*

*Kiranya suatu detik jatuh detiknya  
Aku jadi tua renta  
Setua pelangi senja  
Akalku menjadi lupa  
Fikirku tak faham semua  
Kuingin kau mengingatkan aku  
Kisahmu dan kisahkualui jejak peristiwa.*

*Misal suatu masa jelang masanya  
Aku jadi tua renta  
Setua awan yang lara  
Dengarku tuli semua  
Sepi dari bunyi dan suara  
Kurayu kau bisikkan aku  
Janjimu dan janjiku meniti setiap makna.*

*Pabila suatu ketika lewat tikanya  
Aku jadi tua renta  
Setua lautan duka  
Wujudku hampir tiada  
Hadirku dihujung nyawa  
Kumahu kau disampingku  
Adamu dan adaku khatamkan kitabul cinta.*

### The End of The History of Love

*If one day I get old  
As old as a spruce root  
My legs are unable to stand  
Hands trembling incessantly  
I asked you to lead me on a run  
Your hand and mine are between our fingers.*

*If only the time came  
I'm getting old  
As old as an ancient tomb  
My eyes are not as bright  
I get short-sighted  
Please show me what is beauty  
As your eyes and my eyes staring into one another.*

*If one day comes it's time  
I'm getting old  
As old as an eclipse moon  
My mouth can't speak  
tongue-tied without a word  
I hope you keep talking  
Your lips and mine speak the language of the soul.*

*Suppose a second falls by a second  
I'm getting old  
As old as the rainbow of twilight  
My mind became forgetful  
I cannot understand anything  
I want you to remind me  
Your story and mine go through the traces of events.*

*If the time come ahead of time  
I'm getting old  
As old as a sick cloud  
My hearing turn deaf  
Silence from all sound and noise  
I want you to whisper to me  
Your promise and my promise carry every meaning.*

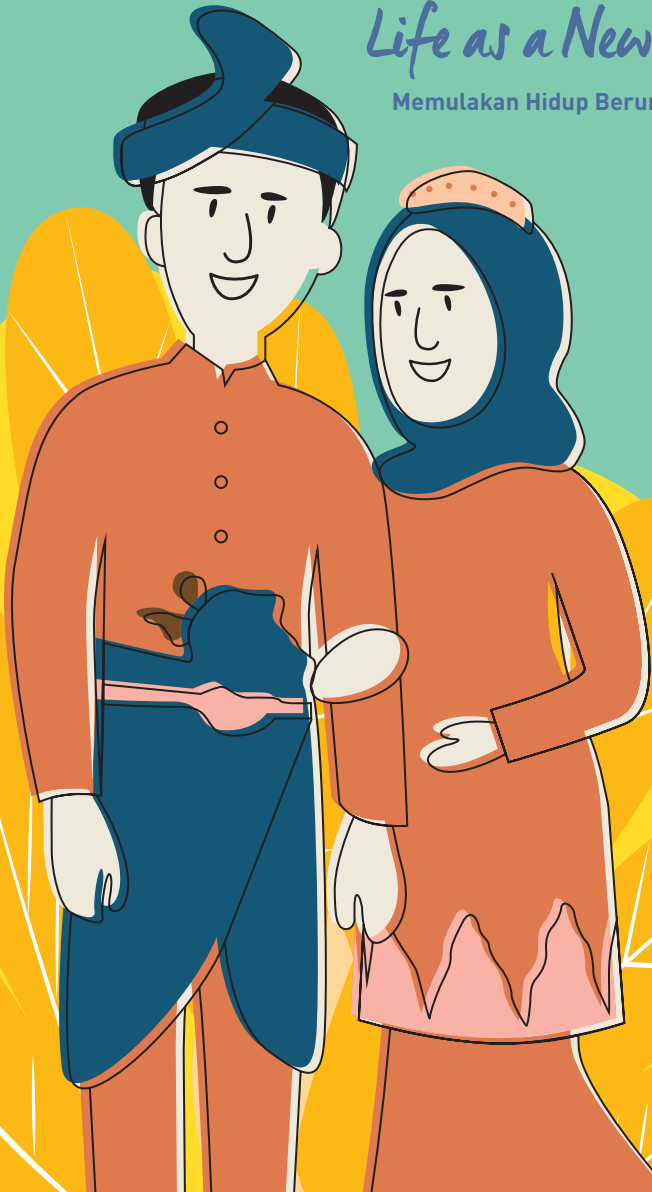
*When a time passes  
I'm getting old  
An ocean of grief  
My existence is almost none  
My presence is at the end of my life  
I want you by my side  
Your existence and my existence concludes the sacred book of love.*

This heartfelt poem was written by poet and Project ARIF participant Rifaat Haji Hamzah. It was shared with Project ARIF in 2022.

# Section 1.

## Life as a Newlywed

Memulakan Hidup Berumah Tangga





# I. Mental preparation before marriage

Congratulations! Planning your wedding is such an exciting milestone. Choosing colour themes, flower arrangements, the menu, and wedding invites will be exhilarating, and you should enjoy every second of it! Nevertheless, this is also the perfect time to take a moment to reflect on and make time to prepare for the marriage journey itself.

Great relationships are not discovered, they are created. It takes hard work and most importantly, COMMITMENT, even though it may sometimes feel difficult. This is the work of a lifetime, but the good news is that you do not have to be completely accomplished in all aspects to have a fulfilling marital relationship as it mostly involves 'on-the-job training'. Preparation for marriage comprises four main parts:

## 1. Establishing the Intention and Purpose of Marriage

There are a myriad of reasons to get married. Some tie the knot because of love, some do so to avoid the feeling of loneliness, and some get married as an act of worship – which is to uphold the Sunnah of Prophet Muhammad PBUH (peace and blessings be upon him). Regardless of the reason, the underlying intent of marriage is to forge a sacred bond between a man and a woman. The bond is so sacred that it has been characterised as one of the signs of Allah's Greatness.

“ And one of His signs is that He created for you spouses from among yourselves so that you may find comfort in them. And He has placed between you compassion and mercy. Surely in this are signs for people who reflect. ”

Surah Ar-Rum 30:21

As we make the decision of matrimony, we take on the task and responsibility of preserving, protecting and strengthening that marital bond.

Your intents and purposes for marriage may differ from other couples, and it is perfectly fine. What is important is that both of you are aware of each other's intentions, so as to be able to remind one another why you are in this union in the first place. Sometimes, we need to be reminded of our intents and purposes throughout our marriage.

## 2. Developing Essential Qualities

Part of the work of creating a great marriage is cultivating the qualities within you that are necessary to living together in a respectful, peaceful, and loving partnership. Examples of these qualities include patience, persistence, commitment, faithfulness, responsibility, resilience, courage, honesty, forgiveness, generosity, and goodwill.

We begin our marriage preparation by standing in front of the mirror. While picking the right person is an essential part of the process to a successful marriage, the more important factor is how we EVOLVE into the right person. Instead of looking for the partner of our dreams, we must become the partner of our dreams.

As we devote ourselves to becoming the partners we aspire to be, we often find ourselves pondering whether we have chosen the right companion for this journey of life. It is equally crucial to reflect on our compatibility with the person alongside whom we wish to walk. Taking a moment to consider potential red flags in relationships is vital, as it helps us assess whether our values, goals, and lifestyles are aligned.

True compatibility goes beyond shared interests; it necessitates a profound understanding of each other's communication styles, emotional needs, and long-term aspirations. Recognising red flags—such as persistent disrespect, stonewalling\* as a preferred mode of communication, and controlling behaviours or isolation—can act as a protective measure against future heartbreak. By investing time in open discussions and evaluations of these critical aspects, we can strengthen our relationship's foundation, ensuring that both partners are aligned on their journey and committed to growth—not just individually, but as a loving couple.

\* Stonewalling is a behaviour where one person withdraws from interaction, refuses to engage, or becomes emotionally unresponsive, effectively shutting down communication.

### 3. Cultivating the Necessary Skills

Effective communication, encompassing speaking respectfully and non-reactive listening, is an essential skill. Communication also occurs non-verbally and includes facial expressions, gestures, physical contact and body language. Other skills are active participation and cooperation, negotiating for our own needs, setting boundaries, conflict management, and practising emotional honesty, which includes frequent expression of appreciation and gratitude.

#### How do we handle conflict and stress as a couple?

If we are honest about it, the life stresses we face are only likely to increase over time. You will face problems both as an individual and as a couple, with others, and between the both of you. Being compatible when it comes to the way in which you react to conflict and stress is a crucial skill to develop in any long-lasting relationship. The first days and months of marriage motivate us to show our better nature in many ways; we restrain our tempers, show tolerance and support, and keep the emotional outbursts to ourselves, not wanting to spoil the moments we share together. Marriage will change this, and all your emotional reactions will eventually become visible. This is why it is important to consider how both of you handle stress and how you react to conflicts. Do you retreat, do you become clingy, do you yell, do you feel angry or sad? Do you know how to communicate assertively? And more importantly – how can you improve on these skills as a couple?

“ The real patience is at the first stroke of a calamity. ”

Bukhari

## 4. Mastering the Art of Asking the Right Questions

Many couples shy away from asking difficult questions for fear of disturbing the romance of their relationship. Marriage can maintain its romance for a long time, but problems may arise as a marriage evolves. This is why marriage preparation will prove to be a decisive factor in whether these big issues destroy your relationship, or motivate you both to thrive. Don't be afraid to talk about problems before they make their appearance – that is a sign of caring about your future wife or husband, and wanting to do everything there is for your future together.

It is not necessary or even possible to completely resolve these differences prior to getting married. It is enough to realise that they are real and that there is a need to identify them, acknowledge them, and put them on the table for discussion. Ask yourselves:

- 1. Children:** Is there an agreement about when to have children? How many? Who will take care of them? How to raise them? If there are problems with fertility, is adoption an option? If we have a change of heart about our responses to any of these questions, how do we negotiate our prior agreements?
- 2. In-Laws:** What is our policy regarding family visits on holidays? How do we deal with aging or dependent parents? How do we deal with conflicts involving our parents or in-laws?
- 3. Money:** What are our expectations of each other for financial contributions to the family household? What is the maximum one person can spend without consent from the other? Do we need a combined budget? Who manages the bills?
- 4. Friendships:** Is it ok for each other to have friends of the opposite sex? How much time can we spend with our friends? What can we do if our spouse feels neglected when we spend time with friends or colleagues?
- 5. Sexuality:** How do we handle differences in sexual desire? How open are we to different sexual techniques? Is there a willingness to seek professional help if there is a sexual problem? If so, when? How do we deal with it if one person wants to get help and the other doesn't?
- 6. Separatedness and togetherness:** What would be the ideal amount of time spent together and apart for each of us? What if it is more important to have "me time" for one person?
- 7. Privacy:** What is our policy regarding sharing personal and marital concerns with personal and marital concerns with other people? What is our policy regarding sharing of photos and family events on social media?
- 8. Love:** What are each of our preferred ways of having love expressed?

Anyone with motivation and a willingness to work on their own marriage/relationship is capable of achieving success, regardless of their background, personal history, personality or predispositions. You are more capable of creating a great relationship than you realise.

There are Marriage Preparation and Support Programmes that you can sign up for to facilitate some of the above-mentioned recommendations.

You can find out more about Cinta Abadi Marriage Programmes here: <https://www.cintaabadi.sg/>



## 5. The Importance of “Adab” in Islam

Adab means to have good manners, etiquette, and moral conduct in daily life. It plays a crucial role in communication, especially within families and between in-laws, as it encourages kindness, respect, and understanding. The Prophet Muhammad (saw) emphasized the importance of good character, saying, “The best among you are those who have the best manners and character” [Sahih al-Bukhari, 3559].

In a marriage, practicing adab such as speaking gently, listening attentively, and avoiding harsh words can prevent misunderstandings and strengthen the bond between spouses and extended family members. By showing respect and patience, couples can build a peaceful and loving home, fostering harmony in their relationships.

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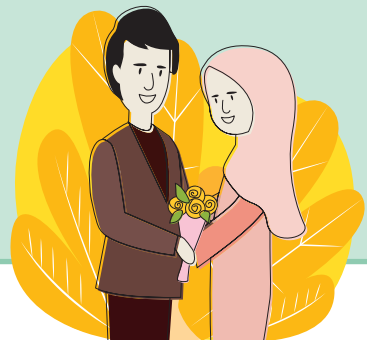
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## Persiapan mental sebelum perkahwinan

Rumah tangga yang kukuh, berasaskan persiapan yang cukup dari segi rohani, jasmani dan kewangan. Dalam usaha kita membina rumah tangga yang mantap, kita memerlukan komitmen dan niat mahu berusaha bersama. Kadangkala anda memerlukan pendapat, bantuan atau pun sokongan daripada ahli keluarga dan sahabat handai yang sudah berpengalaman. Persiapan bagi setiap pasangan yang bakal menempuh alam rumah tangga dapat memberi mereka daya kekuatan untuk menghadapi cabaran yang bakal dilalui. Ini harus diperkasakan dengan ilmu. Antara persediaan yang boleh dilakukan oleh para mempelai adalah:

1. Menanam niat utama berumah tangga. Kongsi harapan anda bersama pasangan.
2. Muhasabah, dan kenal pasti kekuatan dan sifat-sifat positif yang wujud dalam diri anda. Gunakan sifat-sifat tersebut untuk memperkasakan hubungan rumah tangga anda. Pasangan yang ideal bermula daripada diri anda sendiri.
3. Timbalah ilmu dan kemahiran yang dapat membantu mengukuhkan perhubungan rumah tangga. Antara kemahiran yang penting dipelajari adalah kemahiran berkomunikasi secara efektif, bagaimana mengatasi konflik, mengurus kewangan dan sebagainya.
4. Jangan takut untuk membincangkan isu-isu yang dianggap berat tetapi penting. Anda mungkin belum mendapat kata sepakat dalam isu-isu tersebut. Sekurang-kurangnya, isu-isu ini dapat dibincangkan dan pasangan tahu akan perasaan dan penilaian anda mengenainya.

Bincanglah tentang perasaan, harapan, peranan dan tanggungjawab suami isteri sebelum berumah tangga. Oleh itu, pasangan amat dialu-alu menghadiri kursus pra-nikah untuk bersedia menempuh alam rumah tangga.





## II. Living together

The wedding is over and you are now officially husband and wife! But that is just a change in status, the real hard work begins now.

### Make Commitment the Foundation of Your Marriage

#### What is commitment?

The dictionary defines commitment as willingness to give your time and energy to something that you believe in, or a promise or firm decision to do something.

#### Believe.

It takes trust to believe. Mutual trust is the cornerstone of any relationship, especially in a marriage. As newlyweds, this is even more important as the both of you are embarking on a journey into new horizons. Trust can be built between two people by:

- Being open – Meaning no secrets. Be honest about the issues that the two of you face.
- Better communication – Instead of bottling up your feelings, speak up. Do it face-to-face. Open communication helps in connecting and building trust.
- Sharing new experiences – Whether it is learning new things or travelling together, sharing new experiences strengthens bonds and the marriage.

#### How does commitment keep a marriage strong?

A marriage like any relationship, has its ups and downs. It is easy to be lovey-dovey when everything is going well. Commitment is what keeps a marriage going when things are down.

Also, do not forget that a marriage is a union of two families. Family support is crucial when the going gets tough.

### Negotiating Realistic Expectations

You may have known your spouse for decades before marriage, or you might have just gotten to know your spouse for a short period of time. Despite the length of your relationship pre-marriage, both of you are new to this union, and consequently each of you brings in an aspiration and vision of how your marriage will look like, as well as how you and your spouse should perform roles and responsibilities.

Communicate your expectations clearly and check with your spouse what he/she expects of you. Be honest with each other about your strengths and weaknesses, and be gracious and merciful towards each other's capabilities, or lack thereof. Aspire to constantly check on each other's well-being and how your spouse is coping with his/her tasks. Remember that in this marriage, you are a team.

### Roles and Responsibilities of Marriage in Islam

Islam holds both husband and wife accountable to how they lead and manage the marriage and family. Differences in roles do not mean inferiority or superiority of one over the other. Differences in roles serve as complementary to one another. You and your partner need to mutually discuss your respective roles and responsibilities in the marriage.

These verses succinctly capture the essence of how the rights of and responsibilities towards each spouse should manifest, and that in general, a person should treat their spouse how they would like to be treated in return.

“ Your spouses are a garment for you as you are for them. ”

Surah Al-Baqarah 2:187

## How to Do Well in Your First Year of Marriage

As the reality of married life sinks in, many newlyweds find themselves face-to-face with new experiences such as managing combined finances, handling idiosyncrasies that were once thought of as cute, and working to fit around each other's schedule. Some of these new challenges can take a toll on a couple's relationship.

However, all is not lost when things get overwhelming. It helps to know that there is always a transition period whenever you progress to a new stage of your relationship. Using Tuckman's model of team development, every new team (you and your spouse) starts from:

- 'Forming' (getting married or facing a new situation), and moving on to
- 'Storming' (facing differences),
- 'Norming' (understanding and accepting one another) and finally,
- 'Performing' (thinking alike).

With relevant know-how, both of you are well on your way to gaining ground in your first year. It is also important to remember that your spouse is not the enemy, but your comrade-in-arms!

We've gathered some tips on how you can work towards a wonderful and enjoyable first year of marriage:

### 1. Build Boundaries and Form Good Habits

Establishing boundaries and forming good habits at the start will help set the right tone for your marriage. Even if you've failed, try again. It'll get better the next time. Growing as an individual and as a couple is an ongoing process — a series of learning and re-learning.

### 2. Learn to Take Care of Yourself

When you are exhausted — emotionally, physically and socially — you will find it hard to look after each other. Discuss with your spouse and reach an understanding that setting aside some me-time to recharge will benefit both of you in the long-run.

### 3. Establish Friendships with Couples in Healthy Relationships

Surround yourself with couples who can be counted on to provide a listening ear and sound advice.

### 4. Continue Scheduling Date Nights

Even when you don't feel like it or might be caught up with other commitments, scheduling time for regular date nights will be beneficial to your marriage by keeping the romance and sparks alive!

### 5. Create New Traditions and Memories

Creating new traditions and shared memories strengthens your bond. Besides, the excitement of something new can help spice things up in your marriage.

### 6. Constantly encourage each other to strive to be better Muslims

In the marriage sermon (khutba) that the Prophet s.a.w taught us, he would recite the Quranic verses on taqwā, or being cognizant of God's presence. It is thus important to establish God-consciousness in a marriage.

Examples could be regularly praying in congregation at home, motivating each other to do qiyām and have that intimate conversation with God, encouraging each other to relay fears, worries, and concerns to Allah and to be vulnerable in front of Him, making duas for the spouse, marriage, and family, and to constantly seek forgiveness not just from God but from each other. Daily prayers are important in maintaining that consistent connection with God, helping to bring marital satisfaction.

With life's ups and downs, married life might not be a bed of roses every time. However, what makes it special is that you've got your best friend alongside you (and growing with you) on this exciting journey!

## Achieving “Sakinah”, “Mawaddah” and “Rahmah”

In Islam, a strong and successful marriage is built on the principles of Sakinah (tranquility), Mawaddah (love), and Rahmah (mercy), as mentioned in the Quran:

“And among His signs is that He created for you spouses from among yourselves so that you may find tranquility in them, and He has placed between you affection and mercy. Indeed, in that are signs for a people who reflect.” (Surah Ar-Rum : 21)

Sakinah refers to peace and serenity in marriage, where both spouses find comfort and emotional stability in each other. Mawaddah signifies deep love and affection, fostering warmth and care in the relationship. Rahmah means mercy and kindness, allowing couples to forgive, be patient, and support one another.

In every situation, whether joyful or challenging, it is essential to uphold these values in thoughts, words, and actions. By practicing Sakinah, a couple remains calm and resolves conflicts peacefully. Through Mawaddah, love and appreciation continue to grow even in difficult times. With Rahmah, spouses show compassion and understanding, ensuring decisions are fair and beneficial for both. These values help build a resilient and harmonious marriage, strengthening the bond between husband and wife.

## Planning for Your First Home Together

For many couples, wedding plans usually become the centre of their lives for at least a year before the actual day itself. Do you remember the hours you and your spouse spent going through websites to decide on the perfect venue, outfit, theme, or vendor for your special day? After the wedding ceremony, what remains are the wonderful memories and beautiful pictures, as well as the most enduring gift of it all — a future together as a family. The top priority for most newlyweds then would be planning for their first home together.

Compared to the wedding day, many couples feel that finding a home is less exciting and perhaps more stressful, as it involves financial planning and balancing the priorities of the new relationship. It does not however, have to be so. With careful thought and an open approach, planning for and finding a home for yourselves can be just as exciting as planning for the wedding.

## Agree on Your Priorities

We all look forward to having a place of our own. However, a home of your own will mean having to be responsible for property taxes, utility bills, service/conservancy charges, groceries and your daily meals. These costs which used to be taken care of by your parents will soon become additional costs to your personal expenses every month.

These are just the first in a series of financial expenses which you and your spouse will have to plan for. The financial commitments you take on will have an impact on the quality of your family's future.

Therefore, the first and most important discussion you must have together has to be: "How much money should we save, and what are our financial aspirations?" A clear understanding of each other's needs and priorities will allow you to minimise disagreements about how you plan your finances, fund your new home, and the type of home you aspire to live in.

## Know Your Options

Once you understand the financial commitments you are prepared to make, spend time exploring what is available and your options.

Some things you might want to find out about are:

- Housing grants from the HDB
- Housing loan amounts that you are eligible to secure
- Your available CPF and cash savings for a first-time flat purchase

Visit HDB's InfoWEB at [www.hdb.gov.sg](http://www.hdb.gov.sg) to get help with financial planning, as well as to apply for HDB Loan Eligibility, and obtain more information on buying a flat.

## Focus on Building a Home

At the end of the day, you are doing this to build a home that you and your family can live comfortably in, one that will meet your needs. With that, focus on ensuring that your plans are financially prudent. This allows you to spend your time together building your marriage instead of needing to worry about financial woes.

### Reference:

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## Memulakan kehidupan bersama

Kini, bermulalah proses membina identiti keluarga anda. Pertama sekali, kukuhkan asas rumah tangga anda dengan sama-sama memupuk iltizam atau komitmen yang padu terhadap perhubungan ini. Bincangkan jangkaan peranan dan tanggungjawab masing-masing. Hadapi perbincangan ini dengan sifat terbuka dan penuh dengan rasa ihsan dan kasih sayang. Anda berdua mesti yakin dengan masjid yang dibina ini. Tahun pertama kadangkala boleh jadi mencabar kerana inilah tahun pertama anda menjalani hidup bersama. Anda berdua perlu bersifat bertimbang rasa kerana anda berdua belum terbiasa dengan tabiat masing-masing. Apabila mula hidup bersama, anda perlu fikirkan tentang keserasian pasangan anda terhadap tabiat anda. Keserasian ini lebih menyerlah apabila anda berdua mencari, membeli dan mencantikkan kediaman pertama bersama-sama. Berbincanglah dan buat penilaian kewangan dengan teliti supaya proses membeli rumah berjalan dengan sempurna.



TOP



## III. When life gets tougher

Every couple can be affected by tough times. Couples may face major life transitions, such as a new baby, new job, or a new house. They may face ongoing stressors, such as a spouse's ill health or a negative work environment. They may also face losses, such as the death of a friend or a family member, or retrenchment. While tough times affect us all, they can pile on additional stress to your romantic relationship.

### Every Day is a Choice to Stay Married

Healthy couples get through these tough times, and tough times can actually help a couple draw closer.

### How to Prioritise Your Marriage

“ Things which matter most must never be at the mercy of things which matter the least. ”

**Johann Wolfgang von Goethe,**  
German literary figure,  
scientist and statesman

A good marriage does not happen naturally — it requires effort and commitment from both parties. But what does it mean to prioritise your marriage?

### 1. Remember, Both of You are Teammates

A good marriage is one where you remain true to each other even when the going gets tough. Your commitment to weathering the storms of life together, helps in strengthening your bond as a couple. You're on the same team. You are not enemies.

When you function as teammates, it is easier to tackle life's problems together, and it is less likely that you will turn against one another. Tips for sticking together:

- i) Face your conflicts head-on together, don't bury or avoid them!
- ii) Don't assassinate one another's character or belittle each other. Harsh words said out of spite will not only hurt the other party but will destroy the relationship with time.

*Abu Musa al-Ash'ari reported: I asked the Messenger of Allah s.a.w "Who is the most excellent among the Muslims?" He said, "One who avoids harming the Muslims with his tongue and hands." [Sahih al-Bukhari: 10]*

Choose to support and lift your partner up, especially on days when no one else will. Doing so not only lifts your spirits up, but also leads to a stronger marriage! Show the world you are an unbeatable couple.

- iii) Communicate openly about what you are going through, and listen to one another.
- iv) Be present for each other.
- v) When you need a time-out, inform your spouse of your intention and assure him/her that you will come back to deal with the issue at hand.
- vi) Find a trusted counsellor for objective help. This can facilitate your goal and primary objective, which is sticking together and coming out of the conflict stronger.

## 2. Put Your Spouse First, In Front of the Kids

When kids arrive, they can throw everything into disarray — your schedule, your plans, your goals. Let them steal your hearts, but not your marriage.

As we all know too well, having children takes up a lot of time and energy.

However, you should take note that growing apart and jeopardising your marriage will lead to an unhealthy environment for your children to grow up in.

To provide a safe and happy environment for your children to grow up in, you should therefore prioritise your marriage. Of course, that is not to say that you should neglect your children. In fact, this will help to ensure a warm and loving family.

## 3. Create Your Own Marriage Rules

Here's an exercise: Imagine what you want your marriage to look like in the future. Think about what you should do to get there. For example, does it involve a routine or new habit the two of you should form together? Does it involve making some rules about how you conduct yourselves in your relationship?

Make these expectations clear, and communicate them to your spouse to make it happen.

Examples of what could go into your list:

- Never saying "You never..." to one another
- Never complaining about your spouse to other family members
- Agreeing to spend a weekend alone, at least once a month

Every marriage is different. Discuss with your partner and create rules suited to your relationship.

## 4. Celebrate Marriage/Life Milestones Together

In the early years, you have many milestones to celebrate, such as going on your first trip together, having your first child, celebrating your child's first birthday, and so on.

Over the years, new milestones may seem few and far between. However, don't forget that maintaining the marriage itself is good news that's worth celebrating! Such 'celebrations' do not have to be huge and fancy affairs. Recognising them together is one way of showing your love and appreciation, and expressing the importance of the other in your life. You can choose to mark your anniversary by perhaps watching a movie together, or exchanging cards with personalised messages.

Remember that your spouse is your "forever" person, and will need your love as much as your children do.

## 5. Cultivate Intimacy

Love has its natural ebb and flow. It is almost guaranteed that most marriages will experience dry spells in the midst of hard times. Tough situations are very consuming, and that can drain all your energy before you are able to give your marriage the attention it needs.

If you've managed to hold onto each other and get through your unique crises and challenges together, you are already one step ahead of the pack. Clearly, your commitment to each other is still there, but having been tested, the both of you might be feeling pretty empty, emotionally. However, just because your relationship does not feel fulfilling at the moment, it does not mean that it is dead. It simply needs to be revived. You're not going to feel emotionally connected to each other 100% of the time, and that is just how life is sometimes. The trick is learning to become connected again, and you can do this by cultivating intimacy.

To ignite more intimacy in your marriage:

- Revisit things you have in common
- Reminisce together
- Invest in interests or activities that excite your spouse
- Laugh together!

Tough times can take a lot out of you, but laughing together will help you revive the connection that you have been lacking. Bring that back to life, and you'll be amazed at what it does for your marriage.



Married couples may face conflicts and differing expectations in their relationship, leading to marital stress. Do not wait until it is too late to get help. Relationships do not fall apart overnight. The longer the problem stays, the more the relationship becomes strained. Seek early help from a professional to work with you and your spouse on improving your marital relationship. A counsellor can help you and your spouse to:

- Understand the issues and conflicts in your marriage
- Improve your marriage by working through the issues and reasons for conflict
- Discover internal resources and strengths that could strengthen your marriage
- Communicate and re-connect with your spouse
- Regain the trust and commitment in your marriage

*It is important to show mercy in times of stress. The Prophet (PBUH) said. "The best of you is he who is best to his family"*  
**[Mishkat al-Masabih: 3252, 3253]**

*It is stated in another hadith that the Prophet (PBUH) said, "A believing man should not hate a believing woman, if he dislikes one characteristic of hers, then let him be pleased with another."*  
**[Muslim: 1468]**

For more information, please visit <https://familyassist.msf.gov.sg/content/resources/counselling/ways-to-seek-counselling/> for marriage counselling services available near you.

**Reference:**

1. [familiesforlife.sg](https://familiesforlife.sg)
2. [www.msf.gov.sg](https://www.msf.gov.sg)
3. SalamSG TV. (2020, Sep 26). Muhasabah Masyarakat bersama Mufti [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cajrb5DH5Fs&t=275s>
4. Office of the Mufti, MUIS

## Mengharungi cabaran rumah tangga

Setiap rumah tangga ada pasang surutnya. Pasangan boleh memilih untuk tenggelam dalam kemelut kehidupan, atau menggunakannya sebagai peluang untuk mengukuhkan lagi hubungan suami isteri. Cara-caranya adalah:

1. Anda adalah sepasukan. Bukan lawan. Berbincang dan bertindak sebagai satu pasukan
2. Utamakan pasangan di hadapan anak-anak
3. Wujudkan "peraturan" dalam rumah tangga
4. Raikan kejayaan dan hubungan rumah tangga anda!
5. Semarakkan kemesraan dalam hubungan berumah tangga

Jangan biarkan masalah yang kecil berlarutan sehingga menjadi masalah yang jauh lagi besar dan sukar ditangani. Kongsi pendapat, pandangan, dan buat berbincang tentang apa sahaja yang ada kaitan dengan kerja, rumah, kewangan, anak-anak dan diri sendiri. Hargailah pasangan anda. Sentiasa berikan sokongan kepada pasangan anda. Luahkan isi hati anda. Layarilah bahtera rumah tangga ini bersama dengan sifat toleransi dan penuh kasih sayang.



TOP

# Section 2.

## Starting a Family

Membina Keluarga Sakinah





# I. Family planning

Every couple aspires to have a child/children at some point in their marriage. Having children is a huge responsibility. Each child's needs can differ, even between siblings. As parents, you are not only responsible for their development and growth, but also how they are raised, educated, and integrated into society. We should ask ourselves these questions before deciding to embark on the journey of parenthood:

1. When do we want to start a family?
2. How soon before the next child?
3. How many children do we wish to have?
4. Are we medically fit or financially stable to provide for the children?

The answers to the above may affect one's plans for finances, work location, type of accommodation, and even choice of job. Family planning is indeed an important topic to discuss between a husband and wife.

Family planning methods (birth control) or contraception can be short-acting or long-acting. These are available at GPs, polyclinics and hospitals. You should discuss your options with your doctor. Your doctor will further guide you to choose the safest and most effective contraception.

Short-Acting Contraceptives refer to contraception that require close monitoring and which need to be used before engaging in sexual intercourse, or taken daily. Such contraception includes:

1. Natural rhythm – having sexual intercourse out of the ovulation period or “high risk of pregnancy” period
2. Condoms
3. Oral contraceptive pills
4. Patch

Long-Acting Contraceptives refers to contraception that do not need monitoring on a daily basis. Fertility usually resumes once the contraception is ceased.

Options can be:

1. Reversible
  - i. Intrauterine Contraceptive Device (IUCD)
  - ii. Implanon
  - iii. Depo Provera
2. Intended to be permanent and as a last resort
  - i. Ligation/Sterilisation

## I. IUCD

Mirena (hormone-related) or Copper (non hormone-related)

- Inserted on Day 2 to 5 of menses, OR when reliably certain that the woman is not pregnant
- Mirena lasts for 5 years, copper IUCD lasts for 5 years

## II. Implanon

- Inserted on Day 2 to 5 of menstrual cycle, OR when reliably certain that the woman is not pregnant
- Lasts for 3 years
- Needs a small incision (cut in the skin) for removal, under local anaesthesia
- Can be inserted immediately after delivery

## III. Progesterone injections - Depo Provera (3 monthly injections)

First Injection on

- Day 2 to 5 of menstrual cycle, OR when reliably certain that the woman is not pregnant
- Within the first 5 days post-delivery if not breastfeeding
- If exclusively breastfeeding, ONLY at the sixth week post-delivery

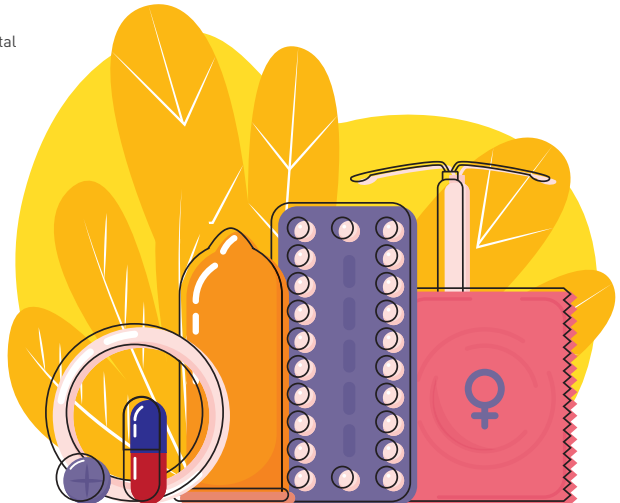
If the time interval between injections is greater than 13 weeks, the doctor will need to determine that the woman is not pregnant before administering the injection.

## IV. Laparoscopic ligation/Post-partum sterilisation (PPS)

Done under general or regional anaesthesia (spinal/epidural)

1. Laparoscopic – key-hole surgery, usually done at least 6 weeks after delivery
2. PPS – a small cut is made below the navel, performed immediately post-delivery or at the same setting during a caesarean section
  - Placement of clips on the Fallopian tubes or salpingectomy (surgical removal of Fallopian tubes)
  - The doctor will ensure the patient is not pregnant before the procedure is performed
  - Hormonal contraception needs to be continued for 7 days after the procedure till the next menses

**Reference:** KK Women's and Children's Hospital



## Perancangan keluarga

Perancangan keluarga bertujuan untuk menjarakkan kelahiran anak yang telah disepakati oleh anda berdua. Ini tidak sama sekali bertujuan untuk tidak memiliki anak.

Perancangan ini penting untuk:

- Suami isteri yang belum bersedia untuk menimang anak terutama dari segi fizikal, mental dan kewangan
- Pengurusan kewangan - Ini akan memberi peluang untuk anda sekeluarga menikmati kehidupan yang selesa
- Ibu yang baru melahirkan supaya pulih dari segi fizikal dan emosi sebelum hamil semula
- Memberi peluang anak yang baru lahir untuk mendapatkan sepenuh perhatian dan susu badan yang secukupnya

Ini akan membantu pasangan untuk sama-sama memelihara kesihatan yang lebih baik untuk isteri, suami dan anak-anak. Jika anda berdua berbincang dan mendapati yang anda belum bersedia untuk membina keluarga sendiri, jumpalah doktor untuk mendapatkan nasihat. Dengan cara ini, anda akan diberikan pil perancang atau cara menjarakkan kehamilan yang tepat dan sesuai.



TOP



# Subfertility

## What is subfertility?

For healthy couples under 40 years old who engage in regular sexual intercourse, there is an 80% chance of becoming pregnant within a year. For the remaining 20%, half of them will become pregnant in the following year.

Subfertility is when a couple is not able to conceive after 1 year of regular sexual intercourse without using contraceptives. It is a common problem and affects at least 1 in 8 couples at some point in their lives.

## What are the causes of subfertility?

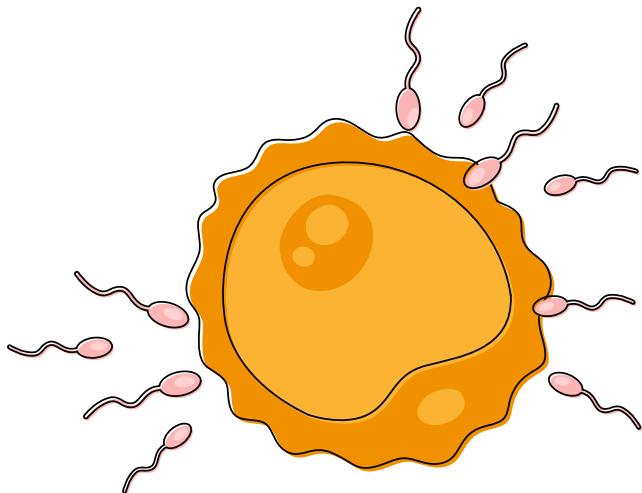
In most cases, a cause or a combination of causes for subfertility can be found. Broadly, these can be classified into the following categories:

- Ovulation problems
  - Irregular or absence of ovulation prevents eggs from being released
  - E.g. Polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS), thyroid disorders
- Fallopian tube factors e.g. blockage, dysfunction, swelling
  - Can be contributed by certain conditions such as pelvic inflammatory disease (PID) and endometriosis
- Structural factors of the uterus and/or cervix
  - Certain problems in the uterus and/or cervix such as fibroids, adenomyosis, endometriosis, scarring from surgery or infection can hinder fertilisation or implantation
- Age
  - Female fertility declines significantly with age, especially after 35 years old, due to a decrease in the number and quality of eggs
  - Male fertility also declines with age, particularly after 40 years old
- Other factors
  - Autoimmune disorders, certain medications, and exposure to toxins can also contribute to subfertility
- Male factor
  - Problems with sperm production, motility or morphology can hinder fertilisation
    - Can be due to genetic conditions, diabetes, cancer or cancer treatment, infections, hormonal imbalances, varicoceles, or the effects of certain medications or treatments
  - Problems with sperm delivery
    - Can be due to genetic conditions e.g. cystic fibrosis, premature ejaculation, injury or damage to the testes, or structural defects such as a blockage in the testicle

However, in some couples with subfertility, despite undergoing standard fertility tests, none of the above causes are found and they may be classified as unexplained or idiopathic subfertility.

## How can I improve my fertility health?

- Achieve your ideal Body Mass Index (BMI)
  - Being overweight or obese reduces fertility and often affects ovulation
- A healthy, balanced diet rich in leafy greens and vitamin-rich fruits as well as fibre-rich foods keep the body in optimum condition for conception and pregnancy
- Exercise
  - Increasing physical activity and losing weight (maintaining a BMI of 19-25 kg/m<sup>2</sup>) can increase the chance of conception and improve overall wellbeing
- Refrain from smoking and consuming alcohol
  - Smoking and alcohol consumption reduce sperm quality in men and egg quality in women, and can cause harm to the developing fetus
- Consume caffeine in moderation
  - As there is no consensus on the association of caffeinated products with fertility problems, the general advice is to consume caffeine in moderation
- Occupation
  - Exposure to certain occupational hazards can reduce both male and female fertility
- Folic acid
  - Recommended dose is 400mcg (0.4mg) per day prior to conception, up to 12 weeks gestation
    - this reduces the risk of neural tube defects
  - A higher dose of 5mg is recommended for women with previous history of having a baby affected by neural tube defects, or for women who have medical conditions like diabetes or epilepsy (on medications) or have a BMI of more than 30.



## What are some of the fertility treatment options available?

### 1. Ovulation Induction (OI)

Ovulatory disorder, when there is a problem in the release of the egg from a woman's ovary, is the most common cause of subfertility and affects one-third of couples with infertility, especially in women with irregular menstruation.

Medications such as Clomiphene Citrate and Letrozole, and sometimes injections such as Gonadotrophin, are used to induce ovulation in these patients.

### 2. Superovulation & Intrauterine insemination (SO-IUI / IUI)

IUI is a fertility treatment where a catcher is used to insert a highly concentrated amount of active motile sperm directly into the womb. Its aim is to deliver sperm to reach the fallopian tubes around the time of ovulation to increase the chance of fertilisation.

IUI can be done as part of the natural menstrual cycle or using ovulation induction medication to improve the egg production – in this case it is known as superovulation IUI (SO-IUI). Your most suitable treatment regime will be decided by your fertility specialist.

### 3. In Vitro Fertilisation (IVF) / Intra-Cytoplasmic Sperm Injection (ICSI)

IVF is when the process of fertilisation of the egg by the sperm occurs outside of the womb (in vitro). The eggs and sperm are placed in a laboratory dish for fertilisation to take place naturally.

ICSI is an IVF procedure when a single sperm that has been selected by the embryologist is injected into the cytoplasm (centre) of the egg using a very fine glass needle, which bypasses the natural selection process,

The fertilised egg (the embryo) is then placed back into the womb to achieve pregnancy. ICSI helps to improve fertilisation rates and is suitable if the sperm is of poor quality or if there had been problems with fertilisation in the past.

## When to seek help for subfertility?

- Not able to get pregnant after 1 year of regular, unprotected sexual intercourse
- Not able to get pregnant after 6 months of regular, unprotected sexual intercourse, if the woman is aged 35 years and above
- For women aged 45 years and above:
  - Natural fertility after 45 years old is low
  - In addition, at an older age, the risks of pregnancy such as miscarriage and genetic and/or structural abnormalities are also higher (>90%)
- If you have a medical condition that may affect your fertility potential



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## Where to seek help for fertility issues?

- See a general gynaecologist for advice
- You may call the KKH Central Appointments hotline (6294-4050) for a fertility specialist consult or obtain a referral from the polyclinic for team care
- Visit the KKIVF Centre website for more information regarding infertility: <https://www.kkh.com.sg/our-specialties/kkivf-centre>

## What is the Islamic perspective on fertility treatments?

Modern medical advancements such as IVF offer hope to couples struggling with subfertility. In Singapore, MUIS has issued fatwas that permit IVF and IUI, provided that the process strictly adheres to Islamic ethics and safeguards the sanctity of lineage (nasab).

Conditions for permissible IVF and IUI:

- The couple must be legally married at the time of the procedure.
- The husband's sperm and his wife's egg are used, and fertilisation occurs either internally (insemination) or externally (in a laboratory), after which the embryo is implanted into the wife's womb.
- When natural conception is not possible due to medical reasons, such as damaged fallopian tubes.

Prohibited Practices:

- Using donor sperm or donor eggs, as this introduces a third party and compromises lineage.
- Surrogacy, where another woman carries the embryo, as it blurs maternal identity and violates Islamic principles of family structure.
- Posthumous conception, where a husband's frozen sperm is used after his death, as conception must occur within a valid marriage.

Allah SWT says in the Quran:

*“He creates whatever He wills. He blesses whoever He wills with daughters and blesses whoever He wills with sons.”*

**(As-Shura: 49)**

This verse highlights that children are ultimately a gift from Allah SWT, granted according to His wisdom and decree. Islam encourages its followers to have children, as they are the future generation who will continue the legacy of faith, knowledge, and good deeds. Raising righteous children is considered an act of ongoing charity (sadaqah jariyah), as their prayers and good deeds benefit the parents even after their passing.

At the same time, the verse reminds believers that matters of conceiving children rest with Allah's will. Some may be blessed with sons, others with daughters, and some may face challenges in conception. However, Islam also teaches that while one should rely on Allah (tawakkal), believers are also encouraged to make effort (ikhtiar) to achieve what is good. Seeking medical treatment or assistance to conceive is therefore permissible, provided it does not contradict Islamic principles.

Having children is a dream for most couples, but challenges can occur for some in achieving a successful pregnancy. Islam encourages believers to try their very best in doing good, including making efforts to seek treatment when facing difficulties in conception. At the same time, prayers and tawakkal (reliance on Allah) remain central, because ultimately it is Allah SWT who determines the outcome of all matters.

While striving to conceive, Islam reminds us that lineage (nasab) is a critical component of family. Therefore, every effort made must align with Islamic rulings to ensure that family integrity, identity, and the sanctity of marriage are safeguarded. This balance of effort, prayer, and reliance upon Allah reflects Islam's holistic approach to navigating both the blessings and challenges of family life.

**Reference:** KK Women's and Children's Hospital, Islamic Religious Council of Singapore (MUIS), Association of Muslim Professionals (AMP)



## Cabaran Kesuburan

Cabaran kesuburan menjadi semakin berleluasa dan boleh menjejaskan lebih kurang 1 daripada 8 pasangan pada suatu ketika dalam hidup mereka. Pasangan dikatakan mengalami masalah ketidaksuburan jika tidak dapat hamil selepas 1 tahun walaupun mengamalkan hubungan kelamin kerap tanpa menggunakan sebarang kaedah pencegahan kehamilan.

Masalah ketidaksuburan dikaitkan dengan banyak faktor, termasuk masalah ovulasi, saluran fallopian tersumbat, masalah struktur rahim atau pangkal rahim, ketidakseimbangan hormon dan jumlah sperma yang rendah. Tahap kesuburan wanita semakin kurang dengan peningkatan usia, terutamanya selepas umur 35 tahun, disebabkan oleh pengurangan bilangan dan kualiti telur. Kesuburan lelaki juga menurun mengikut umur, terutamanya selepas umur 40 tahun, walaupun tidak secepat wanita. Walau bagaimanapun, ada sesetengah pasangan yang menjalani ujian kesuburan tiada punca yang ditemui.

Antara cara untuk meningkatkan kesuburan adalah dengan mengamalkan gaya hidup yang sihat. Ini termasuk menurunkan berat badan yang tinggi, memakan diet yang seimbang, meningkatkan aktiviti fizikal, dan mengelakkan minuman keras dan tabiat merokok.

Bagi pasangan yang memerlukan rawatan kesuburan, cara-cara termasuk penggunaan ubat ovulasi atau prosedur-prosedur seperti inseminasi intra-rahim (IUI), di mana doktor menyalurkan sperma secara terus ke dalam faraj wanita, dan persenyawaan in-vitro (IVF), iaitu proses di mana sel telur disenyawakan oleh sperma di luar rahim.

Di Singapura, MUIS telah mengeluarkan fatwa yang menyatakan IVF dan IUI boleh dilakukan asalkansyarat proses tersebut mematuhi etika Islam dan menjaga kesucian nasab.

Syarat-syarat untuk IVF dan IUI:

- Pasangan tersebut telah berkahwin secara sah pada masa prosedur dijalankan.
- Hanya sperma suami dan sel telur isterinya yang digunakan. Dalam Islam, penggunaan sperma atau sel telur yang telah diderma tidak dibenarkan.
- Kehamilan secara semula jadi tidak berjaya atas sebab-sebab perubatan, seperti saluran fallopian yang rosak.

Mempunyai cahaya mata ialah impian kebanyakan pasangan. Namun demikian ada sesetengah pasangan menaghadapi cabaran untuk mendapatkan cahaya mata. Islam menggalakkan orang yang beriman untuk berusaha sedaya upaya dalam melakukan kebaikan, termasuk berusaha mencari rawatan apabila menghadapi masalah kesuburan.

Jumpa doktor sakit puan atau pakar perubatan kesuburan jika anda:

- Belum hamil selepas 1 tahun melakukan hubungan kelamin tanpa perlindungan
- Belum hamil selepas 6 bulan melakukan hubungan kelamin tanpa perlindungan bagi wanita yang berumur 35 tahun ke atas
- Mempunyai masalah kesihatan yang mungkin menjejaskan potensi kesuburan anda

Dalam usaha menagami masalah kesuburan, Islam mengingatkan kita bahawa nasab ialah komponen penting dalam membina keluarga. Oleh itu, setiap usaha yang dilakukan mestilah selaras dengan hukum Islam untuk memastikan integriti keluarga, identiti, dan kesucian perkahwinan terpelihara.



## III. Preparing for a pregnancy (for her)

### Are you planning to get pregnant? Are you ready for motherhood?

To prepare for a smooth-sailing pregnancy, here is a guide on different ways to keep mentally and physically healthy!

#### Nutrition

- Folic Acid
  - Take 5mg of folic acid at least three months before getting pregnant and this is to be continued until week 12 of pregnancy. Folic acid is a type of Vitamin B that is needed for the formation of red blood cells, the development of the baby's nervous system, and preventing malformations in the baby (such as spina bifida).
- Have a well-balanced diet
  - Include dark green vegetables like spinach and asparagus.
  - Red meat, chicken, fish, egg yolk, and green leafy vegetables are sources of iron and help to prevent anaemia.
  - Fish such as salmon and sardine contribute to healthy development of baby's eyes and brain.
  - Milk, hard cheese, yoghurt and soy contain calcium for bone development. Take them with Vitamin D for better absorption of calcium.



#### Lifestyle

- Exercise regularly
  - Lose weight before pregnancy if you are obese or overweight. Obesity is linked to infertility. Having a normal Body Mass Index (BMI) will make it easier for you to get pregnant successfully and reduce the risks of a complicated pregnancy.
- Vaccination
  - Getting the right vaccinations is important to protect you and your future baby. Do ensure that you are protected against Rubella (German Measles), Varicella (Chicken pox) and Hepatitis B. If you are not vaccinated yet, do set aside some time before getting pregnant to get vaccinated.
- Quit smoking
  - When a pregnant woman smokes, her baby "smokes" with her. Babies born to smokers tend to have lower birth weight, slower growth, greater risk of asthma, and breathing problems. If you require assistance to quit smoking, call the QuitLine: 1800-438-2000.
- Do not consume alcohol or drugs
  - Alcohol can cause irreversible intellectual damage in your baby. It crosses into the placenta and may result in lifelong learning disabilities, memory problems, attention deficits and impulsive behaviour.



If you have any medical conditions, please seek your doctor's advice and have these under control to ensure that it is safe for you to get pregnant, and to ensure a better outcome for you and your baby.

### Mental Health

- Remain calm and stay mentally positive.
  - Some couples may take a longer time to get pregnant. Women wanting to become pregnant should avoid high levels of stress as there is a complex interplay between high stress levels and the menstrual cycle.
- Be prepared for the changes and continue to communicate with your spouse.
  - Pregnancy brings about changes in your body. Communicate with your husband. Let him understand any fears you may have about getting pregnant. Allow him to be with you and support you throughout your pregnancy journey together. A healthy relationship with your spouse is important in creating a stable and safe environment for your future children.



“ O believers! Seek comfort in patience and prayer. Allah is truly with those who are patient. ”

Surah Al-Baqarah 2:153

## Persiapan kehamilan harus diberi perhatian...

...yang teliti. Ini akan menjadikan tahap imuniti, emosi dan jasmani anda lebih stabil sewaktu melalui fasa ini.

Pemakanan yang seimbang dan berkhasiat perlu untuk meningkatkan daya tahan atau imuniti tubuh. Anda boleh mengambil Asid Folik (Folic acid) 5mg 3 bulan sebelum anda hamil atau seandainya anda berdua sudah berniat untuk mempersiapkan diri untuk hamil. Anda akan seterusnya mengambil 5mg Asid Folik sekurang-kurangnya dalam 3 bulan pertama kehamilan anda. Mengubah cara hidup seharian juga penting bagi persiapan untuk hamil.

Anda akan digalakkan agar berhenti merokok. Stres boleh menjejaskan kesihatan anda yang sedang berusaha untuk mengandungi. Seandainya, anda sememangnya suka beriadah dan bersenam, teruskanlah usaha ini kerana ini dapat meningkatkan lagi tahap kesihatan anda.

Eratkan hubungan komunikasi antara anda suami isteri. Sokonglah satu sama lain supaya proses kehamilan dapat dilalui dengan penuh kasih sayang.

Anda berdua juga boleh meminta pandangan ahli keluarga lain ataupun sahabat handai dan mengambil tips yang sesuai dalam persiapan ini. Berusaha dan berdoalah agar persiapan untuk hamil dan tahap-tahap seterusnya akan berjalan dengan lancar dan sempurna.

“ Wahai orang-orang yang beriman!  
Minta pertolongan dengan kesabaran dan do'a.  
Sesungguhnya Allah bersama orang-orang  
yang bersabar. ”

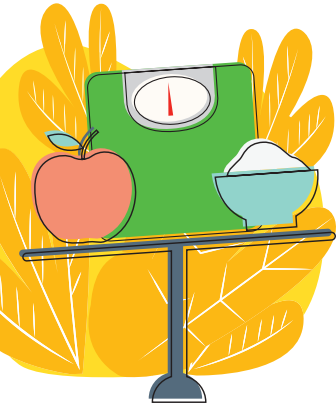
Surah Al-Baqarah 2:153



## IV. Preparing for a pregnancy (for him)

### Are you planning to start a family with kids?

Planning to start a family together and going through pregnancy is not just a journey for your wife. It is important for husbands to be involved and prepare together to enjoy a more positive experience of fatherhood.



#### Personal Health

- Eat a well-balanced diet
  - Include healthy foods which are high in minerals and vitamins. Eat a variety of food in moderation.
- Reach and maintain a healthy weight
  - Obesity among men is associated directly with increasing male infertility. The key to achieving and maintaining a healthy weight is not about short-term changes. Include regular physical activity as a routine. Staying in control of your weight contributes to good health now, and as you age.
- If you are taking medication, check with your doctor if the medicine could affect your fertility.

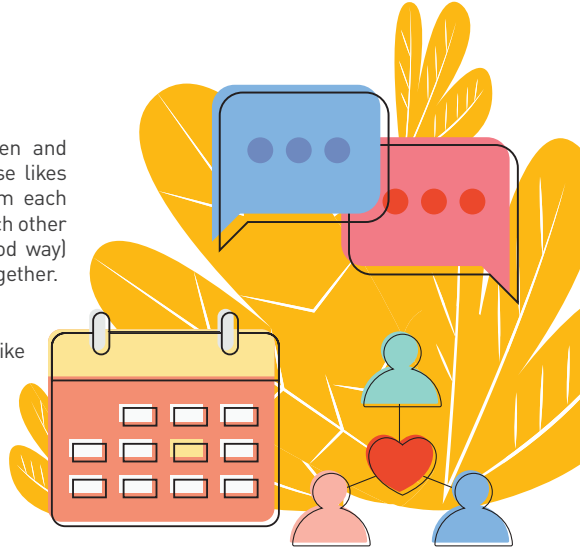
#### Lifestyle

- Exercise regularly—this can be a fun activity to do with friends or with your spouse!
- Avoid very hot baths and wear loose-fitting underwear.
- Do not consume alcohol or drugs.
- Quit smoking
  - A pregnant woman who is exposed to passive smoke has a higher chance of giving birth to a baby with low birth weight than women who are not exposed to passive smoke during pregnancy. If you need assistance to quit smoking, you can call QuitLine: 1800-438-2000.



## Maintaining a Healthy Marriage

- Take the time to get to know each other
  - Communicate with each other in an open and honest manner. Find out what your spouse likes and dislikes and be open to learning from each other. Continue to be romantic and spoil each other where possible. Life will change (in a good way) after a baby comes. Enjoy every moment together.
- Make a plan for the future, together.
  - Having a baby (especially your first) can feel like a huge leap into the unknown. It is hard to predict all the ways your life will change, but one thing is for sure—your life will change. It is important to agree on when you both want to start a family. Develop a budget, pay off debt, manage your work-life balance and develop a schedule as a couple.
- Build a strong social support network that you can rely on in times to come.
  - Pregnancy is a time of transition and change. Use this time before your wife gets pregnant to articulate and address any fears you have, build your support, and establish a stable lifestyle for you and your family. A pregnancy may cause some anxiety and stress but planning ahead may ease some of this stress.



**Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said:**

“ The believers who are the most perfect in faith are those who have the best behaviour, and the best amongst you are those who are best to their wives. ”

**Hadith reported by At-Tirmidhi**

**Reference:** KK Women's and Children's Hospital, Office of the Mufti (MUIS)

## Bukan isteri sahaja yang perlu membuat persiapan...

...untuk kehamilan. Malah, suami juga perlu mempersiapkan diri.

Bagi suami, meningkatkan tahap imuniti, emosi dan jasmani anda juga penting sewaktu melalui fasa ini. Pemakanan yang seimbang dan berkhasiat perlu untuk meningkatkan daya tahan atau imuniti tubuh. Berat badan yang tidak seimbang dan juga pengambilan ubat-ubatan tertentu boleh menjejaskan tahap kesuburan.

Mengubah cara hidup seharian juga penting bagi persiapan untuk hamil. Anda digalakkan berhenti merokok. Asap rokok boleh menjejaskan pertumbuhan bayi yang dikandung isteri anda.

Luangkanlah masa untuk beriadah bersama isteri. Ini juga boleh menyemarakkan rasa cinta terhadap isteri. Elakkan stres kerana ia boleh menjejaskan kesihatan.

Ikutilah gaya hidup yang sihat dan carilah bantuan jika anda memerlukan nasihat. Sokonglah satu sama lain supaya proses kehamilan dapat dilalui dengan penuh kasih sayang antara suami dengan isteri. Sebagai ketua keluarga, anda digalakkan mengukuhkan kekuatan mental dan jasmani sendiri, dan juga tahap kewangan supaya anda berdua tidak dibelenggu masalah-masalah yang boleh dielakkan.

**“ Rasulullah (saw) bersabda: Orang yang paling sempurna imannya di kalangan orang-orang yang beriman adalah orang yang paling baik akhlaknya, dan sebaik-baik orang di kalangan kamu adalah mereka yang terbaik (akhlaknya) terhadap isteri-isteri mereka. ”**

Hadith riwayat At-Tirmidhi



# V. Guide to a healthy & happy pregnancy

Most women learn about their pregnancy when they are about five weeks pregnant due to their missed period, along with other common symptoms. As first-time mothers, here are some things to look out for:

## Trimester 1 (Week 1 to 12)

- You should suspect that you are pregnant when you miss your period while having unprotected intimate relationships with your husband. A pregnancy test can be performed then. The best time of the day to test for pregnancy would be during your first toilet trip in the morning. Your pregnant hormone levels would be highest then due to the reservoir you have accumulated in your bladder overnight.
- After testing positive for pregnancy, you should book your first visit with an obstetrician. A dating scan is done between week 6 and week 12 of your pregnancy to accurately determine how many weeks pregnant you are.
  - If you have any bleeding, see a doctor early. Though some light vaginal bleeding may be harmless, it may also signify other problems (e.g. miscarriage or ectopic pregnancy).
  - At pregnancy week 6, pregnancy symptoms may start to present themselves and may become more challenging over the next few weeks. Some of these include nausea and vomiting (which peak between weeks 8-10), fatigue, frequent urination, food aversions/cravings and breast tenderness.
  - While these symptoms may be very common, it is important to see your doctor if your nausea and vomiting symptoms worsen and you have lost 5kg or more. There are many effective medications that may help to reduce the severity of these symptoms. There are also some tried-and-tested remedies that work for many, such as ginger or sour foods, which may help you to deal with nausea. Sometimes your nausea and vomiting may be so severe that medical attention is required.
- By week 11, the symptoms of nausea and vomiting should be coming to an end. You may, however, experience mild headaches throughout your pregnancy.
- At week 12, the risk of miscarriage usually diminishes. Miscarriages usually have a significant psychological impact on both parents. However, miscarriages are sporadic and will not affect the success of future pregnancies. If miscarriages happen for three or more times, you should consult a doctor to identify the underlying causes.
- Talk to your loved ones so that they can provide you the support you need throughout your journey.
- The first trimester is an exciting time when organ development occurs. The heart is the first organ that develops, followed by other body parts such as the eyes, nose, ears, limbs and the digestive system.



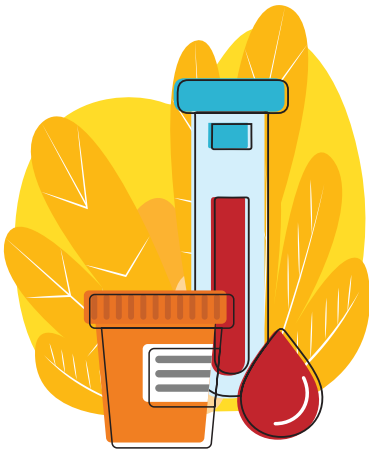
### Diet And Exercise

- Eat a healthy diet and stay active.
- In early pregnancy, tone down your exercise regime to moderate intensity. Some light exercises which may be helpful in the first trimester include swimming, cycling, yoga, and low impact aerobics.
- Take your folic acid supplement.
- Avoid raw and undercooked food.
- Take small, frequent meals and avoid tight-fitting clothing.
- Remember to drink adequate amounts of water and get sufficient sleep.



### Screening Tests

- Routine blood and urine tests will be done to screen for infections (such as HIV, Hepatitis B, Rubella and Syphilis), or conditions that may affect your pregnancy (such as thalassemia).
- In the first trimester, you will be introduced to the subject of screening for Down syndrome and other conditions by your doctor.
- Down syndrome is the most common cause of learning disability and mental impairment in children caused by an extra chromosome in the child's DNA/gene. The risk of having a child with Down syndrome increases with maternal age. For women aged 35 years old and above, the risk of having a baby with Down syndrome increases exponentially.



- Screening tests for Down syndrome include the nuchal translucency test, which measures the thickness of skin at the back of your baby's neck. This screening tool's accuracy is about 80% and increases to 90% when combined with specific blood tests. However, this test is optional.
- Definitive tests such as the chorionic villus sampling (CVS) and the amniocentesis are also available. These tests involve obtaining cell samples from the baby to identify if the baby is affected with Down Syndrome. It is only performed for high-risk cases detected during the screening test. Your doctor will be able to explain this in further detail.

The second trimester will span from pregnancy weeks 13 to 28. Most women find this period the smoothest sailing trimester of all. Pregnancy symptoms will likely improve as the pregnancy progresses and you may feel more energetic and get ready to deal with what's to come. Some pregnant women may continue to experience nausea and lethargy up to the fifth month. Please do not feel discouraged. If you are feeling down, seek advice from your doctor or talk to your partner.

## Trimester 2 (Week 13 to 28)

- At weeks 19 to 22, you may start to feel the first signs of your baby moving.
- There is no hard and fast rule about how often a baby should kick per day as this tends to vary among pregnant mothers. By the end of the second trimester, at about pregnancy week 27, your baby's kicks would have become more constant and it would be easier for you to monitor them. If there are few or no fetal movements felt during this time, please seek medical advice immediately.

### Screening Tests

- At around week 20, a detailed scan will be done to screen for any abnormalities in baby. You may be able to know baby's gender during this scan!
- You will have an Oral Glucose Tolerance Test (OGTT) to screen for Gestational Diabetes Mellitus between weeks 24 and 28.

### Diet And Lifestyle

- You may experience constipation in your pregnancy. Drink plenty of fluids and consume high-fibre foods (e.g. wholegrain, fruits, vegetables).
- Your doctor will also recommend commencing a daily multivitamin supplement starting from the second trimester.
- Pregnancy raises your body temperature and you may find yourself feeling warm all the time! To keep cool, wear breathable clothing and underwear made from linen or cotton.
- You may also experience heartburn. Take small, frequent meals throughout the day and avoid eating close to bedtime or lying flat right after a meal. Avoid oily and spicy foods as these may aggravate the symptoms.
- Stretch marks may occur as your baby bump grows. To prevent them, you may start massaging your belly gently with pregnancy-safe belly oil. Stretch marks are permanent; there is no miracle cream or drug to make it go away permanently once you have them.
- It is safe to have sex during pregnancy and it will not harm your baby. However, if you do have some conditions in pregnancy such as a low-lying placenta, burst water bag or preterm labour, it is not recommended to do so.
- Vaginal discharge may change and increase during pregnancy. Wear comfortable and breathable underwear. If you notice foul-smelling discharge or itchiness during your pregnancy, please inform your doctor.

- Pregnancy stretches out the pelvic floor muscles. Simple pelvic floor exercises several minutes a day during and after pregnancy can help reduce the possibility of pelvic floor disorder in future.
- Aches and pains (especially in the pelvic area) may affect you as your ligaments stretch to prepare for a natural delivery. A dull backache can occur throughout pregnancy and get worse in the third trimester as your growing baby's weight puts additional strain on your back. A warm towel or a gentle massage may be helpful. Paracetamol is safe to take if you need.

The third trimester is the final part of this journey. There are plenty of changes to look forward to and you will need to be ready for the 'big day'.

### Trimester 3 (Week 29 to 40)



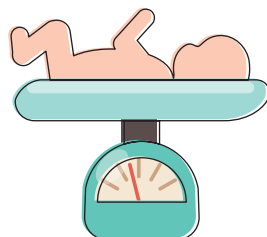
- From week 30, your body may experience changes like leg swelling and lower abdominal cramps, breathlessness, frequent urination, hand numbness, haemorrhoids and varicose veins.
- Try to relax and enjoy the last few weeks of your pregnancy with activities such as swimming or listening to soothing music.

#### Screening Tests

- A growth scan will be done to determine the position of your placenta and baby, as well as to measure the amniotic fluid volume. This is important in preparing for delivery.
- Between weeks 35 and 37 you may receive a vaginal swab to screen for Group B Streptococcus (GBS). If you are positive for the bacteria, you will receive antibiotics during labour. Rest assured it is safe to have a vaginal delivery in this case.

#### Labour

- You may experience harmless contractions which are called Braxton-Hicks contractions. It is important to distinguish between these and the signs of early labour. Harmless contractions usually come at irregular timings and feel like painless tightenings. These do not cause the ripening of the cervix or early delivery of the baby. In contrast, actual labour contractions can be of a stronger intensity and more painful.
- Other symptoms to expect before labour occurs would be your water bag breaking or having a pink vaginal discharge.
- About one in 10 women go into early labour before the estimated date of delivery (EDD). If you are found to be in early labour before week 37, your doctor will try and help prolong the pregnancy and stop labour by giving you certain medications. Some of such interventions will require a short hospital stay as you and your baby will need to be monitored. Also, steroid injections may be administered to accelerate the maturity of your baby's lungs to prepare for the possibility of delivery.



- Some women, especially those having their first child, tend to deliver later. However, delivery before 41 weeks is acceptable. If you do go past your due date, your doctor will monitor you and your baby to ensure both are in good health and discuss further intervention options with you.

“ My Lord! Grant me - by your grace - righteous offspring. You are certainly the Hearer of (all) prayers. ”

Surah Ali-Imran 3:38

Reference: KK Women's and Children's Hospital, Office of the Mufti (MUIS)

## Panduan kehamilan yang sihat dan bahagia

Perasaan terhadap setiap kehamilan unik dan berbeza. Dua belas minggu yang pertama dikenali sebagai trimester pertama. Anda dinasihati supaya mengambil makanan yang seimbang dan berkhasiat. Anda akan mendapati pengambilan makanan akan menjadi lebih sedikit tetapi anda akan lebih kerap lapar.

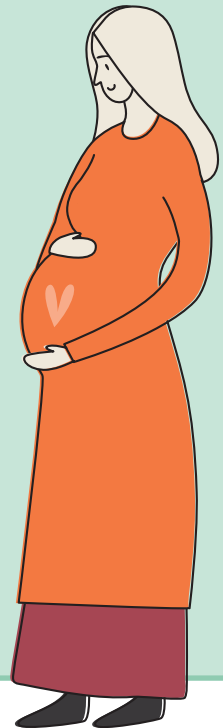
Jangan lupa ambil 5mg Asid Folik (Folic Asid) pada saat anda mengenal pasti yang anda hamil.

Anda disyorkan agar berjumpa dengan pakar bidan bagi pemantauan selanjutnya dan untuk membuat perancangan seterusnya.

Semasa melakukan imbasan (scan), jantung bayi sudah boleh dilihat pada minggu yang keenam. Anda akan dikehendaki membuat pemeriksaan darah bagi jangkitan HIV, Hepatitis B, Syphilis dan Rubella. Perbincangan tentang pemeriksaan Sindrom Down akan dilakukan.

Kadangkala anda mengalami alahan muntah-muntah yang boleh berterusan hingga ke minggu yang ke-20. Kebanyakan wanita akan beransur pulih daripada muntah-muntah.


Sepanjang kehamilan ini, kadangkala anda kelihatan semakin sembab akibat pengekal air di bahagian kaki, tangan dan muka. Kaki anda boleh bertambah bengkak dan menyebabkan sukar berjalan.



Minggu ke-13 hingga ke-28 dianggap trimester kedua. Imbasan lebih teliti untuk melihat struktur bayi akan dilakukan.

Trimester ketiga adalah dari minggu ke-29 sehingga minggu ke-40. Perkembangan bayi akan dipantau melalui imbasan(scan).

Dengan itu, anda hendaklah menjaga kehamilan ini dari trimester pertama sehingga waktu hendak melahirkan dengan tenang dan baik. Banyakkan berdoa. Semoga dipermudahkan...  
Insya Allah



“**Wahai Tuhanku! Kurniakanlah aku dariMu,  
zuriat keturunan yang baik; sesungguhnya  
Engkaulah yang Maha Mendengar doa.**”

**Surah Ali-Imran 3:38**



TOP



# VI. Healthy nutrition in pregnancy

## Nutrition before pregnancy

### What is nutrition, and why is it important before pregnancy?

Good nutrition is about consuming a healthy balanced diet to ensure the body receives adequate nutrients for health and development. Poor nutrition may impact on pregnancy and birth outcomes as well as the future growth and development of the child.

### What are the key nutrients before pregnancy?

**Folic acid** should be taken 3 months before trying to conceive and during the first 12 weeks of pregnancy. Folate can also be found in food sources such as dark green leafy vegetables, fortified breakfast cereals, broccoli and beans.

**Iron** is required to support baby's growth and development and increase a mother's red blood cells to help to carry oxygen around the body and to the baby. To prevent iron deficiency anaemia during pregnancy, iron-containing foods such as red meat, fortified breakfast cereals, dried fruits, dark green leafy vegetables and beans should be consumed on a regular basis to meet the iron requirements.

During pregnancy, woman need more of important nutrients, including **calcium, omega 3 fatty acids, vitamin A, C and D**.

### Why is it important to stop drinking alcohol and caffeine before and during pregnancy?

Consuming alcohol can increase the risk of fetal alcohol syndrome (FAS). Alcohol passes through the placenta and leads to irreversible physical, behavioral and intellectual damage to the baby, resulting in lifelong learning disability, attention deficits, impulsive behaviour and growth deficiency.

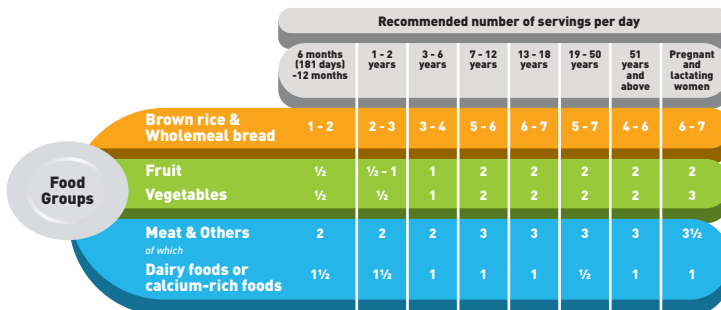
High intake of caffeine increases a mother's heart rate which may increase stress to the baby and lead to miscarriages and low birth weight. Caffeine and tea must be taken in moderation, not more than 2 cups of coffee or tea per day.

### Should I be eating for two?

'Eating for two' is a common misconception and it can cause excessive weight gain during pregnancy. A pregnant woman only requires additional 340 kcal daily from the second trimester onwards, and 450 kcal daily during the third trimester to meet the increased nutrient demands.

### What is a healthy balanced diet during pregnancy?

The diagram below shows the daily recommended servings of each food group for pregnant and breastfeeding women for the entire day:



Visual is indicative only. Please refer to table for accurate representation of daily serving sizes.

*My Healthy Plate* is a visual guide to show what a healthy balanced meal should look like and the correct proportions of different food groups to consume within a meal.

- Fill half of the plate with vegetables and a fruit
- Fill a quarter with whole grains (e.g. brown rice, wholemeal bread)
- Fill a quarter with meat or alternatives (e.g. tofu, beans, seafoods)
- Choose low fat or non-dairy (e.g. milk, yoghurt, cheese)
- Use healthier oils in cooking (e.g. olive oil, canola oil)
- Choose water as a first-choice of drink, avoid sugar sweetened beverages as they can easily lead to unhealthy weight gain



**How much weight should I gain during pregnancy?**

Pregnancy weight gain is determined by pre-pregnancy body mass index (BMI). The table below shows the acceptable pregnancy weight gain based on pre-pregnancy BMI status:

Pregnancy weeks	Acceptable weight gain based on pre-pregnancy BMI (kg/m <sup>2</sup> )			
	Underweight (less than 18.5)	Normal weight (18.5 to 24.9)	Overweight (25.0 to 29.9)	Obese (above 30.0)
<b>1st trimester (up to 12 weeks)</b>	0.5 – 2.0 kg	0.5 – 2.0 kg	0.5 – 2.0 kg	0.5 – 2.0 kg
<b>2nd (13-28 weeks) &amp; 3rd (29-40 weeks) trimesters</b>	0.44 – 0.58 kg/ week	0.39 - 0.50 kg/ week	0.23 – 0.33 kg/ week	0.16 – 0.25 kg/ week
<b>Recommended total weight gain</b>	12.7 – 18.1 kg	11.3 – 15.9 kg	6.8 – 11.3 kg	5.0 – 9.1 kg

**Why is it important to achieve healthy weight before pregnancy?**

Excessive weight gain during pregnancy has been linked to greater risk of complications and adverse health outcomes for both mother and child. Common pregnancy complications include gestational diabetes mellitus, pre-eclampsia and preterm birth. Maternal obesity also increases the risk of macrosomia (delivering big-sized babies), birth injury, caesarean birth and birth defects.

### How can I eat healthily but within a budget?

Eating healthily does not mean eating expensive foods, but it needs to be intentional and may require planning a shopping list in advance. Convenience foods sometimes cost more than fresh ingredients and may not be as nutritious. Although some frozen foods like frozen vegetables, poultry and meat may be cheaper than fresh foods, they are equally adequate. Similarly, some canned foods, for example tuna, sardines, beans, vegetables and fruits are also good alternatives. If shopping at supermarkets, consider buying house brands as they usually cost less than the same products under special branding. Buying in bulk may provide some savings. However, if buying fresh ingredients in bulk, make sure the amount purchased can be used before it goes bad. That can be done by freezing the fresh produce on the same day to seal in the freshness. It is also not necessary to have meat or fish on a daily basis, other cheaper protein-rich alternatives include eggs and beans.

### What are the foods to avoid during pregnancy?

Unpasteurised dairy products such as cow's milk, goat's milk, blue and soft cheeses may contain listeria that can cause an infection which leads to miscarriage and stillbirth. Raw and undercooked meat, liver and liver products or cured meats may have parasites in them which can cause toxoplasmosis and lead to miscarriage. Raw or partially-cooked eggs and foods with raw egg in them (e.g. mayonnaise or mousse) may contain salmonella, which can increase the risk of food poisoning.

Large deep-sea fishes such as shark, swordfish, king mackerel and big eye tuna should be avoided as they contain high levels of mercury, which can affect the development of baby's neurological system. Other fishes such as sea bass, snapper, Spanish mackerel and canned albacore tuna are allowed to be consumed at 1 serving per week with no other fish consumption within the same week; oily fishes such as salmon, trout and mackerel should not exceed 2 servings per week. Unwashed salads or ready-to-eat salads should be avoided during pregnancy as they may carry bacterial contamination from soil.

For more information, refer to <https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/6d6a71c85c7e49808bea7d5ea96e71f9?v=d9683da4>

**Reference:** KK Women's and Children's Hospital, Health Promotion Board

**Source for images:** *My Healthy Plate* is a friendly visual tool on healthy eating habits designed for Singaporeans by the Health Promotion Board (HPB).

## Pemakanan sihat semasa kehamilan

Secara keseluruhan, setiap individu bertanggungjawab ke atas kesihatan sendiri. Wanita yang merancang untuk hamil perlu menitikberatkan hal ini kerana persiapan diri penting untuk menyediakan persekitaran/suasana yang baik untuk bakal janin. Amalkanlah pemakanan yang seimbang lagi bernutrisi sebaik saja merancang untuk hamil dan diteruskan sepanjang kehamilan agar dapat melahirkan generasi yang sihat. Pemakanan yang sihat akan mengurangkan risiko kesihatan semasa hamil pada ibu dan bayi, dan seterusnya melahirkan bayi yang sihat. Pastinya setiap pasangan mengharapkan bayi yang bakal lahir bukan sahaja cukup sifat, tetapi juga sihat fizikal dan mental. Bagi memastikan kesihatan bayi terjamin, penjagaan dan pemakanan yang sempurna perlu dimulakan sebelum janin itu terbentuk.



## VII. Antenatal colostrum harvesting

Antenatal colostrum harvesting is the collection of early breastmilk (called colostrum) during pregnancy, for use after the baby is born. The body goes through 2 stages of milk production, with the first stage beginning from about week 16 of pregnancy when colostrum starts to be produced.

### **Some of the more important nutrients colostrum contains are:**

Immunoglobulin A (an antibody that helps to build baby's immunity).

Lactoferrin (a protein that helps prevent infection).

Leukocytes (white blood cells).

Epidermal growth factor (a protein that stimulates cell growth).

Vitamin A (which plays a vital role in your baby's vision, skin and immune system).

Magnesium (which supports your baby's heart and bones).

Copper and zinc (which support immunity).

### **Other benefits of colostrum:**

1. Helps to establish a healthy gut for your baby by coating the intestines. This helps keep harmful bacteria from being absorbed.
2. Has a laxative effect that helps your baby clear meconium (your baby's first poop) and lessens the chance of jaundice and low blood sugar in full-term babies.

### **Why mothers should consider performing antenatal colostrum harvesting:**

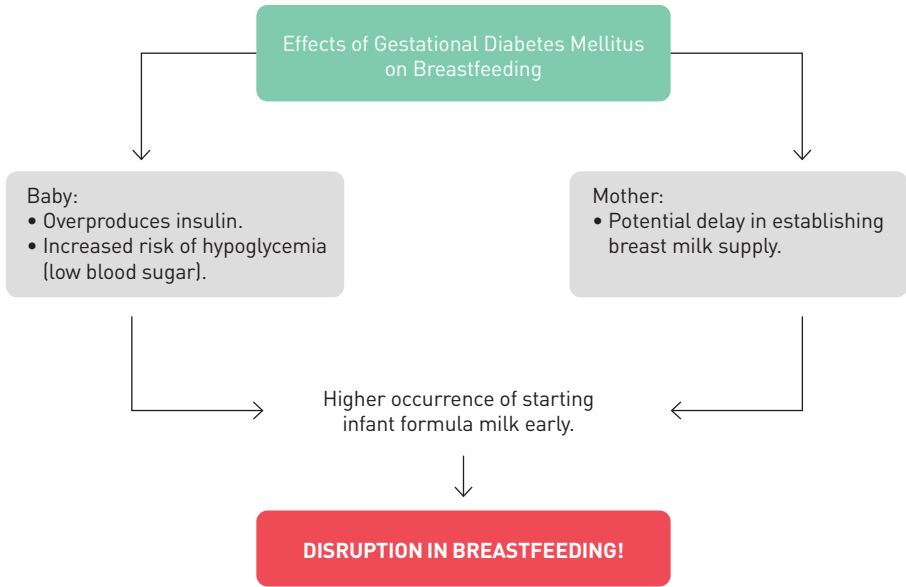
1. To provide the collected colostrum for your baby, if your baby has to be separated from you and nursed in the special care unit or intensive care unit or if your baby faces difficulties during breastfeeding.
2. Allows mothers to use their own milk if baby has low blood sugar.
3. Starting colostrum collection during pregnancy will help parents gain confidence in certain breastfeeding-related techniques such as the hand expression technique.

### **Antenatal colostrum harvesting is safe for most mothers.**

**However, there are groups of mothers and babies who will benefit most from antenatal colostrum harvesting:**

1. Mothers with Gestational Diabetes Mellitus.
2. Mothers anticipating challenges with breastfeeding as the colostrum can be given to baby while mother and baby are learning to overcome the challenges such as latching with an inverted or short nipple.
3. Mothers anticipating separation from baby after birth

## Why is antenatal colostrum harvesting beneficial for mothers with Gestational Diabetes Mellitus (GDM)?



Hence, to overcome this risk, mothers can start colostrum collection during pregnancy and provide her colostrum should her baby develop low blood sugar or if there is a delay in the coming in of her mature milk.

### Precaution and Contraindications:

1. All parents thinking about starting antenatal colostrum harvesting should speak to their doctor or lactation consultant to find out more about the procedure, and to determine their suitability of carrying out the procedure.
2. Antenatal colostrum harvesting may be contraindicated for some groups of mothers including those with history of preterm labour or certain other complications in previous pregnancies, mothers who experience certain complications during current pregnancy such as premature rupture of the water bag, or mothers taking medicine which may transfer into breastmilk, making it harmful for baby.

Antenatal colostrum harvesting should only be performed after week 37 of pregnancy and after consulting with your doctor or lactation consultant. It is also very important that you feel emotionally and mentally ready to start colostrum harvesting. Breastfeeding is most successful when you embark on the journey with a calm, motivated mind.

Antenatal colostrum harvesting is a safe practice for most mothers and has many benefits for both mother and baby. It is important to remember that colostrum harvesting during pregnancy does not replace starting breastfeeding early. Mothers should continue to prioritise latching their baby on early and breastfeeding regularly, even if they have collected colostrum.

Do speak to your doctor or lactation consultant if you are keen to start colostrum harvesting during pregnancy.

## Pengumpulan Kolostrum Sebelum Bersalin

Pengumpulan kolostrum antenatal ialah penarikan susu ibu yang dipanggil kolostrum semasa kehamilan, untuk digunakan selepas bayi dilahirkan. Kolostrum kaya dengan pelbagai jenis nutrien dan mempunyai kesan yang positif pada usus bayi. Kolostrum yang dikumpul boleh digunakan jika bayi terpaksa dipisahkan daripada ibu, contohnya di unit rawatan rapi, atau jika bayi mengalami kesukaran menyusu. Jika anda ingin tahu lebih lanjut samaada pengumpulan kolostrum sesuai untuk diri anda, dapatkan nasihat daripada doktor atau konsultan penyusuan.

### Equipment used for antenatal colostrum harvesting



Reference: KK Women's and Children's Hospital

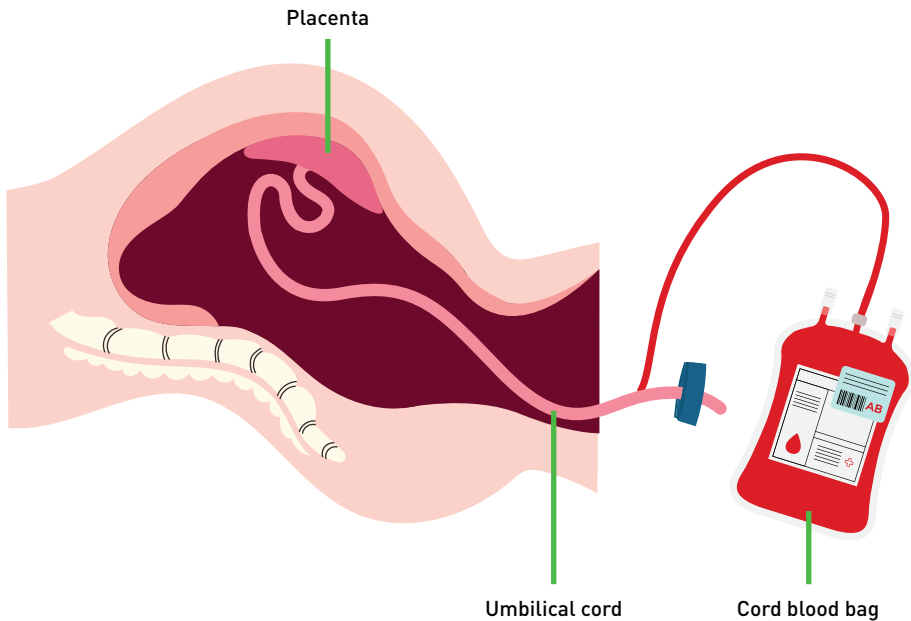


## VIII. Cord blood donation and banking

### A Gift of Life for the Community

When welcoming the birth of a baby, most parents focus on physical and emotional preparations. There are many important decisions to be made and hence, one important decision is often overlooked — whether to donate or bank your baby's cord blood.

### What is Cord Blood and How is it Collected?



Cord blood is the blood that remains in the umbilical cord and placenta after a baby is born and the cord is cut. It is rich in stem cells, which can help treat a range of diseases, including leukaemia (blood cancers), anaemia (low blood counts), and some genetic disorders.

Collecting cord blood is safe, painless, and does not harm the mother or the baby. The placenta can still be brought home and buried after the cord blood is collected. If cord blood is not collected, it will simply be disposed of after delivery of the placenta. Cord blood is therefore an extremely underutilised but valuable resource for medical treatments.

In Singapore, parents can:

- Donate cord blood for free to our only public cord blood bank, the Singapore Cord Blood Bank (SCBB).
- Store it privately at a fee for their own family's use. This may be useful if there is a known family history of certain medical conditions.

## Why Should Cord Blood Matter to the Muslim Community?

### 1. An Opportunity for Charity and Saving Lives

In Islam, preserving and saving life is a noble act. Allah SWT says in the Quran:

*“And whoever saves one life – it is as if he had saved mankind entirely.”*  
**(Surah Al-Ma'idah, 5:32)**

Cord blood can be used to treat patients with life-threatening illnesses. Donating it is a beautiful form of sadaqah jariyah (ongoing charity) that may benefit others long after your child's birth.

### 2. Filling the Gap for the Malay Community

There is currently a shortage of Malay/Muslim cord blood donors in Singapore. Since stem cell transplants are more effective when donors share a similar ethnic background, this shortage makes it harder for Malay patients to find a match.

Donating cord blood increases the chances of finding suitable matches within our own community, fulfilling the Islamic principle of mutual help and solidarity (*ta'awun*).

*“Help one another in goodness and piety...”*  
**(Surah Al-Ma'idah, 5:2)**

### 3. Permissible in Islam

The Islamic Religious Council of Singapore (MUIS) affirms that cord blood donation and banking is permissible (halal), as long as it does not harm the mother or baby, and it is used for beneficial medical purposes.

In line with the objectives of Islamic law, particularly the protection of life (*hifz al-nafs*), donating or preserving cord blood aligns with Islamic ethics and values.

#### A Simple Process:

1. Register for donation or banking early in pregnancy, ideally before 35 weeks.
2. At delivery, the cord blood is safely collected, without affecting the baby or the birthing process.
3. It is then donated or stored based on your decision.

All hospitals in Singapore, including public hospitals such as KK Women's and Children's Hospital (KKH) offer support for cord blood programmes.

## A Message to Parents

Dear parents, your child's birth is a moment of blessing — and an opportunity to give hope to others. By donating or banking your baby's cord blood, you are fulfilling the Islamic duty of compassion, care, and forward thinking.

The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said:

*“Whoever relieves a believer’s distress, Allah will relieve his distress on the Day of Resurrection.”*

**(Sahih Muslim, Hadith 2699)**

Let this be one of the first good deeds your family performs together. May Allah SWT bless your efforts and reward you for every life your decision may help.

**Reference:** KK Women’s and Children’s Hospital

For more information or to register for cord blood donation, visit: [Singapore Cord Blood Bank – www.scbb.com.sg](http://www.scbb.com.sg)

## Pendermaan dan Penyimpanan Darah Tali Pusat

Darah tali pusat ialah darah yang tertinggal dalam tali pusat dan plasenta selepas kelahiran bayi dan tali pusat dipotong. Ia kaya dengan sel stem yang boleh merawat pelbagai penyakit, termasuk leukemia (kanser darah), anemia (kadar darah yang rendah), dan beberapa masalah genetik.

Pengumpulan darah tali pusat adalah selamat, tidak menyakitkan dan tidak memudaratkan ibu atau bayi. Plasenta masih boleh dibawa pulang dan ditanam selepas darah tali pusat dikumpul. Jika darah tali pusat tidak dikumpul, ia akan dibuang selepas pengeluaran plasenta.

Di Singapura, ibu bapa boleh:

- Menderma darah tali pusat secara percuma kepada bank darah tali pusat awam iaitu Singapore Cord Blood Bank (SCBB), atau
- Menyimpannya untuk kegunaan keluarga sendiri, melalui bank darah privet. Ini mungkin berguna jika terdapat masalah medikal tertentu dalam keluarga.

Pendermaan darah tali pusat merupakan satu peluang untuk bersedekah dan menyelamatkan nyawa.

Allah SWT berfirman dalam Al-Quran:

*“Dan sesiapa yang menyelamatkan nyawa seseorang, seolah-olah dia telah menyelamatkan nyawa seluruh manusia.”*

**(Surah Al-Ma’idah, 5:32)**

Majlis Ugama Islam Singapura (MUIS) mengesahkan bahawa pendermaan dan penyimpanan darah tali pusat adalah dibenarkan (halal), selagi ia tidak memudaratkan ibu atau bayi, dan digunakan untuk tujuan perubatan yang bermanfaat.

Pendaftaran untuk proses ini boleh dilakukan awal semasa mengandung, sebaik-baiknya sebelum 35 minggu. Pendaftaran boleh dilakukan secara elektronik.



# IX. Preparing for labour and delivery

## Signs of Labour

There are various signs and symptoms of labour, and these may vary among women. It is important to stay calm and head to the hospital safely when you experience any of these signs:



### Contractions

The pain will be regular and progressively more painful. You may feel the urge to "bear down". An example of when to head to the hospital is when the interval between contractions is 5 to 10 minutes and each lasts an average of 10 to 15 seconds.



### Bloody Vaginal Discharge

In the form of a bloody or thickened, pinkish mucus that will stain your underwear or pad.



### Water Bag Breaks

It could be a sudden gush or a steady trickle of warm fluid from the vagina. About 80% of women with ruptured membranes will progress into established labour pains within 24 hours of this event. 90% of women will progress into established labour within 48 hours.

## Stages of Labour

There are **3 stages** of labour:



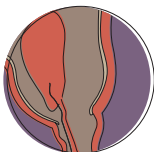
### First Stage

The cervix ripens and opens up till 10cm before the delivery of the baby. Initially, it is slow and symptoms may be mild (such as back ache, some cramps, passage of mucus), but this gradually becomes more intense in the active phase.



### Second Stage

Delivery of the baby. This is the stage where you are required to work hard to push your baby out. Your doctor or midwife will be there to guide you along.

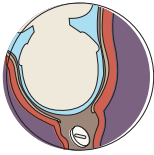


### Third Stage

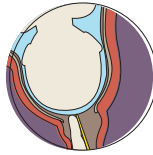
Delivery of the placenta. Once the baby is delivered, your uterus will continue to squeeze out the placenta so that it is separated from the wall of the uterus.

## Induction of Labour

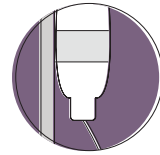
- There are many reasons why labour is induced. Some reasons include complications such as pre-eclampsia, gestational diabetes with large babies, and when your pregnancy goes past the due date. There will be a need to expedite labour and delivery for any of the above reasons to save mother, baby, or both.
- Induction can be carried out in a variety of ways:



Applying medication directly to your cervix to make it dilate.



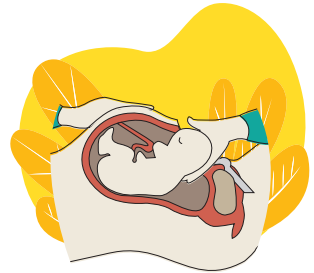
Bursting your water bag to precipitate labour.



Connecting you to a drip to administer an infusion that will augment your uterine contractions.

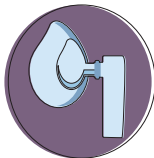
## Caesarean Section

- A caesarean section is performed to deliver the baby through the abdomen when it is not possible or not advisable to deliver the baby through the vagina. A caesarean section can be planned in advance (elective), or it can be an emergency. It is performed for the safety of the mother or the baby, or both.
- If a caesarean section is required, your doctor will advise you on the indication, risks and complications involved. You may want to discuss your concerns with your doctor.



## Pain Relief

These are the common pain relief options offered in labour:



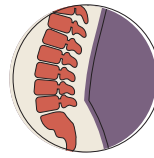
### Entonox gas

Also known as "laughing gas".



### IM Pethidine

An injection given on the thigh that can relieve pain for a few hours. This is usually given in the early stage of labour.



### Epidural Anaesthesia

This involves an injection into the back which will numb the lower half of the body and significantly relieve the pain.

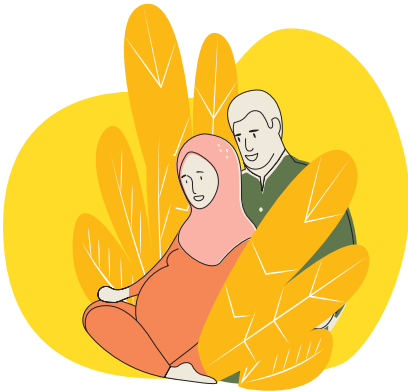
## Preparing Your Mind

- During labour, breathing deeply releases tension, keeps your mind focused and helps to manage pain. Practising breathing techniques in preparation for the birth will help relaxing become second nature during the actual labour.
- Communicate your plans and expectations to your husband. As you have engaged in this entire journey together, allow your husband to be there to support you during the birth as well.



## After a Successful Delivery

- Baby's cord blood will be collected for routine tests (blood group, thyroid tests etc). An injection will be administered to help reduce the risk of post-delivery bleeding. Some patients may opt to claim back the placenta for personal or religious reasons.



- In a majority of normal vaginal deliveries, vaginal tears may arise. This tends to happen more in first-time vaginal deliveries because the skin in that area is less stretchable. Sometimes, an episiotomy (cut that is made sideways from the vagina) will be performed just before the baby emerges from the vagina. This is done in order to create more space at the outlet for the emerging baby, to prevent extended perineal tears or to expedite delivery for maternal or fetal reasons.
- Most of the time, the pain from the episiotomy lasts approximately 5 to 7 days, and healing will be completed by week 6 after delivery, with the stitches having dissolved by then. Passing of urine and stools will not affect the repaired tear although you should try to keep the area as clean and as dry as possible. Ice packs and medications are given to reduce swelling to those who require them. Stool softeners and pain relief can also be requested.

**Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said,**  
“Those who often ask for forgiveness (from Allah), Allah will give to them a way out of every distress and a relief from every anxiety and will provide sustenance for them from whence he expects not.”

**Hadith reported by Abu Daud**

## Persediaan untuk bersalin

Sekarang tiba masanya untuk anda mempersiapkan diri untuk waktu melahirkan. Kelahiran seorang bayi bakal menjadi penebus sebarang derita yang telah berbulan-bulan lamanya ditanggung. Sebelum saat ini tiba, adalah lebih baik jika anda berdua berbincang bersama pakar sakit puan tentang:

### Tanda-tanda hendak melahirkan



Kontraksi dan sakit perut yang berperingkat



Darah mukus yang menandakan pintu rahim anda dalam proses pembukaan

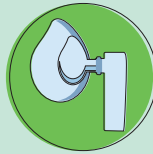


Pemecahan air ketuban

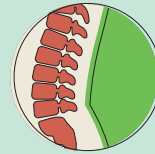
### Ubat pelali sewaktu melahirkan yang boleh digunakan



Teknik pernafasan bersalin



Gas entonoks

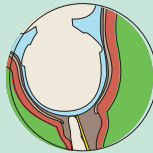


Suntikan Pethidine/  
Morphine atau Epidural

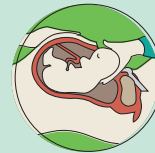
### Cara melahirkan



Secara normal



Dengan bantuan  
forceps/kiwi



Secara pembedahan  
(Caesarean)

Kebanyakan wanita akan melahirkan secara normal. Namun, kadangkala seandainya ada tanda-tanda yang memudaratkan kepada ibu atau bayi, melahirkan secara bantuan forseps/kiwi atau pembedahan perlu dilakukan untuk menyelamatkan ibu dan bayi.

Proses dan pengalaman melahirkan berbeza antara seorang wanita dengan yang lain. Sebaik-baiknya, anda suami isteri bekerjasama membuat persiapan dari segi mental, fizikal dan kewangan supaya proses ini tidak membebankan. Sokongan daripada keluarga dan sahabat handai juga boleh memberi lebih semangat kepada kedua-dua suami isteri.

Perbanyakkanlah beristirahat sementara menunggu waktu melahirkan, sentiasa berfikiran positif, bersabar dan banyak berdoa.



*Rasulullah (saw) bersabda, “Barangsiapa yang memperbanyakkan istighfar, maka Allah swt akan menjadikan untuknya kelapangan dari setiap kegundahan, jalan keluar dari setiap kesempitan, dan memberinya rezeki dari jalan yang tidak diduga.”*

**[Hadith Riwayat Abu Daud]**



TOP



# X. Delayed cord clamping

## What is Delayed Cord Clamping?

Delayed cord clamping (DCC) refers to clamping the umbilical cord at least one minute after the delivery of the baby. This is in comparison to immediate cord clamping where the baby's cord is clamped within 30 seconds post-delivery.

## Why should we perform DCC?

DCC allows additional blood to transfuse from the placenta to the baby. A 1-minute delay in cord clamping leads to an additional 80mL of blood, providing the baby with 30% more blood volume and up to 60% more red blood cells, which will also improve iron supply.

There is no known adverse effect for the mother. DCC does not increase the risk of postpartum bleeding or need for emergency caesarean section, nor affect the third stage of labour for expectant mothers.

## Who is eligible for DCC?

Both babies born by vaginal delivery or caesarean section can undergo DCC.

Babies who are not suitable for DCC are those who need immediate resuscitation due to low heart rate, poor oxygen levels, fetal anomalies that requires resuscitation, abnormal placenta, monochorionic twins, hydrops fetalis, or any other reason determined by the specialist. Mothers who have serious conditions such as eclampsia, severe bleeding in third trimester of pregnancy or known maternal infections such as HIV are also not suitable.

## How is DCC done?

The procedure for DCC involves placing the baby on the mother's abdomen or between the legs at the level of the introitus (vaginal area) at the time of delivery, for up to 2 minutes, after which the cord is clamped.

## What happens during DCC?

During DCC, the baby's breathing effort, tone, and colour is observed. The baby will also be kept warm and stimulated, or suctioned if there are oral secretions. The timing of the cord clamping will also be documented.

If the baby does not appear well at any point in time, if there is any contraindication to DCC, or if the doctor/midwife considers that it is in the best interest of the infant to cut the cord, the cord must be clamped and cut immediately. The reason for stopping delayed cord clamping will also be documented.

## Can the baby be lifted above the surgical screen during DCC in a caesarean delivery?

The baby should be positioned within 10cm above to 10cm below the placenta due to the effect of gravity on the speed of transfusion.

This means that babies born after a caesarean section should not be held over the screen (for parents to see) because there may be reverse blood flow from the infant to the mother, resulting in a decrease in infant blood volume.

## Are there any risks for DCC?

After DCC, all term babies will undergo routine newborn care. A potential disadvantage of DCC is that it has been associated with a small increased risk of jaundice or asymptomatic polycythemia (high red blood cells).

## What happens after DCC?

After clamping, the baby is either left skin-to-skin with the mother or transferred to the Resuscitaire (infant bed on which baby is placed when needing additional medical support) to continue newborn care.

Babies will be monitored closely for high or low temperature and be put on the warmer if needed.

Do speak to your obstetrician or doctor for more information on delayed cord clamping.

### Disposal of the placenta

The disposal of the placenta via hospitals is permissible (halal), as the burial of the placenta is highly recommended (Sunnah) but not compulsory. MUIS provides guidelines on handling the placenta to ensure it is treated with dignity, respecting Islamic values:

- **Hospital Disposal:** It is acceptable to leave the placenta at the hospital if it is difficult for the family to arrange for its burial.
- **Burial Recommendation (Sunnah):** While not mandatory, it is recommended to take the placenta home to bury it in a clean, respectable place. The placenta is considered a part of the body that should be treated with dignity.
- **Alternative Support:** If families wish to bury the placenta but face constraints in identifying a suitable site, they may engage Muslim casket companies in Singapore that provide specialized placenta burial services.
- **Cord Blood Donation:** MUIS permits cord blood donation and storage, stating that the placenta may be buried after the blood has been drained for such medical purposes. (See Pg 48: Cord blood donation and banking)

## Pengapitan Tali Pusat Lewat

Pengapitan Tali Pusat Lewat (PTPL) ialah prosedur di mana tali pusat bayi dikapit sekurang-kurangnya satu minit selepas kelahiran, berbanding pengapitan segera yang dilakukan dalam masa 30 saat selepas kelahiran.

### Faedah:

- Membolehkan pemindahan darah tambahan dari plasenta kepada bayi
- Memberikan 30% lebih isipadu darah dan sehingga 60% lebih sel darah merah
- Meningkatkan bekalan zat besi kepada bayi
- Tiada kesan sampingan kepada ibu

### Kelayakan:

- Sesuai untuk kelahiran normal dan pembedahan cesarean
- Tidak sesuai untuk bayi yang memerlukan bantuan kecemasan atau mengalami masalah kesihatan tertentu
- Tidak sesuai untuk ibu yang mengalami eklampsia, pendarahan teruk atau jangkitan HIV

Sila berbincang dengan pakar obstetrik atau doktor anda untuk maklumat lanjut tentang prosedur ini.

### Pengendalian Uri bayi (Plasenta)

Pengebumian uri adalah sangat digalakkan (Sunnah) tetapi tidak wajib. MUIS menyediakan garis panduan mengenai pengendalian uri untuk memastikan ia dilakukan dengan cara yang menghormati nilai-nilai Islam. Hal ini termasuk pengendalian uri oleh hospital, pengebumian uri dengan cara sendiri, atau menggunakan Perkhidmatan Pengebumian Islam di Singapura yang menyediakan perkhidmatan pengebumian uri.



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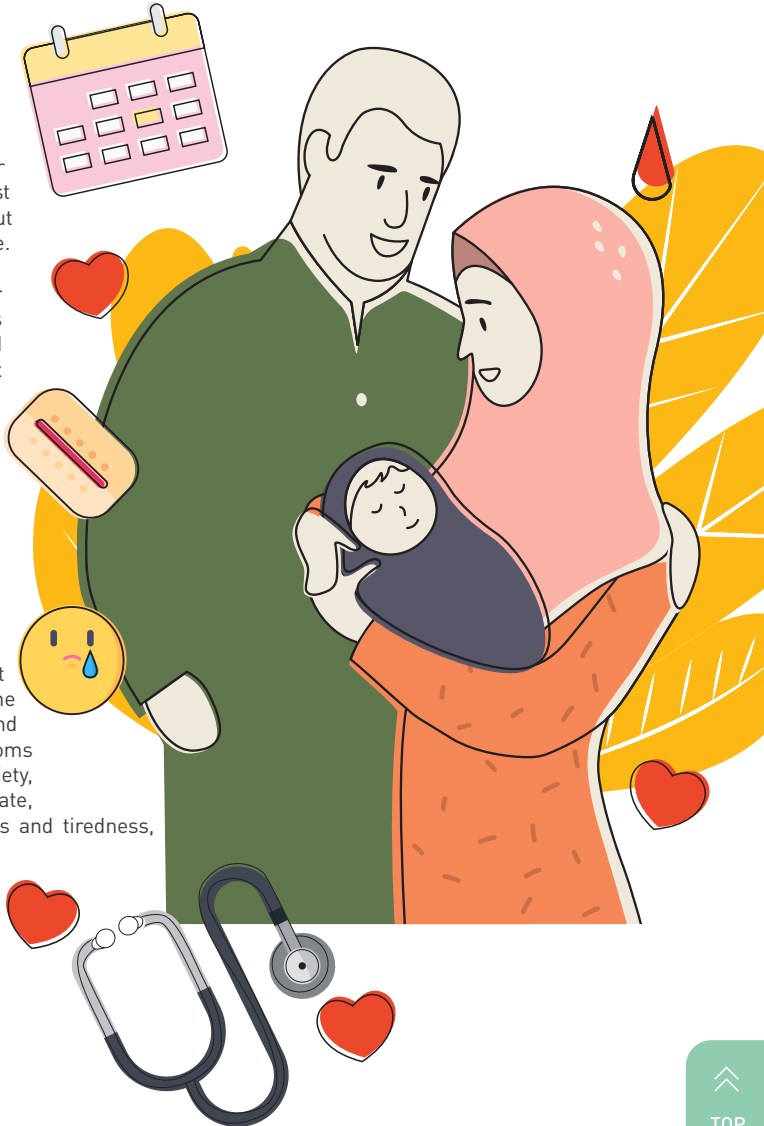


# XI. After your delivery

## Physical Well-Being and Mood

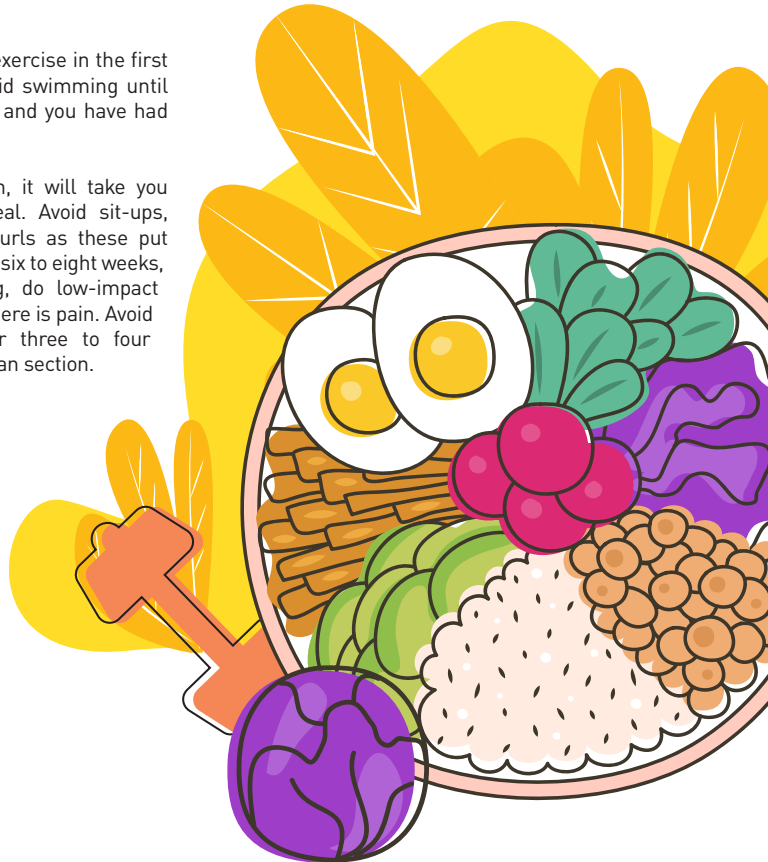
- It may take approximately six weeks for most of your pregnancy-related changes to return to pre-pregnancy state. The water retention in your ankles, wrists and the rest of the body will take about four to six weeks to resolve.
- Vaginal bleeding after delivery usually becomes progressively lighter and stops within four to six weeks from delivery.
- Pain from the wound site will last for about 1 to 2 weeks for the episiotomy site, and 4 to 6 weeks for the caesarean wound site (on average).
- Postnatal blues are very common and occurs in two-thirds of women. It normally occurs during the first week after delivery and does not last long. Symptoms include irritability, anxiety, inability to concentrate, sudden feeling of sadness and tiredness, but being unable to sleep.

Refer to our next section, "Mental Wellness During and After Pregnancy".



## Getting Back into Shape

- Eat a variety of healthy food. This includes meat, fish, nuts, cereals, beans, vegetables, cheese and milk. This will help you regain your health.
- If you are breastfeeding, ensure adequate fluid intake. Consult your doctor before taking any supplement or medication (Western or traditional). Refer to our chapter on 'Breastfeeding' for more information.
- Exercise! Start gradually with low- to moderate-intensity exercises.
- After a vaginal birth, you can start doing gentle pelvic floor exercises and abdominal exercises the first day or two after birth. Start with a gentle walk then gradually increase the time and pace of your walks. Build up to a 30-minute walk every day if you can.
- Do not do any strenuous exercise in the first 12 weeks after birth. Avoid swimming until the bleeding has stopped and you have had your postnatal check.
- After a caesarean section, it will take you at least six weeks to heal. Avoid sit-ups, crunches or abdominal curls as these put pressure on the scar. After six to eight weeks, it is OK to start walking, do low-impact aerobics or cycle. Stop if there is pain. Avoid high-impact exercises for three to four months after your caesarean section.



## Post-Delivery Checkup

- Six weeks after your delivery, you will have a postnatal follow-up. This may either be in the hospital or polyclinic. Your doctor will check on your physical and mental well-being and discuss with you on family planning and resumption of sexual intercourse.
- Your doctor will also be checking your wound, running some simple blood tests to monitor the blood sugar levels of those with gestational diabetes, and monitoring your blood pressure to make sure that those levels have also returned to baseline.
- Feel free to let your doctor know how you are coping with your moods, breastfeeding, and general health.
- Do not be afraid to seek help if you need it. You are never alone!

“ A baby is something that you carry inside you for nine months, in your arms for three years and in your heart till the day you die. ”

**Dr Mary Ann Mason, author and former UC Berkeley graduate dean**

**Reference:** KK Women's and Children's Hospital

### Panduan selepas bersalin

Selepas melahirkan, hidup anda akan berubah sebab tumpuan utama akan diberikan kepada si bayi. Inilah naturi semula jadi seorang ibu dan ayah.

Apabila anda baru melahirkan, anda digalakkan menyusukan anak anda. Proses ini boleh mengambil masa dan anda mesti bersabar kerana bagi segolongan wanita, susu badan mengambil masa untuk bertambah demi memenuhi keperluan bayi.

Namun, janganlah berputus asa kerana susu badan ini adalah yang terbaik untuk bayi anda. Susu badan amat berkhasiat untuk bayi. Apabila anda memberi susu badan, bayi anda akan berada dekat pada tubuh anda dan ini akan mengeratkan hubungan dan keserasian antara ibu dengan anak.

Kadangkala emosi anda boleh bercelaru apabila anda kurang rehat, tidur atau pun anda sememangnya tidak dapat mengawal emosi anda. Para suami, sila ambil perhatian.

Seandainya suami mendapati isteri murung, tidak banyak bercakap, atau tidak boleh tidur, sila dapatkan nasihat doktor. Ini boleh memudaratkan kerana boleh menjadi kemurungan yang berlarutan seandainya diabaikan. Oleh itu isteri harus luahkan kepada suami, apa yang tersimpan di hati dan berkongsilah sebarang masalah atau kerunsingan yang melanda. Dengan terus membuka ruang berkomunikasi yang luas, anda berdua dapat bekerjasama untuk mengatasi apa sahaja masalah dengan lebih yakin.

Bentuk tubuh anda yang telah berubah akibat kehamilan selalunya akan kembali ke asalnya setelah 6 minggu.

Anda mesti memantau darah nifas, dan pastikan anda lawas sewaktu buang air kecil dan air besar. Masa yang diambil untuk pulih sepenuhnya bergantung pada kekuatan tubuh anda, pemakanan yang berkhasiat dan cara kelahiran.



“Seorang bayi adalah sesuatu yang dibawa di dalam dirimu selama sembilan bulan, Didapak dalam tanganmu selama tiga tahun, dan disimpan di dalam hatimu sampai akhir hayatmu.”

**Dr Mary Ann Mason, penulis and bekas dekan siswazah UC Berkeley**

# Section 3.

## *Achieving Mental Wellness Together*

Mencapai Kesejahteraan Mental Bersama





## I Mother's emotional & mental well-being

The pregnancy journey can occasionally be stressful to the body, and to the mind. Pregnancy hormones can affect your emotions and cause a variety of emotions which you have never or rarely felt before. It is crucial to recognise and acknowledge such emotions. These emotions are usually temporary. They may improve as the pregnancy progresses. However, they may reappear or worsen after delivery as you cope with the arrival of the new baby.

If you are encountering emotions that you are unable to explain, such as feeling lost, easily irritated, getting angry or crying for no apparent reason, or are unable to feel rested and cannot sleep well at night, take ONE step back, and breathe. You can do the following:

- Take care of yourself.
  - Allow yourself some time to rest and do things that you enjoy.
  - Try to have some alone time even if it is just to go for a walk or read a magazine.
  - Eat well and exercise.
- Share how you feel with your loved ones.
  - Talking to your family about your thoughts and feelings is a good way to release pent-up emotions.
- Write your thoughts down.
  - Writing down your thoughts could help you gain a better perspective of what happened and how things affected you.
- Accept changes to your body.
  - Changes to your body is part of the birthing experience.
  - Start a gentle exercise routine like walking to help you get back in shape.
  - Do not compare yourself to other mothers.
- Recognise symptoms of depression:
  - Low mood, irritability or tearfulness.
  - Poor sleep, loss of interest, poor appetite or poor concentration.
  - Loss of energy
  - Excessive self-blame or guilt.
  - Feeling hopeless or that life is meaningless.

**Speak with your doctor immediately if you experience any of these symptoms.**

Don't forget or neglect your husband. Some fathers may feel left out of the caring process. Encourage your husband to do things like changing diapers and checking on the baby during the night. Communicate with him; it is helpful to understand that you are both in this together.

It is also important to remember that in Islam, any pain (emotional or physical) has a spiritual component to it. Men are afflicted with trials and tribulations for their sins to be expiated and to be rewarded abundantly by God. In addition to seeking appropriate therapies to relieve symptoms of post-natal depression, Islam teaches us that *duas* are a medium to help us make sense of the chaos in our lives. *Duas* also allow us to recognise that there is a wisdom and order behind our experiences that may not be fully understood by us.

The Prophet s.a.w has prescribed a *dua* that can be recited during periods of grief and anxiety:

*Whoever is afflicted with grief or anxiety, then he should pray with these words, "Oh Allah, certainly I am your slave, the son of your male slave and the son of your female slave. My forehead is in Your Hand. Your Judgment upon me is assured and Your Decree concerning me is just.*

*I ask You by every Name that you have named Yourself with, revealed in Your Book, taught any one of Your creation or kept unto Yourself in the knowledge of the unseen that is with You, to make the Quran the spring of my heart, and the light of my chest, the banisher of my sadness and the reliever of my distress."*

**[Musnad Imam Ahmad: 3712]**

**Reference:** KK Women's and Children's Hospital, Office of the Mufti (MUIS)

## Kesihatan mental untuk Ibu

Emosi ibu hamil boleh menjadi tidak menentu bila-bila masa sepanjang kehamilan itu. Perasaan ini boleh berlaku tanpa sebarang simptom. Ia boleh pulih secara berperingkat. Ia juga boleh menjadi berlarutan sekiranya tidak dikenal pasti terlebih awal dan tidak ditangani dengan baik. Perubahan hormon sepanjang hamil membuatkan anda mudah tersentuh, tersinggung, atau membenci sesuatu tanpa sebab. Elakkan diri daripada perbuatan yang memudaratkan kesihatan seperti merokok. Sebaliknya, banyakkantah berzikir dan berselawat. Cara-cara menangani stres:

1. Kenal pasti punca stres
2. Rehat dan tenangkan minda
3. Berkomunikasi dengan suami dan ahli keluarga yang tersayang
4. Jumpa doktor dan minta nasihat





## II. Support from fathers

The role of the husband and father cannot be understated. The moral and emotional support you render to each other as new parents is very important. Here are some tips for fathers:

### Pregnancy

- **Keep up to date with the pregnancy.**
  - Be well informed about various aspects of pregnancy by reading up and sharing what you have learned with your wife. You can reassure your wife about the milder symptoms such as backache.
  - Attend clinic visits with your wife. Ask questions and be involved in the decision-making process.
- **Attend antenatal preparation classes together.**
  - You will understand better what your wife is going through when you learn more about the symptoms of pregnancy.
  - Through the classes, you may learn how to support your wife and manage her symptoms.
- **Decide on the birth plan together with your wife.**
  - Share with each other your expectations and wishes for the labour and delivery.
  - Decide on birth-related processes such as cord blood donation and whether you would like to cut your baby's cord.
- **Plan your finances.**
  - You may want to check with the clinic if they have an outline of the estimated medical fees.
  - Do a stock-take of your personal and shared finances.
- **Help your wife manage her emotions.**
  - Your wife will be experiencing a mix of hormonal changes that will affect her physically and emotionally. Sometimes the best answer is just to be there with a warm smile and a listening ear and maybe a foot rub or two!
  - Encourage your wife to share her feelings with you. Listen, sympathise, be supportive and patient.
  - Remember to make time for non-baby moments. Plan activities just like you used to, from taking a walk together, to having a picnic or watching a movie.
- **Be open about your own emotions.**
  - Learning that you are going to be a father is a big moment that may come with some stress or worries. This is normal.
  - A chat with your own father or a friend with children might make you discover how common these feelings are.
  - A great way to stop stress from overwhelming you is to leap into action. Each task done or preparation ticked off will help you feel more in control. Start figuring out what to pack for the delivery, or planning baby names.
  - Me-time always helps. Remember to engage in your usual hobbies, and relax and enjoy the process.



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## Childbirth

- Be close by to provide reassurance to your wife.
- Physical contact can be a great calming influence, so hold her hand, wipe her face and stroke her hair—whatever she wants.
- Assign yourself the role of chief hydrator and feed her regular sips of water.
- Many mothers experience back pain and sore muscles during labour, so be at hand to give a gentle and soothing massage.
- Changing positions may also help to relieve sore muscles, although your wife may find it difficult to shift on her own, so be there to help her.
- Time to use those breathing techniques you mastered in pre-birth class. With the stress and disorientation brought on by her labour, your wife may have forgotten everything that she has learnt. Remind her, and take long slow breaths together with her.

*Allah mentions in the Quran, “Their mothers bore them through hardship upon hardship.” [Surah Luqman 31:14] and “Their mothers bore them in hardship and delivered them in hardship.” [Surah Al-Ahqaf 46:15].*

In these verses, Allah describes labour pain and the experiences of a mother to show that He is not unaware of the pain and hardship she goes through to bring the child into the world.

Pregnancy and the delivery of a baby is a struggle (jihad) that the woman goes through that is greatly rewarded by Allah. Being aware of this and understanding the biological and emotional changes that are occurring inside of the woman is imperative for the husband, who is the partner and pillar of support in these hard periods. It is important that he ensures that the needs of the wife are being taken care of and assists in relieving her burdens as much as he can for her well-being and that of the family.



## Fatherhood

- Be a supportive husband and father.
  - Do not be discouraged when your wife is preoccupied with caring for your baby. Instead, take the time to build that special baby and father bond.
  - Learn to change your baby's diaper, give him a bath and comfort him when he cries. Take your baby for a walk or read to him. Your wife will feel much better knowing she can rely on you.
  - Keep telling her that she's doing well.
  - Help your wife manage her expectations of herself.
  - Try to understand your wife's love language and use it to make her feel better.
  - Spend some time together as you did before baby came along.
  - Stay calm and be the pillar of strength so that you can make good decisions for your family.
- Fathers have a huge impact on their children's psycho-social development.
  - Fathers who spend time with their children provide a sense of security and authority to the family.
  - Children look to their fathers for comfort and assurance whenever they feel insecure or uncertain.
  - Children with an involved, nurturing and playful father have better educational outcomes and are better able to regulate their emotions and behavior.

Source: KK Women's and Children's Hospital, Office of the Mufti (MUIS)

### During Pregnancy



### During Labour



### After Delivery



## Sokongan dari suami

Peranan suami dalam kehamilan dari segi mental dan emosi tidak boleh diperkecilkan. Kadang-kadang isteri yang sedang hamil tidak perasan perubahan emosi ataupun tingkah lakunya sendiri. Ada juga yang tidak dapat mengawal perasaan yang melanda anak pemikiran mereka. Suamilah tunjang dalam ikatan ini. Komunikasi yang efektif antara satu sama lain penting untuk mengatasi sebarang ketidakyakinan dalam proses kehamilan, sewaktu melahirkan dan selepas kehadiran anak yang baru lahir. Seandainya anda kurang pasti apa yang perlu dilakukan, minta nasihat ayah, adik-beradik lelaki atau teman-teman yang pernah mengalami proses yang sama. Ini akan membuat anda lebih prihatin dengan perubahan tubuh badan dan emosi isteri anda. Anda akan lebih bersedia menghadapi saat-saat seperti ini dengan lebih tabah. Yang penting, anda terus memberi sokongan kepada pasangan anda.



## III. Emotional and mental well-being for husbands and fathers

In Islam, being a husband and father is more than just a role, it's a way to worship Allah. A good husband is someone who supports, guides, and grows with his family. Through the spirit of peace (*Sakinah*), love (*Mawaddah*), and compassion (*Rahmah*), he helps to build a strong, happy, and safe home. Being involved in the lives of his wife and children is not just a good thing to do, it is something that Islam encourages strongly.

### 1. A Responsible Leader in the Family

The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said:

*“Each of you is a shepherd, and each of you is responsible for his flock... A man is a shepherd over the people of his house and is responsible for his flock.”*  
**(Sahih al-Bukhari & Muslim)**

This means the husband is the one responsible for taking care of the family. But being a leader doesn't mean being bossy, it means being caring, making good decisions, and looking after everyone's needs.

### 2. A Source of Love and Comfort

Allah says in the Quran:

*“And among His signs is that He created for you from yourselves mates that you may find tranquillity in them; and He placed between you affection and mercy...”*  
**(Surah ArRum, verse 21)**

This shows that marriage is supposed to bring peace and happiness. A husband should be loving, gentle, and understanding, especially when you are being tested by Allah.

### 3. Shared responsibility at home

The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) used to help with housework. Aisyah (may Allah be pleased with her) said:

*“He used to keep himself busy serving his family and when it was time for prayer, he would go for it.”*  
**(Sahih al-Bukhari)**

This teaches us that husbands should also help with chores at home. It brings the couple closer and shows the children that working together is part of a happy family.

## 4. Supporting the Family's Growth

Being a husband isn't just about earning money. He should also guide and support his family's emotional and religious well-being. Allah says:

*"O you who have believed, protect yourselves and your families  
from a Fire whose fuel is people and stones..."*  
**(Surah At-Tahrim, verse 6)**

This means a husband should lead his family towards doing good and avoiding harm. He should help them build strong character and faith.

## 5. A Man of Good Character

The Prophet (peace be upon him) said:

*"The best of you are those who are best to their wives,  
and I am the best of you to my wives."*  
**(Sunan At-Tirmidhi)**

This hadith reminds us that the way a man treats his wife shows his true character. A good husband is patient, respectful, and kind. How he acts at home sets the tone for the whole family.

## The Beginning of the Fatherhood Journey

Becoming a father is one of the biggest life transitions. The fatherhood journey starts from preconception through pregnancy, to postnatal and beyond.

Pregnancy can be both exciting and challenging. It is important for husbands to understand and support mothers-to-be through physical and emotional changes during pregnancy. This may include attending antenatal appointments and scans, taking on more household and caregiving responsibilities, and making practical preparations for the baby's arrival.

If you are welcoming a baby into your growing family unit and there are older children in the household, do make time to spend with each child individually and together as a family, so that no one feels left behind.



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## Mental health of fathers

**We often forget that with the many roles and responsibilities a father has, he may also need emotional support.**

Parenthood can strain relationships or bring couples closer together. The mental health of parents significantly influences the emotional environment of the parent-infant interaction and the entire family. When parents are well, they are more likely to be emotionally available, responsive, and nurturing towards their children. This promotes overall family well-being.

As the transition to fatherhood can be stressful, do reach out and seek help if you have concerns about your mood and coping. This could be professional or informal. Father-to-father support networks are protective for mental health and can improve parenting confidence.

**Reference:** KK Women's & Children's Hospital, Association of Muslim Professionals

For further support and resources:  
Centre for Fathering (including Bapa Sepanjang Hayat)  
<https://fathers.com.sg/>

Parent Hub: Parenting For Wellness  
<https://www.healthhub.sg/programmes/parent-hub/parentingforwellness>

**If you are in a crisis, please contact the Samaritans of Singapore (SOS) helpline:**

24-hour Helpline: 1767

24-hour Caretext: 91511767

## Kesejahteraan Emosi untuk Suami dan Bapa

Dalam Islam, menjadi seorang suami dan bapa yang baik adalah salah satu cara beribadah kepada Allah SWT. Dengan memupuk ciri-ciri ketenangan (Sakinah), kasih sayang (Mawaddah), dan belas kasihan (Rahmah), suami yang bertanggungjawab dapat membina keluarga yang kukuh dan bahagia. Seorang suami merupakan pemimpin kepada ahli keluarganya. Namun, menjadi pemimpin bukanlah bermakna suami menggunakan kuasa atau paksaan, tetapi bersifat penyayang, membuat keputusan yang bijak, dan memastikan keperluan semua ahli keluarga dipenuhi.

Persiapan untuk menjadi bapa bermula daripada sebelum kehamilan. Suami perlu memahami dan menyokong isteri yang hamil dari segi fizikal dan emosi. Ini termasuk menemani isteri berjumpa doktor, membantu dalam kerja rumah dan membuat persediaan praktikal untuk menyambut kelahiran bayi.

Menjadi seorang bapa merupakan salah satu perubahan besar dalam hidup. Kesihatan mental seorang bapa penting dan sangat mempengaruhi kesejahteraan keluarga. Jika anda berasa tertekan, jangan ragu untuk mendapatkan bantuan, sama ada daripada ahli profesional atau pun tidak formal. Rangkaian sokongan (atau "support group") sesama bapa juga boleh membantu menangani kesihatan mental dan meningkatkan keyakinan diri semasa mengharungi perjalanan ini.



## IV. Mindfulness

Mindfulness during the perinatal period (pregnancy, birth, and postpartum) can be a powerful tool for reducing stress, improving emotional well-being, and enhancing the parent-baby bond. It involves being present in the moment, accepting experiences without judgement, and cultivating self-awareness.

### Benefits

Mindfulness can be particularly beneficial for new parents, helping them navigate the challenges of parenthood. Some benefits include:

1. **Reduced stress and anxiety:** Mindfulness practices like meditation and deep breathing can help new parents manage stress and anxiety.
2. **Increased self-awareness:** Mindfulness can help new parents develop a greater understanding of their own emotions, needs and limitations.
3. **Enhanced self-care:** Mindfulness can encourage new parents to prioritise their own physical and emotional well-being.
4. **More responsive parenting:** Mindfulness can help parents respond more sensitively to their child's needs, promoting a more secure attachment.
5. **Increased resilience:** Mindfulness can help new parents develop coping skills and resilience, better equipping them to handle the challenges of parenthood.

### Foundational Attitudes

The following attitudes form the emotional and mental framework that supports mindfulness practice

1. **Non-judgement:** Notice thoughts with kindness as "mental events" that will flow by instead of labelling them as 'good' or 'bad'
  - Avoid comparing your pregnancy or parenting journey with others
  - Let go of self-criticism and embrace the uniqueness of your experience
2. **Beginner's mind:** Approach each day with curiosity, as if experiencing it for the first time
  - Let go of fixed ideas or expectations about who you are 'supposed to be'
  - Allows room for your identity to evolve as a parent, partner and individual
3. **Acceptance:** Active acknowledgement of things as they are in the present moment without trying to change them
  - Accept changes in your body and acknowledge difficult emotions with kindness
  - Allow space for both joy and challenges without resistance
4. **Patience:** Allowing things to unfold in their own time and resisting the urge to force outcomes
  - Be patient with yourself as you learn to care for your baby
  - Breastfeeding or sleep routines can be challenging; be patient with baby's pace and rhythm, trust the process and give yourself grace
5. **Letting go:** Release unrealistic expectations about birth, postpartum recovery and parenting
  - Letting go of perfectionism in pregnancy and motherhood and allowing your experience to be what it is, even it means having to embrace challenging moments
  - Surrender to the moment and trust your intuition

**6. Gratitude:** Gently turning towards the things that sustain you

- Acknowledge small joys; like feeling your baby move or a peaceful feeding session
- Recognise the hard work you are doing and celebrate small wins

## Practice: Mindful breathing

4-7-8 Breathing technique:

1. Inhale through your nose for a count of 4.
2. Hold your breath for a count of 7.
3. Exhale through your mouth for a count of 8.

## Mindfulness in Islam

In Islam, mindfulness also known as *muraqabah*, means being aware that Allah is always watching over us. It helps us stay present, calm, and intentional, especially during emotional journeys like pregnancy and parenting. The Prophet s.a.w said that *ihsan* (excellence) is “to worship Allah as if you see Him, and if you cannot see Him, then know that He sees you.” This reminds us that even when we feel tired, unappreciated, or emotionally drained, especially by those we love, remember! Our efforts never go unnoticed by Allah. Mindfulness helps us shift from just being hopeful to being truly grateful. The more we practice gratitude (*syukur*), the more peace we feel in what we do. Because Allah sees our struggles and sincerity, and He promises to reward us with goodness whether in this life or the next.

## Kesedaran Minda

Kesedaran minda semasa kehamilan, kelahiran, dan selepas bersalin adalah sangat berkesan untuk mengurangkan tekanan, meningkatkan kesejahteraan emosi, dan mengeratkan ikatan antara ibu bapa dan bayi. Kesedaran minda bermakna kita berusaha untuk menghadirkan diri dengan penuh kesedaran dalam situasi yang sedang dihadapi, dengan penggunaan teknik seperti meditasi dan pernafasan dalam. Salah satu teknik pernafasan yang boleh diamalkan adalah 4-7-8, iaitu:

1. Tarik nafas melalui hidung sambil mengira hingga 4.
2. Tahan nafas selama kiraan 7.
3. Hembus nafas melalui mulut sambil mengira hingga 8.

Dalam Islam, kesedaran minda yang juga dikenali sebagai **muraqabah**, bermaksud menyedari bahawa Allah swt sentiasa memerhatikan kita. Ia membantu kita untuk kekal hadir, tenang, dan berniat dengan penuh kesedaran, terutamanya semasa melalui perjalanan emosi seperti kehamilan dan keibubapaan.

## Useful links:

### Mindful parenting

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FggkOde\\_lro](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FggkOde_lro)

<https://www.healthhub.sg/live-healthy/mindful-about-mindfulness>

### Relaxation techniques

<https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/4d1028b54a2b411eb215184a19fb6108?v=be135580>

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# Section 4

## Raising your little one(s)

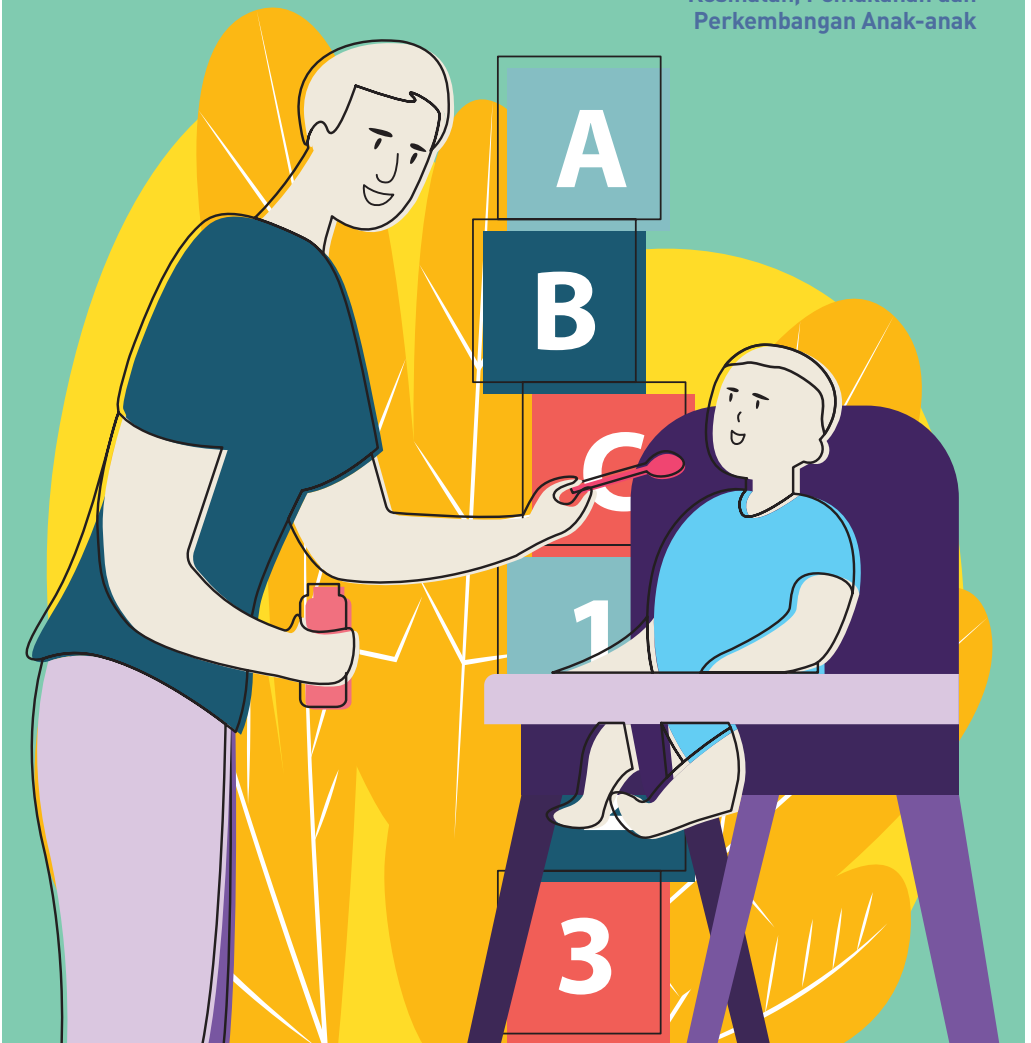
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# Section 4a

## Child Health, Nutrition & Development

Kesehatan, Pemakanan dan  
Perkembangan Anak-anak





# I. The power of the first 1000 days of life

## Congratulations on being a parent/parent-to-be!

As you embark on this very special journey with your spouse, find out how you can give your child the best head start in life. The first 1000 days of life start from the time you find out you are pregnant, until your child turns about 2 years old.

Research has shown that this period is a unique opportunity to enhance your child's ability to grow, learn and thrive, as his brain is developing rapidly. Preparing your child for the best in life as early as possible helps to maximise his future health and development, with an impact all the way into adulthood!

Here are some of the ways you can build a solid foundation for your child's future, starting from now.

### 1. Take good care of yourself

A healthy baby starts with a healthy mummy. Refer to our chapters on maternal physical and emotional wellness for tips and pointers during your pregnancy.

### 2. Provide the best nutrition for your baby

- Aim to exclusively breastfeed your baby for the first 6 months; thereafter continue to breastfeed while providing a healthy nutritious diet as your child enters the toddler years.
- Studies have shown that children who get the right nutrition in the first 1000 days of life have a lower risk of many illnesses and diseases. They also go on to be better learners with fewer behavioural problems in preschool and enjoy better health and financial security as adults.

### 3. Bond with your baby

- Always kiss your baby to show love and mercy.

*It was reported the Prophet (PBUH) kissed his grandson Al-Hasan and said 'He who does not show mercy (towards his children), no mercy would be shown to him' {Muslim}.*

- Know and manage your baby's needs such as hygiene, feeding cues, crying, bathing, nappy changes, sleeping and responses.
- Taking care of your baby well helps build a strong and special bond.
- Your baby will feel secure and contented. This helps in his emotional development.

### 4. Nurture your child well

- Establish good habits early, provide a nurturing environment and don't underestimate the power of play.
- Actively engaging with your child strengthens your parental bond and stimulates his early development.
- The right type of stimuli during the first 1000 days of life helps with language, mathematics, reasoning and social skills, and these skills stand your child in good stead for life!

Do read on and find out more about how to maximise your child's growth, health and development.

**Reference:** World Health Organisation (WHO), KK Women's and Children's Hospital

*To be a righteous parent.*

*Allah says 'And as for the wall, it belonged to two orphan boys in the city, and there was beneath it a treasure for them, and their father had been righteous, so your lord intended that they reach maturity and extract their treasure, as a mercy from your lord.' [Surah Al-Kahfi 18:82]*



**Source:** WHO, UNICEF, World Bank Group. Nurturing care for early childhood development: a framework for helping children survive and thrive to transform health and human potential. Geneva:WHO;2018

## Kepentingan 1000 Hari Pertama kehidupan

Tahniah atas kehamilan anda! Tahukah anda tentang pentingnya 1000 hari pertama kehidupan, yang bermula dari sewaktu janin terbentuk, sehingga anak anda berumur 2 tahun? Inilah waktu optimum perkembangan otak anak anda dan ini akan menentukan kecerdasannya dalam jangka panjang. Faktor-faktor penting membina asas yang kukuh bagi perkembangan otak anak anda termasuk pemakanan yang bernutrisi, stimulasi, pengasuhan yang baik dan kasih sayang.

Amalkan gaya hidup yang sihat dan pemakanan yang berkhasiat. Bayi yang sihat bermula daripada ibu yang sihat. Tahap kesihatan seorang ibu mempengaruhi perkembangan mental dan fizikal bayinya secara langsung sewaktu mengandung.

Apabila bayi sudah lahir, cuba sedaya upaya untuk menyusu badan secara eksklusif pada 6 bulan pertama. Seterusnya, pastikan anak anda menerima pemakanan yang berkhasiat.

Dari awal, bina ikatan yang rapat dengan bayi anda. Kasih sayang yang dicurahkan kepada bayi anda akan memastikan perkembangan emosi yang stabil. Stimulasi yang optimum juga adalah penting dalam perkembangannya secara keseluruhan. Pastikan anda mengasuh anak anda dengan baik, dan jangan lupa meluangkan masa untuk bermain dengannya!



## II Breastfeeding

Breast milk is the ideal food for your baby as it contains all the nutrition that he needs in the first 6 months of life. The World Health Organization (WHO) recommends exclusive breastfeeding for the first 6 months. Following that, in addition to solid food, it is recommended that you continue to breastfeed until age 2 years or older.

*“Mothers may breastfeed their children for two complete years  
for whoever wishes to complete the nursing (period)”*  
**[Surah Al-Baqarah 2:233]**

### **Benefits of breast milk for baby:**

- Contains essential vitamins, minerals and nutrients necessary for growth and development.
- Easily digested and less likely to cause stomach upset, constipation or diarrhea.
- Filled with antibodies that boost immunity and reduce risk of infections.
- Reduces the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (cot deaths) as well as obesity and diabetes in adulthood.

### **Benefits of breastfeeding for mother:**

- Allows your womb to contract faster and reduces blood loss after childbirth.
- Delays the return of your menstrual period and is a natural, although imperfect, contraceptive.
- Can burn calories for weight loss.
- Reduces the risk of breast and womb cancer, heart disease and osteoporosis (brittle bones).
- Enhances the special bond between you and your baby.

## **Preparation should start soon after your delivery:**

### **1. Building a good milk supply**

- Establish your milk supply early by breastfeeding your baby as soon as possible after delivery (ideally within the first hour of birth).
- Breastfeed regularly on demand, 8 to 10 times a day.
- Frequent and effective milk removal is important in establishing your milk production.
- If your baby is not latching well or separated from you, express breast milk every 3 hours in the day and night to maintain your milk production.

### **2. Expressing and storing breast milk- using a breast pump or manually with your hand**

- Before you start, always wash your hands thoroughly.
- Ensure all your equipment is clean and sterilised.
- Express your breast milk every 3 hours and keep it in sterile breast milk zipper bags before storing them in a fridge or freezer.

### Storage of breast milk:

Place of Storage	Temperature	Recommended Duration
Expressed breast milk at room temperature	25°C	4 hours
Expressed breast milk in a cooler with ice pack	15°C	24 hours
Expressed breast milk stored in the fridge	4°C	48 hours
Frozen breast milk in a 2-door fridge	-5°C to -15°C	3 to 6 months
Frozen breast milk in deep freezer	-20°C	6 to 12 months
Thawed breast milk stored in the fridge	4°C	24 hours

#### • Thawing process

- Thaw frozen milk in the refrigerator or in a cup of warm water.
- Use the milk immediately and discard the leftover.
- Do not boil or heat breast milk in a microwave.
- Do not re-freeze or re-warm the breast milk.

### 3. Nutrition during Breastfeeding

To eat halal and good food and to avoid impurities:

*“O humanity! Eat from what is lawful and good on the earth and do not follow Satan’s footsteps. He is truly your sworn enemy.”*

**[Surah Al-Baqarah 2:168]**

### DOs and DON'Ts for a healthy diet when breastfeeding:

DOs	DON'Ts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✔ Have a balanced diet</li><li>✔ Eat and drink whenever you are hungry or thirsty. <i>It is permissible in Islam for a mother not to fast during Ramadhan if it would affect the baby who is still breastfeeding.</i></li><li>✔ Drink plenty of fluids, at least 8 to 10 glasses per day. This is to replace the fluids lost through breastfeeding.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✘ Smoke. Smoking can cause mothers to produce less milk. Smoking can transmit harmful chemicals to your baby via your breast milk.</li><li>✘ Drink more than 2 cups of coffee or tea per day. Caffeine has been shown to pass through breast milk to babies.</li><li>✘ Consume fish that contain high amounts of mercury, such as shark, swordfish, tuna and king mackerel.</li></ul>

### Traditional confinement food

Confinement is a period of time after delivery to help the mother recuperate from childbirth. It is part of our culture, and some practices may not be evidence-based. It is however, acceptable to follow traditional practices in moderation as long as it consists of a well-balanced diet. If in doubt, consult your doctor or nurse.

### Breastfeeding positions

Finding a comfortable position that works for you and your baby is well worth the effort. A relaxed mother is able to trigger her letdown reflex more easily.

**Remember, always stay awake when breastfeeding.** Falling asleep when nursing may result in accidental smothering of your baby. Place your baby back in his cot when he has finished feeding.

Below are several positions you may adopt when you breastfeed.



Cradle Position



Cross-Cradle Positions



Football Hold



Side Lying

### Latching your baby

A good latch is important for effective breastfeeding and prevention of sore nipples. How to tell if baby is latched well?

- Baby's chin is touching your breast and his nose is slightly away.
- Baby's mouth is wide open, covering the areola (dark area around the nipple).
- Baby's lips form a seal on the breast, with the lower lip turned out.
- You feel the initial tug on your nipple and there is no pain/discomfort.
- Baby is sucking and swallowing with no clicking sounds heard.

## Common Breastfeeding Issues

### Sore or cracked nipples

Sore nipples can be prevented by ensuring proper positioning and latching during breastfeeding.

- After feeding, express a little milk on your nipples and let them air dry.
- It helps if you go without a bra for short intervals on a daily basis.
- If the soreness persists, express your milk temporarily, 6 to 8 times a day, and feed this milk to your baby.



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## Engorgement

This is the accumulation of milk in the breasts resulting in hardness, discomfort or pain. Engorgement may be minimised by demand feeding, including night feeding and early feeding from birth.

The following techniques may help:

- Massage your nipple, areola and breast to clear any blockage.
- Apply cold towels or cabbage leaves on the breasts in between feeding to reduce the swelling.
- Express your breast milk before and after each feed if needed.
- Painkillers such as Panadol may be taken to relieve the pain.

## Blocked milk ducts

This occurs when the milk is not being emptied efficiently. It may cause part of your breast to feel lumpy, hard or sore. To unblock the ducts:

- Gently massage the nipple, areola and affected area before feeding.
- Apply cold towels or cabbage leaves on the affected area.
- Change your feeding position, e.g. football hold.

**Consult your doctor or lactation nurse if any of these problems persist.**

## Going Back to Work

Before you go back to work:

- Start expressing and storing your milk early.
- Introduce your baby to the bottle by replacing 1 or 2 feeds with expressed breast milk from about 4 to 6 weeks after birth. Use a softer teat to facilitate the transition from breast to bottle. Gradually increase the number of expressed milk feeds about 2 weeks before you start work.

At Work:

- Breastfeed your baby before you go to work and as soon as you arrive home.
- While at work, express your milk at regular intervals.
- Breastfeed on demand on weekends or when you are not working so as to “reconnect” with your baby and simultaneously increase your milk supply.

**Reference:** KK Women’s and Children’s Hospital, Health Promotion Board.

## Penyusuan susu ibu

Sebagai ibu, anda semestinya mahu memberi yang terbaik untuk bayi anda. Susu badan ibu ialah susu yang terbaik untuk bayi anda yang baru lahir. Apabila anda memberi susu badan, bayi anda akan merasakan degupan jantung anda dan juga kehangatan pelukan, kemesraan dan belaian yang amat murni. Posisi bayi anda sewaktu menyusu dekat pada dada anda. Ini boleh mengeratkan hubungan antara bayi dengan anda demi menyemarakkan aura perkembangan yang positif. Susu badan anda mengandungi nutrien yang secukupnya dan berubah-ubah mengikut keperluan tubuh bayi. Bayi anda juga boleh mendapat antibodi melawan kuman melalui proses penyusuan. Proses penyusuan boleh menghentikan pendarahan anda. Anda juga boleh mendapat kembali bentuk badan asal. Bayi yang baru lahir sebaik-baiknya diberikan susu badan dengan kerap iaitu antara 8-12 kali dalam tempoh 24 jam. Jangan berputus asa seandainya anda rasa susu badan anda belum mencukupi. Kunci kejayaan penyusuan ibu ialah niat, ilmu, sokongan dan latihan. Setiap masalah yang anda hadapi pasti ada penyelesaiannya jika anda meminta bantuan segera daripada kaunselor atau doktor.



## III. Early childhood nutrition

Find out more about how you can give your child a head start in life with the best nutrition!

### Birth to 6 months

- At this age, milk alone is enough for your baby's nutritional needs. Breast milk is best wherever possible.
- Baby doesn't need any additional water. Milk has enough water content to keep baby hydrated. Giving a young infant plain water may lead to "water intoxication" and cause the blood sodium level to drop. Low blood sodium level can be harmful to the brain, and can cause problems such as seizures (fits).
- Baby also doesn't need any additional food like cereals or rice mixed into their milk. They may not be ready to handle thicker textures or semi-solid foods, and may choke.
- During routine well baby checks, the nurse/doctor will monitor your baby's growth to ensure that baby is gaining weight well and growing healthily.

### 6 to 12 months – It's time to wean!

At this stage, you will need to start introducing solid foods to meet the changing nutritional needs of your growing baby.

Why should solid foods be introduced at 6 months of age?

- Nutrients from milk alone are not enough for good growth. Late introduction may deplete your baby's body stores of iron and other nutrients.
- Swallowing thicker textures helps your child develop the muscles for speech development.
- Social skills are developed during mealtimes.
- When children start to self-feed, they develop independence.

Most babies by 6 months are developmentally ready for solid foods. They are able to hold their heads up, can sit well when supported, can make chewing motions and move food to the back of the mouth to swallow.

#### Getting started

- Make sure your child is seated nearly upright in a chair with good head and body support.
- Start with foods that are rich in iron like iron-fortified rice cereals. Vegetables and fruits can also be given to provide Vitamin C, which enhances iron absorption.
- Ensure food texture is smooth, soft and fine.
- Do not add salt, sugar or honey, as babies do not have an acquired taste for seasoned food at this age and you should not encourage the development of a sweet tooth. Seasoning should be avoided before 2 years of age.
- Avoid adding fats such as butter or oil unless medically indicated by your doctor or dietitian.
- Do not force feed your baby. If your baby does not seem keen to eat, wait and try again later or on another day.
- Some babies take time to learn to eat new foods. It can take up to 15 or more exposures for a baby to try a new food. Persevere and be patient. Offer the new food again 2 to 3 times in the same week.
- Only 1 new food should be introduced at a time; wait 3 to 4 days and then introduce another new food, while looking out for any symptoms of intolerance or allergies.

### Symptoms of food allergies

The top 8 allergy-causing foods are dairy (cow's milk), eggs, wheat, fish, seafood, soy, peanut and tree nuts. You do not have to avoid introducing these foods, but be aware of what to look out for.

In general, symptoms may occur within several hours after eating the food. It is best to observe your baby's reaction(s) closely, especially after introducing any new food.

#### Milder symptoms

- Hives or rashes (may be around the mouth or over the body)
- Worsening or flaring of eczema
- Watery stools

#### More serious symptoms needing urgent medical attention

- Swollen eyes, tongue, face, mouth and lips
- Vomiting
- Difficulty in breathing
- Fainting

Some babies may have an allergic reaction 1 or 2 days later (e.g. eczema flare, wheezing, persistent vomiting, constipation, stomach pain).

Do keep a lookout and visit your doctor if your baby displays any of the above reactions.

### Progressing on solids

- You can begin by feeding your child once a day, in between his milk feeds, when your child is most alert.
- After a week or two, you can increase the frequency to 2 times a day.
- As your child grows, he should start taking foods with increased texture and complexity e.g. thicker or coarser. This helps in developing oral motor function and sensory processing, which are essential skills for eating.

### What about milk feeds and other beverages?

- It is important to continue feeding milk to your baby.
- As your baby starts to eat more semi-solid foods, you can gradually reduce the number of milk feeds a day.
- As a general guide, once your baby is able to have a full meal, you can skip one milk feed.
- Eventually as your baby progresses on weaning, aim for milk intake of 500 to 750ml per day.
- You can start offering some water to your baby once you have started semi-solid foods in his diet.
  - Use cooled boiled water. Avoid giving bottled mineral water to your baby as it may contain high levels of some minerals.
- Do not introduce sugar sweetened beverages such as fruit drinks or juices until at least 2 years of age. These drinks can contain large amounts of sugar, which may cause dental cavities and may lead to your baby developing a preference for sweet foods. They can also lead to early childhood obesity.

### Safety Tips

- Your baby must always be supervised when eating.
- Always feed your baby sitting in the correct posture.
- Avoid giving foods that lead to choking easily such as
  - Small and hard pieces of food (e.g. peanuts, nuts, seeds and grapes)
  - Food that is crunchy or hard (e.g. uncooked vegetables)
  - Fish and meat with bones
  - Fruits with seeds
  - Sticky food e.g. glutinous rice (pulut)
- When reheating foods, always bring to full boil, then cool. If reheating using a microwave oven, stir the food well and test the temperature on the back of your hand before feeding to avoid scalding your baby's mouth.

### Hygiene Tips

- Always wash your hands before handling your baby's food.
- Separate raw and cooked foods.
- Cook meat thoroughly.
- Cover foods before keeping in the refrigerator.
- Discard food that is unfinished from your baby's bowl.
- In general, a small thermal flask cannot store food at a safe temperature (60°C or above) for a long period. To reduce the risk of bacterial growth, food stored in a thermal flask should be eaten within 2 hours after it is cooked.
- If you are preparing a few meals at a time, set aside some portion of it and keep the remainder.
- Similarly, if you wish to give baby jar food, and your baby is unlikely to finish the whole jar, portion out the amount he can consume and store the remainder.

## 12 to 24 months

At 12 months of age, your toddler's digestive system is ready to accept small portions of food similar to what adults eat. Ensure that meals are balanced amongst all four food groups (fruits, vegetables, grains, meat and alternatives) and prepared with minimal salt, sugar or seasoning. Instead, use ginger, garlic, spring onion or spices like turmeric as alternatives for seasoning. Include sufficient fibre (from fruits, vegetables and whole grains) and water to prevent constipation in your child.

### What about milk and other beverages?

- Toddlers should continue to consume breast milk as an important source of nutrients through the first year and beyond.
- If your child has been drinking formula milk, he can switch to full cream milk such as chilled pasteurised, UHT (ultra-high temperature processing) or powdered full cream milk.
- Growing-up/Stage 3 formula milk is more energy-dense than full cream milk and may displace your child's appetite for other foods.
- After 2 years of age, your toddler can be given low-fat milk if he is eating and growing well.
- Give your toddler a training cup or a straw to drink with. Replace the bottle with a training cup for one feed during the day, gradually increase the frequency. By 18 months of age, he should stop using the bottle entirely.
- Avoid giving sugared drinks, soft drinks or fruit juices.
- Avoid giving caffeinated drinks such as energy drinks, coffee or tea.

### Do I need to give my child vitamins or supplements?

- Routine supplements are not required if your toddler is taking a healthy, balanced diet and growing well.
- If your child is a picky eater and it is challenging to achieve a balanced diet, you may seek a pharmacist's or your doctor's advice on the use of supplements such as multi-vitamins.

**Reference:** KK Women's and Children's Hospital, Health Promotion Board

For further resources on early childhood nutrition, click here:

<https://www.healthhub.sg/programmes/parent-hub/baby-toddler/childhood-healthy-diet>



TOP

## Pemakanan awal kanak-kanak

### **Lahir sehingga 6 bulan:**

Sejak bayi dilahirkan sehingga mencapai umur 6 bulan makanan utamanya ialah susu. Susu badan ibu ialah pilihan terbaik untuk bayi anda. Sememangnya, bayi anda tidak memerlukan air kosong atau minuman dan makanan yang lain.

### **6 sehingga 12 bulan:**

6 bulan ialah waktu untuk memperkenalkan makanan kepada bayi anda. Anda boleh mulakan dengan makanan yang kaya dengan zat besi, seperti bijirin beras yang kaya dengan zat besi. Sayur-sayuran dan buah-buahan juga penting kerana mengandungi Vitamin C, yang diperlukan untuk penyerapan zat besi di dalam badan. Pastikan tekstur makanan yang disediakan adalah lembut dan halus. Ini memudahkan anak anda menelan bertahap-tahap kerana beralih daripada minum susu sahaja. Elakkan garam, gula atau perisa dalam makanan bayi anda dalam 2 tahun pertama.

Pastikan anda memperkenalkan makanan yang baharu bertahap-tahap. Berikan hanya satu jenis makanan pada satu masa. Tunggu selama 3-4 hari sebelum memperkenalkan makanan baharu. Langkah ini membantu menentukan sama ada anak anda gemarkan makanan baharu itu. Beri perhatian pada sebarang tanda awal alahan seperti ruam. Jika anak anda tidak menunjukkan sebarang alahan, barulah anda boleh memberikan makanan itu berterusan. Kesan-kesan alahan merbahaya yang memerlukan rawatan segera di hospital termasuk bengkak di mata atau bibir, sesak nafas, muntah – muntah atau kelesuan yang berlebihan.

### **12 sehingga 24 bulan:**

Jika sebelum ini anak anda minum susu formula, apabila usia mencapai 1 tahun, anda boleh beralih kepada susu segar penuh krim. Susu segar mengandungi kadar gula yang kurang berbanding susu formula dan ini penting untuk memastikan anak anda tidak terlalu kenyang susu sehingga mengurangkan selera makannya.

Sekiranya anak anda mempunyai tabiat pemakanan yang baik dan membesar dengan sihat, anda boleh tukar kepada susu segar rendah lemak setelah usia 2 tahun.

Vitamin tambahan tidak perlu jika anak anda mengambil diet yang seimbang dan bagus selernya. Ini penting kerana sumber asas vitamin dan zat-zat utama untuk pembangunan mental dan fizikal kanak-kanak berlandaskan daripada pemakanan yang sihat.



TOP



## IV. Childhood immunisations

### Immunise your little one to protect him against infections!

Immunisations protect your baby against infections that can lead to disability or even death. Some vaccines give rise to lifelong immunity upon completion of the full course. Other vaccines have to be given again later in life to maintain your child's immunity to the disease. This additional dose is called a booster.

Most babies are fit for immunisations. In certain special situations, your baby's doctor will advise you accordingly.

Singapore's National Childhood Immunisation Schedule aims to give your child the best possible protection from serious infections. **In Singapore, diphtheria and measles immunisations are compulsory by law.**



## National Childhood Immunisation Schedule

(from birth to age 17 years, effective from 1 November 2020)

Vaccine	Birth	2 months	4 months	6 months	12 months	15 months	18 months	2-4 years	5-9 years	10-11 years	12-13 years	13-14 years	15-17 years
Bacillus Calmette–Guérin (BCG)	D1												
Hepatitis B (HepB)	D1	D2		D3									
Diphtheria, tetanus and acellular pertussis (pediatric) (DTaP)		D1	D2	D3			B1						
Tetanus, reduced diphtheria and acellular pertussis (Tdap)										B2			
Inactivated poliovirus (IPV)		D1	D2	D3			B1			B2			
Haemophilus influenzae type b (Hib)		D1	D2	D3			B1						
pneumococcal conjugate (PCV10 or PCV13)			D1	D2	B1								
Pneumococcal polysaccharide (PPSV23)													One or two doses for children and adolescents age 2-17 years with specific medical condition or indication.
Measles, mumps and rubella (MMR)					D1	D2							
Varicella (VAR)					D1	D2							
Human papillomavirus (HPV 2 or HPV4)												D1 (Females) D2 (Females)	
Influenza (INF)													Annual vaccination or per season for all children age 6 months to <5 years (6-59 months).
													Annual vaccination or per season for children and adolescents age 5-17 years with specific medical condition or indication.

### Recommended ages and doses for all children

### Recommended for persons with specific medical condition or indication

#### Footnotes:

- **D1, D2, D3:** Dose 1, dose 2, dose 3
- **B1, B2:** Booster 1, booster 2
- **10-11, 12-13, 13-14 years:** Primary 5, Secondary 1, Secondary 2 (Tdap, IPV, HPV [for females] and MMR [as catch-up]) vaccines are provided as part of health promotion Board's school-based vaccination programme
- **HepB:** Doses 2 and 3 are recommended to be given as part of the 6-in-1 vaccine at 2 and 5 months, respectively
- **MMR:** Only the dose 2 is recommended to be given as part of the MMRV vaccine

It is important that you ensure your child is immunised according to the recommended schedule. Avoid delaying vaccinations. Immunising children as early as possible provides protection during the most vulnerable early months of life. Many of the vaccine-preventable diseases such as diphtheria, measles, pertussis, or pneumococcal infection can cause widespread infection in a young baby or child and attack different parts of the body such as the lungs, ears and brain. In serious cases, these infections may lead to deafness, brain damage, disability and developmental problems.

Most vaccine side effects are minor and temporary, such as a sore arm or mild fever (see below). The benefits of vaccination greatly outweigh the slight risk. A child is far more likely to be seriously affected by one of these diseases than by any vaccine.

*Regarding concerns about MMR and autism, be assured that carefully performed scientific studies have found **no** relationship between the MMR vaccine and autism, or any form of developmental delay.*

### Optional Vaccines

There are also optional vaccines for your baby. Some examples of optional vaccines (valid at the time of printing) are rotavirus, hepatitis A, and meningococcal vaccines. It is best that you discuss the need for these vaccines with your doctor.

### Post Vaccination Advice

<b>Possible reactions to vaccination</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Redness, swelling, pain at the injection site</li> <li>• Fever</li> <li>• Irritability or fussiness</li> <li>• A small lump may persist at the injection site for some weeks. This should not be of concern and requires no treatment.</li> </ul>
<b>What to do</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hold and cuddle your child</li> <li>• Give a dose of paracetamol provided by the clinic</li> <li>• Ensure your child drinks well and stays hydrated</li> <li>• Dress your child in light clothing</li> </ul>
<b>When to consult a doctor</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Persistent fever of more than 38°C for more than 2 days</li> <li>• Child is lethargic or much less active than usual</li> <li>• Persistent inconsolable crying or irritability</li> <li>• Seizures or fits</li> <li>• Worsening redness, swelling or pain at the injection site</li> </ul>

### MUIS's Stance on Childhood Immunisations

The Islamic Religious Council of Singapore (MUIS) strongly supports vaccination and preventive medicine for babies and children, viewing them as a crucial, religiously encouraged method to protect life (known as Maqasid Shariah or the higher objectives of Islamic law). MUIS holds the position that vaccines are a necessary, proactive measure against harmful diseases.

MUIS strongly advises Muslims to adhere to national immunization schedules to protect their children. The primary requirement is that the vaccines must be medically authorized as safe and effective by relevant authorities, such as the Health Sciences Authority (HSA) in Singapore.

Early preventive measures, including vaccinations and essential, well-proven medical treatments, are aligned with Islamic principles that emphasize preventing harm rather than just curing it.

There are numerous hadiths in which the Prophet s.a.w. encouraged his ummah to seek medication. One of such hadiths is from Usamah bin Syarik. He mentioned of a Bedouin who once asked the Prophet s.a.w.:

*O Rasulullah, should we seek treatment?*

*And Rasulullah said, Seek treatment, for Allah will not send an illness, except that He has also sent with it a cure, save for one illness.*

*Then they asked again: And what is that illness?*

*The Prophet s.a.w. answered: Old age.*

### **[Hadith from Tirmidzi 2038 and Sunan Abu Dawud 3855]**

**Reference:** Ministry of Health, Health Promotion Board, KK Women's and Children's Hospital, Office of the Mufti (MUIS)

You can find more information about childhood vaccines including available subsidies, at <https://www.nir.hpb.gov.sg/nirp/eservices/login>

## **Imunisasi Kanak-kanak**

Imunisasi, atau proses memberi vaksin, adalah penting untuk melindungi anak anda daripada jangkitan kuman yang merbahaya. Jadual imunisasi bayi dan kanak-kanak telah ditentukan oleh Kementerian Kesihatan Singapura.

Kebanyakan kesan sampingan vaksin seperti demam ringan atau sakit di bahagian yang disuntik, ringan dan sementara sahaja. Kesan ke atas seorang bayi atau kanak-kanak kecil yang tidak divaksin adalah jauh lebih serius jika dijangkiti kuman-kuman yang menyebabkan penyakit pertusis (batuk kokol), difteria (penyakit saluran pernafasan), pneumokokus (radang paru-paru) dan sebagainya. Jika anda bimbang tentang kaitan autisme dengan vaksin MMR, yakinlah bahawa banyak kajian saintifik telah membuktikan dengan kukuh bahawa tiada kaitan vaksin dengan kondisi ini. Sebagai ibu bapa, pastikan rekod dan tarikh pengambilan vaksin disimpan dengan baik agar tidak terlepas temu janji bagi pengambilan dos seterusnya.

Majlis Ugama Islam Singapura (MUIS) sangat menyokong vaksinasi untuk bayi dan kanak-kanak kerana ia merupakan langkah pencegahan yang penting terhadap penyakit berbahaya. Langkah ini juga digalakkan dari segi agama untuk melindungi nyawa (Maqasid Syariah). MUIS menasihati umat Islam agar mematuhi jadual imunisasi kebangsaan bagi memberikan perlindungan yang terbaik untuk anak-anak mereka.

Terdapat beberapa hadis di mana Nabi s.a.w. menggalakkan umatnya untuk mencari rawatan perubatan. Langkah-langkah pencegahan awal, termasuk vaksinasi dan rawatan perubatan yang terbukti, adalah selaras dengan prinsip Islam.



## V. Playing with your child

### Why is play important?

Play helps your child to achieve his full developmental potential in a fun and enjoyable manner. It allows your child to explore and interact with the world around him. Your child will learn how to manage his feelings in relation to others and understand the functions and properties of daily objects. It also provides an ideal opportunity for you to bond with your child.

Aside from strengthening the bond and developing their motor and cognitive skills, playing with children is an act of kindness and mercy that was exemplified by the Prophet s.a.w.

*It was narrated from 'Abdullah bin Shaddad r.a. that his father said: "The Messenger of Allah s.a.w. came out to us for one of the nighttime prayers, and he was carrying Hasan r.a. or Husain r.a. The Messenger of Allah s.a.w. came forward and put him down, then he said the Takbir and started to pray. He prostrated during his prayer and made the prostration lengthy."*

*My father said: "I raised my head and saw the child on the back of the Messenger of Allah s.a.w. while he was prostrating so I went back to my prostration. When the Messenger of Allah s.a.w. finished praying, the people said: "O Messenger of Allah, you prostrated during the prayer for so long that we thought that something had happened or that you were receiving a revelation." He said: 'No such thing happened. But my son was riding on my back and I did not like to disturb him until he had had enough.' [Sunan an-Nasa'i: 1141]*

Here, we can see that the Prophet showed mercy and kindness by being sensitive about the child's feelings. He knew that it is in the child's nature to play. He did not rebuke his son or shove him away although he was performing his prayer which requires deep concentration. Letting children explore their surroundings will have positive benefits in the long-term and it is in our tradition to aid our children in developing their potential.

### Play Ideas for your baby (Below 6 Months)

Babies first learn to recognise your voice, face, and touch, and associate them with comfort. They then explore through grabbing and putting things in their mouths. Try out the following play ideas:

- Tummy time
  - Lay your baby down on his tummy on a playmat/mattress or in his cot
  - Place some baby-friendly toys within reach
  - Start with short periods (e.g. 1 to 2 minutes), and do often during the day. Increase the duration as your baby gets stronger and more comfortable.
  - Always make sure your baby is supervised at all times, he may start rolling soon!
- Cuddle your baby, use a changing tone of voice and varying facial expressions. Or sing to him!
- Tickle and blow on your baby's tummy
- Stimulate your baby with toys that are colourful and make noise (e.g. using rattles)

### Did you know?

Tummy time helps a child to develop gross motor skills by strengthening the neck and back muscles. It also helps prevent flat head. Start as early as possible if your child is well!

## Play Ideas for your baby (6 to 12 Months)

As your baby becomes more mobile, he will love to explore his surroundings. Here are some play ideas to stimulate him:

- Provide your baby with toys of different shapes and textures (e.g. soft, hard, rough)
  - You can even use common household items such as baby spoons and bottles or colourful towels
- Play peek-a-boo
- Bath time
  - Place child-safe items (e.g. cups with handles, balls, sponges) in the baby bath-tub
  - This is a great time for your baby to explore and learn, but **remember to never leave your baby alone, even for a minute!**
- Mirror play
  - Smile, make faces and watch as your baby taps or pokes at his reflection
  - Making eye contact with your baby is great for building bonds

## Play Ideas for your toddler (12 to 24 months)

As toddlers start to move independently, they need to practice motor skills such as pushing, pulling and developing hand-eye coordination. As they start to talk, they need opportunities to practise speaking. Their attention span is short and they need a lot of changes in activity. Their world is also expanding and they like to go for small outings. Try these play ideas:

- Use a bucket and large spoon to scoop up water or sand
- Scribble on paper using crayons, pencils or markers
- Play “Masak-masak”
  - Pretend to cook and serve each other meals
- Go for a walk in the neighbourhood
  - Listen to different sounds (e.g. birds, cars, footsteps)
  - Find different surfaces to walk on, like grass, sand, concrete pavement and leaves
  - Jump on each other’s shadows
- Ball play
  - Throw, kick and catch a ball together

## Play ideas for your pre-schooler (2 to 3 years)

Pre-schoolers are beginning to learn to share and take turns, and they like imaginative and pretend play. They also like activities which allow them to move about freely, such as running, climbing and riding pedal toys. Try out the following activities with your pre-schooler:

- Paint using interesting textures such as sponges and toothbrushes or try finger or foot-printing
- Mixing colours
  - Help your child learn about mixing primary colours using food colouring and water
- Lie on a large sheet of paper and draw around your outlines, then fill in face and body details
- Construct a homemade telephone with two plastic cups and a string
- Press, roll and cut out shapes using playdough or home-made dough
- Go camping
  - Make a tent using things you can find at home, e.g. bedsheets
  - You can even make an obstacle course with chairs, pillows or boxes
  - Make sure that the items used will not fall over or hurt your child

## What you need to know about toys

Often, parents may feel that they need to buy lots of toys for their young children. However, having many toys may not allow children to use their own imagination and create their own games. This can lead to children playing with them for a while and then wanting more.

Rotate a few toys and resources that allow your child to be creative. These will be more valuable than a large number of expensive toys.

Examples of valuable 'toys' for your child are:

- Wooden blocks
- Pots, pans and cooking sets
- Boxes of all shapes and sizes
- Large sheets of paper and washable crayons or watercolour paints
- Old clothes for dressing up and pretend play
- Toys to ride on or pedal

## Toy safety

- Check that the toy is of sound quality or has a Safety Mark (e.g. CE mark) or LION Mark.
- Make sure that the age range of the toy is suitable for your child's age.
- Check for loose parts, small detachable parts or sharp edges.
- Any cords or strings should be less than 15cm to prevent accidental strangulation.
- Avoid giving your young child balloons, small balls, marbles or magnets.
- Check toys regularly for wear and tear. Discard if broken.
- Keep batteries locked away. Toys should ideally have a screwed-on battery compartment.
- Follow the instructions and warnings provided with the toy.
- Supervise your child during play at all times.
- Tidy up after playing to prevent tripping.

## Things to note

- Play with your child but do not take over. Let your child determine the game.
- Talk about what your child is doing and encourage him (e.g. "It looks like Dolly is going shopping. What does she want to buy?")
- Appreciate and encourage your child's efforts (e.g. display his work on walls or the fridge).

Play is about focusing on the process, not the end product. Have fun teaching, learning from and bonding with your child!

**Reference:** KK Women's and Children's Hospital, Office of the Mufti (MUIS)

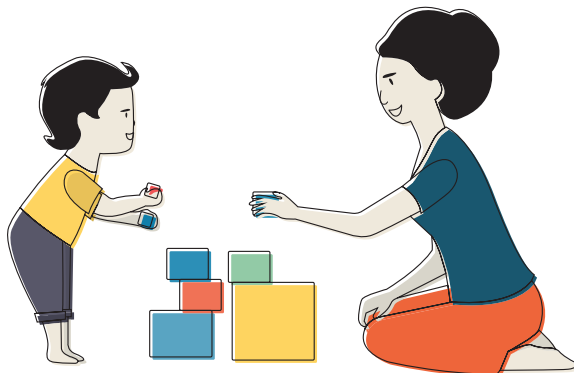
## Pentingnya Bermain dengan Anak Anda

Meluangkan masa dengan anak anda dan bermain bersama mereka boleh menyemarakkan rasa kasih sayang dan mendekatkan diri anda dengan anak-anak anda. Ini juga membolehkan anak anda berinteraksi dan meneroka alam di sekitarnya dengan penuh keyakinan. Selain memperbaiki kemahiran dalam berkomunikasi dan mengawal perasaan, bermain dengan ibu bapa dan adik-beradik mengeratkan lagi ikatan kekeluargaan.

Bagi bayi kecil, luangkan masa setiap hari until latihan meniarap (tummy time). Ini boleh dimulakan secepat mungkin jika bayi anda sihat. Berada di posisi meniarap dapat melatih otot-otot leher dan tubuh bayi. Pastikan bayi anda dibaringkan di tempat yang selamat seperti tilam atau tikar bayi. Gunakan objek yang berwarna-warni untuk memberi bayi anda stimulasi.

Apabila anak anda semakin membesar, mungkin anda rasa terdesak untuk membeli pelbagai jenis mainan. Sebenarnya, memiliki banyak sangat mainan menghindari daya imaginasi dan kreativiti seorang kanak-kanak. Anda tidak perlu beli mainan yang banyak atau mahal untuk anak anda. Sebaliknya, mainan-mainan seperti blok pembina, alat mainan masak-masak, kotak-kotak beraneka saiz dan kertas bersama alat lukis lebih berkesan kerana dapat digunakan berkali-kali dengan pelbagai cara.

Jangan lupa juga luangkan masa untuk aktiviti fizikal seperti bermain di taman permainan atau di padang bola. Ini juga memberi anda peluang untuk beriadah bersama anak anda.





# VI Speech & language development in children

Language is what people use to communicate with each other. When we use language, we can understand (receive) and give (express) information. Most children develop language in stages. They usually develop non-verbal communication (body language) before spoken language. You can help your child develop his language by knowing more about these stages, as follows:

	1 to 2 years old	2 to 3 years old
Understanding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Follows a routine</li> <li>• Understands simple 1-step commands, e.g. "Come here."</li> <li>• Demonstrates appropriate use of objects in play e.g. combs a doll's hair</li> <li>• Identifies pictures of familiar objects</li> <li>• Understands "No", "Cannot" (inhibitory words)</li> <li>• Indicates body parts on self, caregiver or soft toy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understands 2-3 step commands e.g. "Pick the toy from the floor and put it in the basket"</li> <li>• Understands simple concepts e.g. big/small, in/on/under</li> <li>• Recognises actions in pictures e.g. sleeping, eating</li> <li>• Understands pronouns e.g. me, my, you</li> <li>• Understands up to 300 words e.g. body parts, food, clothing, animals</li> </ul>
Expressing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uses fun sounds e.g. animal sounds</li> <li>• Can say single words with meaning e.g. "Mama" or "Ayah" when calling for you</li> <li>• Uses gestures e.g. pointing when wanting something</li> <li>• Can answer "What's this?"</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can say 50-200 words</li> <li>• Starts to use 2 word sentences e.g. "Where ball?"</li> <li>• Imitates words and phrases</li> <li>• Names familiar objects in pictures e.g. animals</li> </ul>

Note that these milestones apply to any language your child is familiar with. For example, your child may speak his first words or phrases in Malay if he is mainly exposed to Malay language at home.

Reading to your child is a great way to encourage his speech and language development, whilst enhancing your bond with him. It is never too early to start exposing your child to books.

The National Library Board has a programme called "Babies Can Be Members Too!" Read more about it at

[www.nlb.gov.sg](http://www.nlb.gov.sg)

The Quran has mentioned that the faculty of hearing was created before sight when the child is still in the mother's womb.

*"And Allah brought you out from the wombs of your mothers while you knew nothing, and gave you hearing, sight, and intellect so perhaps you would be thankful."*

**[Surah An-Nahl 16:78]**

You can take this opportunity to also instill Islamic virtues in your child and educate them about the stories of the Prophets while developing their speech potential. Stories such as the Isra' and Mi'raj (the miraculous night journey of the Prophet (PBUH)) will spark your child's curiosity and imagination.

## When to be concerned

If your child is not saying any words and/or not imitating actions or sounds by 18 months of age, or if he shows any of the behaviours listed below, do bring him to see your doctor or paediatrician.

- Does not seem to notice if you are in the room
- Does not seem to notice when spoken to (e.g. seems to hear a car horn or a cat's meow but not when you call his name)
- Appears to be in his own world
- Prefers to play alone; seems to "tune others out"
- Has intense interest in objects young children are not usually interested in (e.g. he would rather carry around a flashlight or ballpoint pen than a stuffed animal or favourite blanket)
- Can say the ABCs, numbers, or words to TV jingles but unable to use words to ask for things he wants
- Uses words or phrases that are unusual for the situation or keeps repeating scripts from TV

In addition, do inform your doctor at any point if your child has stopped speaking or is unable to do things that he used to do before (regression).

## What is Autism?

Autism is a condition that results in differences in social communication and social interaction, together with restricted, repetitive behaviours. Some of the features described above may point towards autism. It is very important that autism be identified early, so that the child can benefit from interventions to improve his or her long-term outcomes.

A study performed in 2024 found that Malay children in Singapore were more likely to be diagnosed with autism later and had a higher rate of co-occurring intellectual disabilities when compared with Chinese children and other ethnicities.

If you are concerned that your child may have autism, do bring him to see a paediatrician or developmental specialist early for further evaluation.

**Reference:** KK Women's and Children's Hospital, Office of the Mufti (MUIS)

For more information on autism, do click on the link below:

<https://ch-api.healthhub.sg/api/public/content/6a1aa87d799744d699fee18a340c653f>

## Penguasaan Bahasa dan Pertuturan

Bertutur adalah salah satu cara kita berkomunikasi antara satu sama lain. Penguasaan bahasa kanak-kanak merangkumi kemahiran kefahaman serta kemahiran bertutur. Secara umum, perkataan pertama akan disebut dalam lingkungan umur 12 hingga 18 bulan. Sebelum mencapai umur 2 tahun, kanak-kanak sepatutnya mampu memahami arahan yang mudah, mengenal pasti beberapa anggota badan, menggunakan beberapa patah perkataan dengan betul, memanggil ibu bapa atau anggota keluarga lain dan menggunakan gerak isyarat seperti menuding jari. Membaca bersama digalakkan untuk memupuk perkembangan bahasa anak anda. Luangkanlah masa untuk membaca dan melawati perpustakaan bersama-sama.

Jikalau anak anda tidak dapat bercakap sebarang patah perkataan apabila sudah berumur 18 bulan ke atas, atau menunjukkan ciri-ciri seperti:

- berkelakuan seolah-olah berada dalam dunia sendiri
- kecenderungan bermain sendirian dan tidak kisah dengan keadaan sekeliling
- kurang bertentang mata apabila berkomunikasi
- tidak meniru aksi atau pergerakan orang lain
- hilang kemahiran bercakap, sila maklumkan kepada doktor anda

Ciri-ciri tersebut mungkin boleh menandakan Autisme.



TOP



## VII. Preventing childhood obesity

Obesity is a rising problem among children and teenagers. Many parents may have the misconception that the chubbier the child is, the cuter or healthier he is.

In fact, a study in 2017 by the Health Promotion Board (HPB) has found that 7 in 10 children who are overweight by 7 years old will remain overweight into their adult years. This puts them at greater risk of developing life-threatening cardiovascular diseases and diabetes.

Childhood obesity can also cause breathing, sleep and joint problems, as well as mental health issues such as low self-esteem and depression.

Unhealthy weight gain in children is usually contributed by poor eating habits and reduced physical activity.

### How to help your child aged 1 to 3 years achieve a healthy Body Mass Index (BMI)? Follow the steps below...

#### • 0 — Zero sweetened beverages

- Avoid introducing your child to sweetened beverages. This includes malted drinks, probiotic cultured milk and fruit juice concentrates (e.g. blackcurrant-flavoured). Encourage your child to drink water to quench his thirst.

Swap formula milk for plain, fresh milk as it contains less sugar. Children above 2 years can have low-fat milk.

#### • 1 — Limit screen time to ONE hour per day and sedentary time to ONE hour at a time.

##### - Screen time

Avoid long periods of screen exposure (watching TV, tablets, mobile devices or computer). Excessive screen time promotes sedentary behaviour, and can affect your child's well-being in many ways. Refer to our chapter on 'Managing Screen time'.

##### - Sedentary time

Limit use of prams/strollers or sitting for prolonged periods of time to encourage your child's motor development.

#### • 2 — Ensure at least TWO servings of fruits and vegetables daily

- Let your child enjoy the goodness of fruits and vegetables. Fruits and vegetables are rich in nutrients and fibre and are essential for a healthy, balanced diet.
- Serve a rainbow of fruits and vegetables for different vitamins and minerals.
- Getting your child to eat his greens may not always be easy. Give vegetables an interesting twist. Try cutting vegetables into different shapes and sizes. Use different vegetables to add colour to dishes.

#### • 3 — Spend at least THREE hours in a variety of physical activities

- Make physical activity a part of your child's everyday play.
- Play with your child to boost his concentration skills and attention span, and to help develop motor skills, healthy bones and muscles.
- Active bodies do make brighter minds, and it is best to start early.

#### 4 — Practice the FOUR Dos for a healthy lifestyle

- 1. Encourage regular sleep and wake times with no overnight milk feeds.** Children aged 1 to 2 years need 11 to 14 hours of good quality sleep, including naps, with regular sleep and wake times. Avoid night milk feeds as it promotes tooth decay.
- 2. Encourage self-feeding with supervision and without any distractions.** Allow your child to choose how much to eat, and do not force-feed. Your child will be able to regulate his own food intake. Avoid any digital devices during meals.
- 3. Encourage healthy snacking at regular times to prevent over-eating.** Offer your child nutrient-dense foods as snacks, 2 to 3 hours apart from main meals. Pair fruits with protein for a healthy snack.
- 4. Encourage home-cooked family meals.** This will allow you to limit the amount of salt, sugar and oil in meals and increase the amount of vegetables for a more balanced diet. Parents are important role models for healthy habits during meal-times.

*The Prophet s.a.w taught us to be aware of our food intake and to not overeat to protect us from sicknesses caused by eating and drinking excessively. He said: "The son of Adam does not fill any vessel worse than his stomach. It is sufficient for the son of Adam to eat a few mouthfuls, to keep him going. If he must do that (fill his stomach), then let him fill one third with food, one third with drink, and one third with air." [Sunan Ibn Majah: 3349]*

*Allah mentions in the Quran, "Eat and drink, but do not waste. Surely He does not like the wasteful." [Surah Al-A'raf 7:31]*

#### Reference:

1. KK Women's and Children's Hospital
2. Singapore Integrated 24-hour Activity Guidelines for Early Childhood
3. Health Promotion Board
4. Office of the Mufti (MUIS)

## Mencegah Masalah Kegemukan

Masalah kegemukan semakin meningkat dalam kalangan kanak-kanak dan remaja. Di Singapura, kajian Lembaga Penggalakan Kesihatan (HPB) menunjukkan bagi setiap 10 kanak-kanak, 7 orang kanak-kanak yang gemuk pada usia 7 tahun akan kekal gemuk apabila dewasa kelak. Ini menambahkan risiko penyakit-penyakit kronik seperti kencing manis dan darah tinggi. Pada usia muda, kegemukan boleh membawa kepada masalah seperti mudah sesak nafas, berhenti bernafas sewaktu tidur ('sleep apnea'), tekanan pada sendi-sendi, kurang keyakinan diri dan kemurungan. Kenaikan berat badan yang berlebihan selalunya disebabkan oleh tabiat pemakanan yang tidak sihat dan kekurangan aktiviti fizikal.

Antara cara-cara untuk mencegah masalah kegemukan dalam kalangan kanak-kanak berusia 1 ke 3 tahun:

1. Elakkan daripada memberi minuman yang manis kepada anak anda. Ini termasuk jus buah-buahan dan minuman malt coklat. Jika anak anda haus, galakkan minum air kosong.
2. Gantikan susu formula dengan susu segar pada usia lebih daripada 1 tahun.
3. Elakkan daripada memberi anak anda susu pada waktu malam.
4. Pastikan sekurang-kurangnya 2 hidangan buah-buahan atau sayur-sayuran sehari.
5. Masakan rumah lebih baik untuk mengawal kadar garam, gula dan lemak dalam pemakanan untuk anak anda.
6. Hadkan waktu menghadap skrin (menonton televisyen, telefon bimbit atau alat elektronik) ke 1 jam sehari.
7. Luangkan masa sekurang-kurangnya 3 jam sehari dalam aktiviti-aktiviti seperti bermain di luar, jalan-jalan dan beriadah.

# Section 4b.

## Child Safety

Keselamatan Anak-anak





# I. Safe sleep

Learn more about how to ensure a safe environment for your baby during sleep.

To reduce the risk of accidental suffocation during sleep, the following measures are advised:

## 1. Prepare an appropriate sleeping area for your newborn baby

- Ensure that the crib, bassinet or playpen meets recommended safety standards and has a tight-fitting, firm mattress and fitted sheet designed for that particular product.
- **Nothing else should be in the crib except for baby.** Do not place pillows, blankets, stuffed animals, crib bumpers or other bedding in the crib as rolling into any of these items may unintentionally block baby's air flow.
- If you are worried that baby may feel cold, dress him in long-sleeved, well-fitted pyjamas. Or, you can use infant sleep clothing such as a sleep sack or wearable blanket. For our climate in Singapore, one layer in addition to baby's clothes is enough.
- You can swaddle your baby, but make sure that baby is always on his back when swaddled. The swaddle should not be too tight. When your baby looks like he is trying to roll over, you should stop swaddling.

## 2. Keep baby's crib in the same room where you sleep for the first 6 months or, ideally, for the first year.

- The risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) has been shown to decrease by as much as 50% with room sharing.
- However, **sharing the same bed with you is not recommended.** Studies have shown that the risk of SIDS is especially higher when bed-sharing if:
  - Baby is younger than 4 months old.
  - Baby was born prematurely or with low birth weight.
  - You or your spouse is a smoker (even if you do not smoke in bed).
  - You smoked during pregnancy.
  - You have taken any medicines that might make it harder for you to wake up.
  - The surface is soft, such as a waterbed, old mattress, sofa, couch, or armchair.
  - There is soft bedding like pillows or blankets on the bed.

*Prophet (PBUH) encouraged not to sleep alone or leave the baby to sleep alone – "Prophet forbade (us) from seclusion; that a man sleeps alone or travels alone."  
(Musnad Ahmad)*

## 3. Always place your baby to sleep on his back

- Babies who sleep on their tummies or in the side position can roll over more easily, increasing the risk of suffocation.

## What about other infant sleep products?

- Be cautious about buying products that claim to reduce the risk of SIDS.
- Wedges, head positioners, special mattresses and specialised sleep surfaces have not been shown to reduce the risk of SIDS.
- Do not rely on home heart or breathing monitors to reduce the risk of SIDS. If you have questions about using these monitors for other health conditions, speak with your doctor or paediatrician.

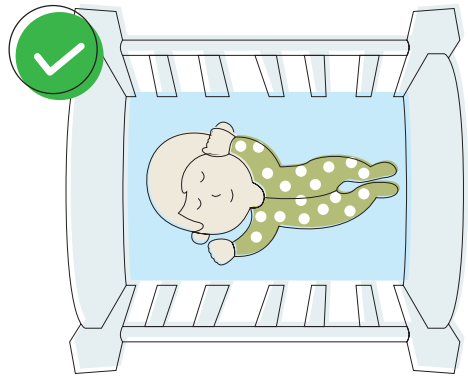
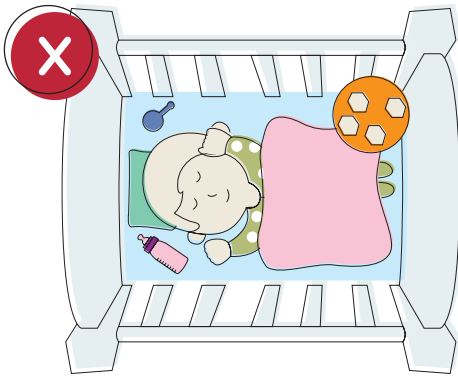
*Prophet (PBUH) "When any one of you goes to bed, he should take hold of the hem of his lower garment and then should clean (his bed) with the help of that and then should recite the name of Allah (i.e. Bismillah)..."*

*Reported by **Abu Hurairah (Imam Muslim)***

*Recite ayatul kursi for your baby. The Prophet (PBUH) said "Whoever recites ayatul kursi Allah will send an angel to protect him until morning."**[Al-Bukhari]***

*Recite the last 3 Qul (Al-Ikhlās, Al-Falaq & Annas) – "The Prophet (PBUH) will read 3 Qul and blow into his palm and wipe them over his body starting from his head, face and his front body."**[Al-Bukhari]***

**Reference:** American Academy of Paediatrics (AAP), KK Women's and Children's Hospital, Office of the Mufti (MUIS)



## Panduan Keselamatan Sewaktu Tidur

Untuk mengurangkan risiko kematian bayi secara mengejut (Sudden Infant Death Syndrome atau SIDS), Persatuan Pediatrik Amerika (American Academy of Pediatrics) telah mengisytiharkan garis panduan berikut:

### Tempat tidur bayi

- Sediakan katil bayi yang mengikut tahap keselamatan terkini. Pastikan tiada sebarang ruang atau celah di mana bayi anda boleh terjatuh melaluinya.
- Gunakan tilam bayi yang padat, kemas dan pejal (tidak terlalu lembut).
- Jangan letakkan sebarang bantal, pelapik tilam, selimut, penghadang katil, mainan atau anak patung di dalam katil bayi.
  - Barang-barang lembut yang diletakkan di dalam katil bayi berpotensi menjadi punca halangan pernafasan.
- Jika anda risau bayi anda akan berasa sejuk pada waktu malam, pakaikan baju tidur lengan panjang yang selesa.
- Katil bayi seharusnya diletakkan berdekatan dengan katil ibu bapa.
- Elakkan daripada tidur bersama bayi anda di atas katil yang sama. Jangan sesekali tidurkan bayi anda di atas sofa.

### Posisi tidur

- Posisi tidur yang sihat bagi bayi ialah tidur terlentang, bukan meniarap atau miring.



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## II. Safety on the road

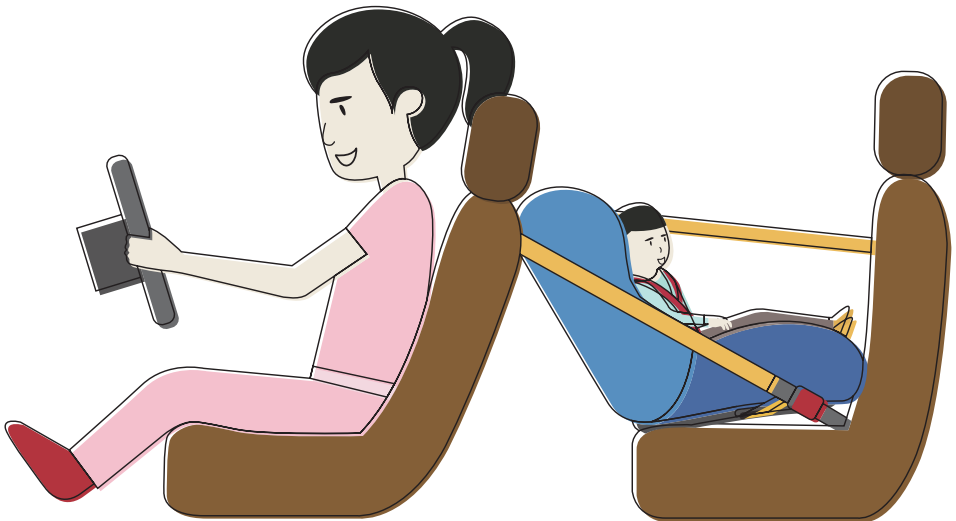
Car seats are the only safe way to travel with children in motor vehicles. It is never safe for children to ride in a car in their mothers' arms, on someone's lap, or in a baby carrier or sling.

Do remember to prepare an appropriate rear-facing car seat suitable for your newborn infant for his journey home from the hospital.

Using car seats from birth can drastically reduce the risk of death and injury in road traffic accidents. By Singapore's laws, all passengers below 1.35m of height (approximately 12 years of age) must use an approved child restraint appropriate to their height and weight. Taxis are exempt from this legal requirement, but they are not exempt from the laws of physics and the risks remain the same.

**Your child's safety is the utmost priority.**

- When securing your baby in his car seat, ensure that he is not swaddled. Do not use extra support pillows that did not come with the car seat.
- The car seat should never be placed in the front seat of the car due to the presence of the active air bag.
- Keep your baby in the rear-facing car seat until they are at least 2 years old.



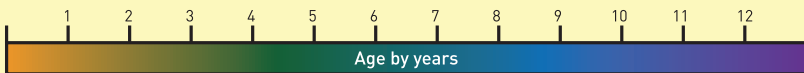
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Here is a useful guide for car safety for different ages:

## Buckle Up Safely

Guidelines for Parents and Caregivers

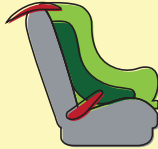
Making sure your child is in appropriate car seat or booster seat can save his or her life.



**Rear-Facing Car Seat**

From birth up to age 2\*

Infants and young children should be kept in a rear-facing car seat for as long as possible until they exceed the highest weight or height allowed for their seat, and at least after their 2nd birthday.



**Front-Facing Car Seat**

From age 2 up to at least age 5\*

Children who have outgrown the rear-facing car seat should travel in a forward-facing car seat, up to an age of 5 at least, or when they exceed the weight or height limits of the seat.



**Booster Seat**

From age 5 up until seat belts fit properly\*

Children 5 years old and above should travel in a booster seat, until they are about 1.4 metres tall.



**Seat Belt**

Once seat belts fit properly without a booster seat

Children can graduate to an adult seat belt only when the seat belt fits them. The lap belt should fit across the upper thighs and the shoulder belt across the chest.

### Be Safe!

In the presence of an active air bag, never place a rear-facing car seat in the front seat of a car. In fact, children 12 years old and younger should not sit the front seat.

\*Recommended age ranges for each seat type vary to account for differences in child growth and height/weight limits of car seats and booster seats. Use the car seat or booster seat owner's manual to check installation and the seat height/weight limits, and proper seat use.

Reference: KK Women's and Children's Hospital

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## Panduan Keselamatan Dalam Kenderaan

Apabila berada dalam kereta, pastikan bayi dan kanak-kanak duduk di atas kerusi kereta yang sesuai dan selamat. Statistik menunjukkan bahawa penggunaan kerusi kereta sejak lahir banyak mengurangkan risiko kematian dan kecederaan di jalan raya.

### Garis panduan memilih kerusi kereta:

Lahir sehingga 2 tahun: Gunakan kerusi kereta bayi yang menghadap ke belakang. Pastikan kerusi kereta sesuai dengan umur dan berat badan anak anda.

2 sehingga 5 tahun: Gunakan kerusi kereta yang menghadap ke depan.

Dari 5 tahun ke atas: Gunakan 'booster seat' sehingga ketinggian anak anda melebihi 1.4 meter.

Kerusi kereta sesekali tidak boleh dipasang di tempat duduk sebelah pemandu. Ini untuk mengelakkan anak kecil tercedera jika beg udara kereta dilepaskan sewaktu berlakunya brek kecemasan.





## III. Safety in your home

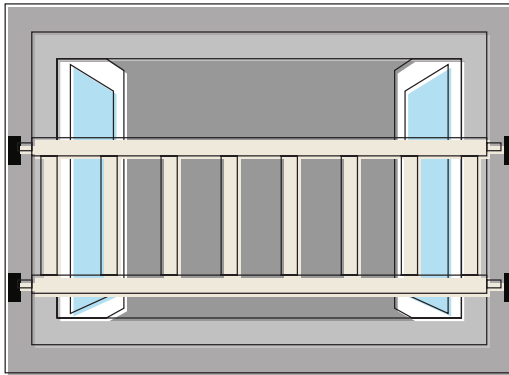
Every parent wants their child to grow up healthy and strong in a safe environment.

Young children are naturally curious and love to explore. From the time your child starts to crawl and pull to stand, this newfound mobility will mean you may need to make changes to your house to make it safe for him to explore.

The good news is that there are simple and easy steps that you can take to protect your child from accidents and injuries.

### Preventing Falls

- Install approved safety gates at the top and bottom of staircases, and attach them to the wall if possible.
- Keep your baby and young child secured when using high chairs, swings or strollers.
- When removing your baby from a carrier, place the carrier on the floor and not on top of furniture such as a table.
- Properly install window guards and stops to prevent falls from height. Windows above the first floor should have an emergency release device in case of fire.



### Furniture Safety

- Mount flat-panel televisions to the wall to prevent them from falling off stands.
- Use brackets, braces or wall straps to secure unstable or top-heavy furniture such as wardrobes, to the wall.

### Fire Safety

- Keep flammable items, such as dish towels or wooden spoons, away from your stovetop.
- Have a fire extinguisher in the kitchen in case of emergency, and ensure you know how to use it.
- Blow out candles when you leave the room or before you go to sleep.
- In the event of a fire, leave your home immediately. Once you are out of the house, do not re-enter.

## Preventing Burns & Scalds

- Do not carry your child while cooking on the stove. Place your child in a secured high chair where you can still see them.
- Keep an eye on appliances such as irons or hair dryers that can heat up quickly or stay warm. Unplug and store these items at a safe location after use.
- Keep appliance cords out of your child's reach, especially if the appliances produce a lot of heat.
- Test the water temperature with your wrist or elbow before giving your baby a bath.
- To prevent hot food or liquid spills, use the back burner of your stove and turn pot handles away from the edge.
- Keep hot foods and liquids away from the edge of your counters and tables.

## Water Safety

- Actively supervise your child in and around water.
- Avoid distractions of any kind, such as using mobile phones.
- Once bath time is over, drain the tub immediately.
- Keep toilet lids and the doors of bathrooms and laundry rooms closed to prevent drowning.
- Do not leave pails of water in the house as children can fall in.
- At an early age, teach your child not to go near or into water without an adult's company. This includes small bodies of water like estate ponds or fountains.
- When at pools or beaches, all children should swim with an adult at any one time.

**Remember, drowning in children can occur even with small amounts of water!**

## Poison Prevention

- Store all household products and cleaning solutions out of your child's sight and reach. Remember that storage areas under kitchen or bathroom sinks are at the eye-level of young children.
- Keep cleaning products in their original containers. Do not store a potentially poisonous product in another container other than its original container, such as storing liquid detergent in a plastic fruit juice bottle, where your child may mistakenly consume the liquid detergent.

## Medication Safety

- Store all medications and supplements out of reach and sight after every use. Young children may mistake them as candies, and ingesting even 1 or 2 tablets of adult medication can be toxic to a child.
- Use the dosing device (e.g. spoon, cup or syringe) that comes with the medicine, not a kitchen spoon. Kitchen spoons are not consistent in size, and a teaspoon or tablespoon used for cooking will not measure the same amount as the dosing device.



TOP

Reference: KK Women's and Children's Hospital

## Panduan Keselamatan di Rumah

Anak-anak hendaklah membesar dalam persekitaran yang selamat. Kanak-kanak kecil dengan semula jadinya mempunyai tabiat ingin tahu, dan suka meneroka alam sekeliling. Ini bermula dari rumah anda sendiri. Pastikan rumah anda selamat untuk anak anda, terutama sekali apabila dia mula merangkak dan berjalan.

### Untuk mengelakkan daripada kecederaan:

1. Pasang tali keselamatan apabila anak anda berada di kereta sorong, kerusi makan kanak-kanak atau buaian.
2. Pastikan tingkap rumah dikunci atau dipasang jeriji.
3. Cabut palam alat-alat elektrik seperti seterika atau pengering rambut apabila tidak digunakan. Alat-alat ini boleh mengakibatkan kelecuman.
4. Pastikan wayar-wayar elektrik diletakkan jauh daripada dicapai anak anda.
5. Letak makanan atau minuman panas di tengah meja jauh daripada dicapai anak-anak. Jangan dibiarkan di tepi meja.

### Untuk mengelakkan daripada keracunan:

1. Simpan bahan-bahan pencuci jauh daripada anak anda.
2. Jangan gunakan botol minuman kosong untuk diisi bahan-bahan pencuci.
3. Pada pandangan kanak-kanak kecil, ubat yang berwarna-warni menyerupai gula-gula. Simpanlah segala ubat, vitamin dan suplemen di tempat yang selamat. Satu butir pil untuk orang dewasa boleh membawa padah jika tersalah dimakan oleh kanak-kanak.
4. Jika anak anda perlu makan ubat doktor, gunakan sudu khas yang disediakan. Jangan gunakan sudu makan atau alat lain kerana sukutannya mungkin tidak sama dengan sudu ubat.

### Untuk mengelakkan daripada mati lemas:

1. Jika anak anda sedang berenang, bermandi-manda atau bermain dalam air, pastikan anak anda dijaga dengan teliti oleh seorang dewasa yang bertanggungjawab dan dapat menumpukan sepenuh perhatian.
2. Jangan biarkan baldi atau bekas-bekas yang berisi air di kamar mandi.
3. Pastikan pintu kamar mandi dan tempat cuci baju sentiasa ditutup rapat.



TOP

# Section 4c.

## Useful Tips & Advice

Tip-tip dan Nasihat yang berguna





# I. Newborn skin care

A newborn baby's skin is much more fragile than the skin of older children and adults. Newborn skin is thinner and more easily damaged by strong and irritating skin products. It also contains fewer and less developed sweat glands, predisposing to overheating.

## Skin Cleansing

Newborn babies can enjoy a gentle bath or cleansing of the skin for 5 to 10 minutes, once a day. Use slightly warm tap water (ideal temperature between 36°C to 40°C) and a gentle soap-free cleanser. The use of harsh soaps is not recommended for newborn or infant skin.

After bathing, pat the baby's skin dry with a soft towel before dressing. In our warm climate, one layer of light cotton clothing including mittens and booties, is sufficient.

## Use of Moisturisers

Moisturisers help to protect your baby's skin and enhance its maturation and repair. In newborns with a family history of allergic conditions such as eczema, asthma or allergic rhinitis, the application of moisturisers can prevent atopic dermatitis (eczema).

You should apply moisturisers after bath for the best effect, on all your baby's skin surfaces including the face. Choose moisturisers that do not contain fragrances, dyes and preservatives. Moisturisers that mimic the natural skin oils, especially those containing ceramides have been shown to help form a healthy skin barrier in babies.

Always follow your doctor's instructions when applying medicated creams or ointments.

## Care of the Umbilical Cord

The umbilical cord usually separates from the baby 7 to 10 days after birth. Before that, it is important to keep the area clean by gently cleansing with cool, boiled water or a soap-free cleanser. Antiseptic solutions are not required and may lead to irritation of the skin if used excessively or when the skin is sensitive.

The cord clamp can be left in place until the cord separates. Bring your baby to the doctor or paediatrician if there are signs of infection like redness, offensive smell, and/or yellow discharge.

## Care of the Nappy Area

Diapers should be changed frequently, usually every 3 to 4 hours, or when soiled. Disposable diapers are recommended.

As excessive use of wet wipes may cause irritation to the diaper area, you can use water or soap-free cleansers with cotton wool instead. A thick barrier cream should be applied at each diaper change. The use of talcum powder at the diaper area is not recommended as this can dry the skin and cause irritation.

Nappy rash is a very common problem. If you have practised the above measures but the rash is persistent, especially if there is worsening redness or flaking, do bring your baby to see a doctor.

**Reference:** KK Women's and Children's Hospital

## Penjagaan Kulit Bayi

Kulit bayi sangat halus dan kadangkala sangat sensitif pada produk-produk kulit yang tidak sesuai. Berhati-hatilah apabila menjaga kulit bayi. Penggunaan pelembap kulit penting kerana ia menjadi lapisan perlindungan untuk kulit bayi anda. Ia juga dapat mengelakkan ruam ekzema dalam kalangan bayi yang mempunyai kulit sensitif. Sapukan pelembap kulit ke atas semua bahagian tubuh bayi anda selepas mandi. Gunakan pelembap yang tidak mengandungi bahan pewangi, pewarna atau pengawet.

Tali pusat bayi selalunya tanggal antara 7 hingga 10 hari selepas lahir. Sebelum itu, bersihkan tali pusat dengan menggunakan kapas dan air suam. Anda tidak perlu menggunakan antiseptik. Jika terdapat tanda-tanda jangkitan di tali pusat seperti kemerahan, nanah atau mempunyai bau yang kurang menyenangkan, sila bawa bayi anda untuk berjumpa doktor.

Pastikan anda menjaga kulit di bahagian punggung bayi anda. Untuk mengelakkan daripada ruam di bahagian punggung, tukar lampin bayi setiap 3-4 jam, atau setiap kali kotor/penuh dengan najis/air kencing. Lampin pakai buang disyorkan berbanding lampin kain. Anda juga boleh gunakan krim pelindung yang sesuai.





## II. Infant massage

Touch is the physical expression of love and it is a universal language that babies can understand before they can talk.

### Benefits of infant massage

- Promotes parent-child bonding
- Calms a fussy or colicky baby, and helps baby to release tension, anxiety and irritability
- Helps baby to relax and fall asleep easily
- Encourages body awareness, coordination and motor development
- Promotes emotional growth

### Tips on infant massage

- It is best to do it after a warm bath, before bedtime, when your baby is still alert and not drowsy.
- Lay your baby on a flat surface, e.g. a mattress. You can also sit on the floor and make a diamond shape with your legs; soles facing each other. Place a blanket over your legs to form a “cradle” for baby to lie in.
- Remember to dress baby in his diaper.
- Use a little baby oil or lotion. It makes the massage smoother. Do a patch test first, to make sure that the oil or lotion is not too harsh for baby’s delicate skin. Do not use pure concentrated essential oils.
- Rub the oil or lotion between your palms to warm it up before putting your hands on baby, so that he does not get a shock from your cold hands.
- Sing or hum to baby, or talk and make eye contact with baby while massaging. Baby will like that!

Follow this link for a useful step-by-step guide on infant massage:  
<https://www.healthhub.sg/live-healthy/1195/baby-time-to-unwind>

**Reference:** Health Promotion Board, KK Women’s and Children’s Hospital

### Mengurut Bayi

Deria sentuhan diibaratkan tanda kasih sayang bagi bayi. Bayi suka dipeluk, dimanja, didodoi dan juga diurut. Faedah urutan bayi:

- Mengeratkan ikatan antara bayi dengan ibu bapa
- Menenangkan bayi yang sedang menangis atau gelisah
- Menolong bayi untuk tidur dengan lena
- Membina keyakinan bayi dan meningkatkan perkembangan emosi bayi



## III. Soothing your baby

Babies cry as a form of communication. Sometimes it may be challenging to soothe a crying baby.

### Try to identify why your baby is crying.

- **Hunger:** Baby may show signs like sucking his fists, turning towards your breasts, or rooting (making sucking motions with his mouth).
- **Soiled diaper:** Check for and change dirty diapers immediately.
- **Too hot or too cold:** Baby may appear uncomfortable and may be flushed or sweaty. Remove or add clothing as necessary, and adjust the room temperature.
- **Illness:** If baby feels very warm, check his temperature. Use an axillary (armpit) thermometer as this is more accurate in an infant 6 months old and below. If baby is having a fever, do bring him to see a doctor. Refer to our chapter, "Managing the Sick Child".
- **Overstimulation:** This happens when baby is tired but cannot sleep, and is frustrated.

### Try these methods to soothe your baby.

- **Make sure all of baby's comfort needs are met**
- **Swaddling** - Swaddling provides newborns with a sense of security and comfort as this is the position they were cocooned in while in the womb.
- **Massage** - You can try some gentle massages to soothe baby.
- **Change in stimulation** - Dim the lights where you and baby are, or go with baby to another room. You can even try taking baby for a ride in the car or stroller.
- **Cuddle your baby** - Hold baby close to your chest or against your body while you walk or sit in a rocking chair.
- **Soothing Sounds** - Babies love attention and sounds, so talk, sing or coo to him softly. To try to get baby to sleep, it's best to put him in a dark, quiet room with no distractions. Some babies prefer a room with soothing background noise like a fan, a ticking clock, white noise or soft music.

It is okay to pick baby up and carry him when he cries. Baby needs to know that someone is there for him. Avoid leaving baby to "cry it out".

If you get to the point where you are very frustrated with the crying and you feel angry at yourself and your baby, it is time to take a break. If you have a family member or another trusted adult at home with you, ask for help. If you are alone, make sure that baby is fed, dry and safe. Leave him in the crib while you step away to another room for a few moments. Stay calm and your baby is more likely to calm down too.

**NEVER shake your baby to make him stop crying! Shaking can cause internal bleeding and damage your baby's brain.**



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Most of the time, the crying will stop when baby's comfort needs are met. However, do bring baby to see a doctor if you observe any of the following:

- Baby cries constantly for more than 3 hours or cannot be soothed despite trying for a reasonable period of time.
- Baby's cry sounds different or "painful" to you
- Baby has signs of illness like fever, cough, runny nose, vomiting or diarrhoea
- Baby is lethargic and/or not feeding well
- You feel scared that you are tired or angry and might hurt your baby

**Reference:** KK Women's and Children's Hospital, Health Promotion Board

## Cara Menenangkan Bayi Anda

Cara bayi berkomunikasi adalah dengan menangis. Tangisan bayi mempunyai pelbagai maksud dan keinginan. Dengan itu, ibu bapa perlu memahami nada/suara tangisan bayi supaya lebih mudah untuk mengetahui apa yang bayi mahukan.

### **Antara sebab-sebab mengapa bayi lazim menangis:**

- Lapar atau haus
- Lampin yang kotor
- Terlalu panas atau sejuk
- Sakit
- Tidak dapat tidur kerana terlalu banyak gangguan

### **Cubalah cara-cara berikut untuk menenangkan bayi yang sedang menangis:**

- Pastikan bayi anda bersih dan tidak kelaparan.
- Gunakan bengkung bayi, belai dan peluk bayi anda.
- Urut bayi anda (lihat bab mengenai mengurut bayi).
- Tukar suasana sekeliling bayi anda. Sebagai contoh, padamkan lampu di dalam bilik, atau bawa bayi anda ke bilik lain. Anda juga boleh membawanya keluar menaiki kereta atau kereta sorong.
- Bercakap dengan bayi anda menggunakan nada yang lembut.
- Mainkan muzik yang menenangkan, atau dodoikan bayi anda.

Elakkan daripada membiarkan bayi anda menangis berterusan secara sendirian. Jika anda berasa terlalu tertekan atau marah kerana bayi anda tidak berhenti menangis, pastikan bayi anda diletakkan di tempat yang selamat seperti katil tidurnya. Tarik nafas, rehat seketika dan cuba lagi. Kalau boleh, minta tolong daripada ahli keluarga lain.

**Jangan sesekali menggoncang badan bayi anda kerana ini boleh menyebabkan pendarahan di dalam otak.**

Bawalah bayi anda untuk berjumpa doktor jika:

- Bayi anda menangis lebih 3 jam atau tidak berhenti walaupun anda sudah cuba sedaya upaya untuk menenangkannya.
- Anda syak bayi anda dalam kesakitan.
- Bayi anda tidak mahu menyusu.
- Bayi anda batuk, selsema, muntah, ceret-beret atau demam.
- Anda rasa terlalu tertekan sehingga tidak dapat kawal emosi.



## IV. Dental care

It is important to start taking care of your child's teeth early to prevent tooth decay. Tooth decay, or damage to the tooth's surface (enamel), is caused by mouth bacteria acting on sugars in food and drinks, producing acids which eat away at your child's teeth.

### Prevention of Tooth Decay

1. Brush your child's teeth once they emerge, usually around 6 months old.
  - Use a smear of toothpaste (size of a rice-grain) containing 1000ppm of fluoride 2 times a day.
  - Fluoride protects your child's teeth from tooth decay by strengthening it.
  - A smear amount is recommended for children below 3 years old, who tend to swallow toothpaste.
  - When your child is older, above 3 years old, you can increase the toothpaste to a pea-sized amount.
2. Brush your child's teeth after (not before) his last milk feed. As formula milk is sweet, do not put your child to bed with a bottle of formula milk as this can cause tooth decay.
3. Always supervise your child when brushing teeth, and keep toothpaste out of reach.
4. Minimise consumption of sweetened beverages and snacks with high sugar content as this can cause severe tooth decay. Dried fruits such as raisins, sweetened cereals, cakes and biscuits with filling or fruit juices have high sugar content. Nuts, cheese and yoghurt naturally sweetened with fruits are better choices.
5. Take your child to a child-friendly dentist when he turns 1 year old.

**Reference:** Health Promotion Board, KK Women's and Children's Hospital

Follow this link for a detailed guide to dental care for your child:

<https://www.healthhub.sg/live-healthy/1272/growing-kid-help-your-child-smile-for-life>

### Penjagaan Gigi

Jagalah kebersihan mulut(gigi dan gusi) anak anda dari awal lagi untuk mengelakkan daripada kereputan gigi dan penyakit gusi.

- Gosok gigi apabila gigi mula tumbuh (lazimnya sekitar 6 bulan). Gunakan setitik sahaja ubat gigi khas untuk bayi yang mengandungi kadar fluorida 1000ppm, dua kali sehari.
- Gosok gigi bayi anda selepas habis minum susu pada waktu malam.
- Elakkan daripada menidurkan bayi anda sambil menghisap sebotol susu kerana susu mengandungi banyak gula yang boleh menyebabkan kereputan gigi.
- Kurangkan minuman manis seperti jus buah-buahan. Kurangkan makanan yang mengandungi banyak gula seperti kek, kismis dan biskut berkrum.
- Bawalah anak anda berjumpa dengan doktor gigi kanak-kanak apabila berumur 1 tahun ke atas, untuk pemeriksaan gigi.
- Sentiasa memantau anak anda apabila menggosok gigi, dan ajarkannya supaya jangan menelan ubat gigi.



## V. Eye care

Myopia, or shortsightedness, is very common in Singapore. About half of our children develop myopia by age 12 years.

This condition is thought to be partly hereditary (in the genes), and partly due to environmental factors. You can help delay your child from getting it—or if your child is already myopic, prevent it from getting worse, by following the eye-care tips below:

- ✔ Start by adopting healthy lifestyle habits. Ensure your child:
  - Has a balanced diet
  - Has enough sleep
  - Has regular outdoor activities in the sun
- ✔ Limit screen time for your toddler
  - Refer to our chapter, “Managing Screen Time”
- ✔ Ensure that your child doesn’t have hair or a fringe that covers her eyes.

When reading:

- Hold the book 30 cm away.
- Sit upright and ensure adequate lighting, but don’t read under strong sunlight or with light shining against the face.
- Do not read books with small print.
- Do not read in a moving vehicle.

When watching TV or engaging in supervised screentime:

- Sit upright and ensure adequate lighting.
- Watch TV from 3 meters away, with the height of the TV at eye-level or lower.
- Relax the eyes after 30 to 40 minutes of doing any near work.

**Reference:** Health Promotion Board, KK Women’s and Children’s Hospital

### Penjagaan Kesihatan Mata

Kira-kira 50% kanak-kanak di Singapura bawah umur 12 tahun mengalami masalah rabun mata. Untuk mengelakkan rabun mata berlaku, jagalah mata anak anda sejak dari awal :

- Pastikan anak anda mengamalkan gaya hidup yang sihat – pemakanan yang seimbang, cukup tidur dan aktif.
- Kajian menunjukkan bahawa risiko mengalami masalah rabun berkurangan jika kanak-kanak banyak melakukan aktiviti fizikal di luar.
- Elakkan berlebihan “screen time” atau berhadapan dengan skrin televisyen, telefon bimbit atau alat elektronik lain.



## VI. Managing screen time

Screen time refers to the time spent on electronic devices with screens. These include TV screens, laptops/desktop computers, mobile devices (smartphones & tablets) and, handheld game consoles. While some screen time can be educational, it is easy to go overboard. Some caregivers may use screen time to 'babysit' their young children so they are able to do their daily chores.

### What are the professional recommendations on screen time for children?

The Ministry of Health (MOH) recommends that children under 18 months old should not be given any screen use unless for interactive video chatting. Any TV in the background should be turned off.

For those between 18 months and 6 years, screen use outside of school should be limited to less than 1 hour per day. Screens should not be used to occupy or distract children. Screens should also not be used during meals and 1 hour before bedtime.

When using screens, choose educational and age-appropriate content. Watch programmes together and discuss the content with your child.

Children aged 7 to 12 years old should have screen time limited to less than 2 hours per day, unless it is related to schoolwork.

### Why is too much screen time harmful?

Excessive screen time exposure has been associated with various medical and developmental problems including the following:

#### 1. Behavioural problems

Short attention span, aggression, violence, bullying and risk-taking behaviours

#### 2. Irregular sleep/sleep deprivation

Difficulty falling asleep, disturbed sleep routines and nightmares

#### 3. Language, cognitive and motor delays

#### 4. Poor academic performance

#### 5. Obesity

### How do you manage your child's screen time?

- Place firm limits on screen time depending on your child's age.
  - Agree on a daily screen time limit within your family and other caregivers such as grandparents or helpers, and adhere to it.
  - Explain to your child about screen time limit, and consequences if the limit is exceeded (e.g. no screen time at all the next day).
- Set a good example when your child is present. Limit your own screen time and avoid watching or playing violent or other inappropriate content when your child is present.
- Eliminate unnecessary background screen time, e.g. TV screen is on when your child is doing other activities. Turn off the TV to reduce sensory overload and distractions to your child's attention.
- Discourage repetitive viewings of the same show. Children can easily repeat a programme on video-sharing websites. Switch off the screen after 1 episode of the programme.
- Do not let your child eat while watching a screen device. This includes their regular meals and snacks.
- Keep screen devices out of the bedroom to enable you to monitor the content that your child is being exposed to.
- Avoid any screen time 1 hour before bedtime. This allows your child's sleep hormone (melatonin) to rise naturally, and for you to do a bedtime routine such as reading a story or singing a lullaby, to promote parent-child bonding.

- Avoid purchasing more devices than you need. It is not necessary for your child to own his own TV, smartphone or tablet. He can access your device for a limited time. Having a password on your screen device will prevent unauthorised use.

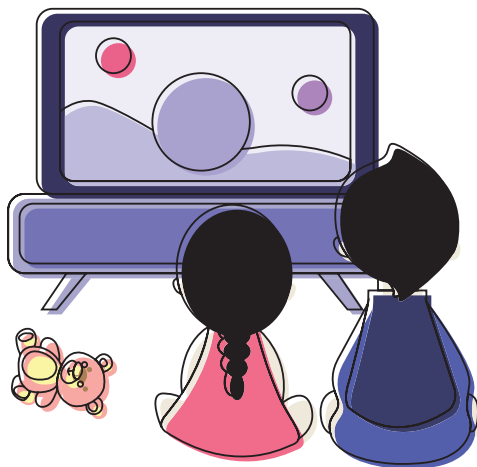
### How else can I entertain my child without the use of a screen device?

Screen time is generally a solitary and passive activity. However, young children need to learn to interact socially, communicate with others, perform physical exercise, develop imaginative play, think creatively and engage in multi-sensory exploration.

*Refer to our chapter on 'Playing with your child' for play ideas to entertain your child.*

#### Reference:

1. Guidance on Screen Use in Children, Ministry of Health
2. KK Women's and Children's Hospital



## Pengawasan “Screen time”

“Screen time” ialah masa yang diluankan di hadapan skrin telefon bimbit (smartphone), menonton televisyen, bermain komputer atau permainan video. Apabila kanak-kanak dibiasakan dengan smartphone, mereka akan duduk diam dan menumpukan perhatian berhibur berjam-jam. “Screen time” kalau tidak dikawal boleh mengkhayalkan.

“Screen time” ialah aktiviti yang tidak aktif secara fizikal. Tenaga yang sangat sedikit digunakan semasa membuat aktiviti tersebut. Meluankan masa yang terlalu lama menghadap skrin memudaratkan kerana menjejaskan perkembangan emosi, fizikal dan kemahiran berbahasa. Kajian telah menunjukkan bahawa kanak-kanak sedemikian mempunyai prestasi akademik yang lemah, kurang perhatian di sekolah, mempunyai masalah emosi seperti kerap melakukan keganasan dan tidak cukup tidur. Tambahan pula, kadar obesiti lebih tinggi dalam kalangan kanak-kanak ini.

Kementerian Kesihatan Singapura mengesyorkan:

Bawah 18 bulan: Elakkan kegunaan sebarang skrin elektronik selain “video call” (panggilan video bersama ahli keluarga)

Antara 18 bulan hingga 6 tahun: Hadkan penontonan skrin supaya tidak melebihi 1 jam sehari. Ibu bapa perlu menonton bersama dengan anak-anak, dan mengulas semula atau memberi penerangan setiap apa yang dipelajari daripada konten media.

Antara 7 hingga 12 tahun: Hadkan penontonan skrin supaya tidak melebihi 2 jam sehari, kecuali diperlukan untuk tugas sekolah.



## VII. Toilet training

### When should I begin toilet training my child?

- Toilet training can begin when your child shows signs of readiness
- In general, starting before age 2 is not recommended as the skills and physical development your child needs for toilet training only develop between 18 months to 2.5 years
- Your child may be ready for toilet training when he:
  - Can imitate your behaviour and can demonstrate independence by saying “No”
  - Expresses interest in toilet training, e.g. following you to the bathroom
  - Is able to indicate that diapers are wet/soiled or that he is urinating/defecating
  - Is able to pull clothes up and down (or on and off)
- Timing is important
  - Toilet training should not be started when your child is ill or experiencing major life changes such as moving house, new siblings, new school or a new child care situation

### What are some tips I can follow for toilet training?

1. Get your environment ready
  - You can start with either a potty or the toilet bowl
  - A potty is easier for a child to get on/off, and many children feel more secure because their feet are supported on the floor
  - When training your child to use the toilet bowl, use a step stool to help your child get on/off, and use a toilet training seat if the toilet seat is too big
2. Use the right language
  - Choose words that help your child to describe body parts, urine and bowel movements
  - All caregivers need to use the same words to avoid confusing your child
3. Make potty visits a routine
  - Let your child first sit on the potty once a day as a routine
  - Once he is used to it, bring your child to the potty at regular times in the day (e.g. 30 minutes after meals, at bath time)
  - Watch for cues that may signal the need for a bowel movement e.g. squatting, making straining noises, grimacing], and ask your child if he needs to go
  - If your child struggles strongly or is unable to pass urine/motion, just try again the next time
  - If your child is successful, praise and/or reward him
4. Clothing/diapers
  - Keep your child in loose, easy-to-remove clothing
  - Help him master the undressing and dressing needed to sit on the potty
  - When your child is successfully using the potty several times a day, he may be ready for underwear for part of the day
  - Because diapers can be very reassuring, do not rush your child out of diapers
  - Keep your child clean and dry, and do not leave him in soiled clothing as a training method



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### What are some things to note when toilet training my child?

- Accidents are common and these should be forgivable. This must be expected in the training process.
- Give praise and hugs for successful tries. Punishment or scolding may make the training process more stressful for your child.
- Boys generally take a longer time to be trained than girls.
- Boys should learn to urinate sitting first, because if they are trained to stand first, they may not want to sit for a bowel movement.
- A well-balanced diet with sufficient fibre helps your child produce soft stools and makes toilet training easier. Ensure your child drinks enough water through the day.

### What about night-time training?

Help your child be successful in toileting during the day first before starting with night-time training. Night-time dryness may not occur until a year or so later after daytime dryness. Here are a few tips to help your child stay dry at night:

- Take your child to the toilet just before going to bed
- With your child's permission, wake him at night to use the toilet
- Ask your child to withhold urine a little during the day to gain better control

### When should I consult my doctor?

- Your child seems to be uncomfortable or is experiencing pain when passing urine or motion
- You have tried potty training regularly with little or no success
- Your child is still consistently wetting the bed more than twice a week by age 6 years

**Reference:** American Academy of Paediatrics, KK Women's and Children's Hospital

## Melatih Anak untuk Buang Air Sendiri

Anda boleh mula melatih anak anda membuang air tanpa lampin apabila anak anda menjangkau usia 2 tahun. Proses ini lebih mudah sekiranya dia boleh bertutur bahawa lampinnya kotor atau dia ingin membuang air besar/kecil. Pilih masa yang sesuai untuk memulakan latihan "toilet training". Dalam latihan ini, ingatlah bahawa pada mulanya, mungkin kerap kali anak anda tidak dapat mengawal pembuangan air besar/kecil di tandas. Anak anda memerlukan tindak balas positif daripada ibu bapa. Elakkan daripada menghukum atau memarahinya sekiranya terbuang air tanpa sengaja. Sebaliknya, banyakkkan memberi pujian atau pelukan jika anak anda berjaya menjalani latihan ini dengan baik.

Bawa anak anda berjumpa doktor jika:

1. Dia kelihatan kurang selesa atau mengalami kesakitan apabila membuang air besar/kecil.
2. Anak anda tidak dapat mengawal kencingnya pada waktu tidur lebih daripada 2 kali seminggu selepas umur 6 tahun.



## VIII. Effective discipline

Disciplining your child is one of the many challenges in parenting. There is no one method that will work for all children. An important rule to remember is to dislike the behaviour, but love the child. Always stay in control when disciplining your child. You may have had a bad day at work, or maybe your child's behaviour has been especially difficult. Whatever the reason, refrain from yelling, screaming, or spanking. When you find yourself on the verge of losing your cool, walk away and take a deep breath.

The Prophet [PBUH] was known to take a nurturing approach to his relationships and showed mercy and compassion while also being firm in other aspects. This can be seen in his method of educating others, be they children or adults. With children, the Prophet [PBUH] was particularly affectionate and respectful toward them.

*Anas r.a. reported: I served him for ten years, and he never said 'Uff' (an expression of disgust) to me. He never said 'why did you do that?' for something I had done, nor did he ever say 'why did you not do such and such' for something I had not done. [Riyad as-Salihin: 621]*

*Abu Huraira reported that al-Aqra' b. Habis saw Allah's messenger [PBUH] kissing Hasan. He said: I have ten children, but I have never kissed any one of them, whereupon Allah's Messenger [PBUH] said: He who does not show mercy (towards his children), no mercy would be shown to him. [Sahih Muslim: 2318]*

### Try these useful tips to manage your child's behaviour:

1. Model behaviours that you would like to see in your children.
  - Children learn by observation. Point out good practices in adults: "Daddy is sharing his drink with Mummy. Good job sharing, Daddy!"
  - Model ways to calm down: "Mummy is really frustrated right now. Please help me calm down by taking 10 deep breaths with me."
2. Notice good behaviour and praise it. Use repetition to continually reinforce good behaviour.
3. Understand where your children are developmentally so that you can set clear and realistic expectations for your children.
  - e.g. a 2-year-old may not understand and remember instructions that were given previously, and a 4-year-old may continue to wet the bed at night even when she is toilet trained in the day.
4. Be prepared—anticipate and plan for difficult situations.
  - e.g. If you anticipate your child getting hungry or bored when you are on an outing, bring a snack or something to entertain them with.
5. Build structure and routines in your child's day. This will give her a sense of security and control.
6. Use discipline strategies to guide and teach instead of punishments.
  - Time-out
    - Have your child go to a quiet place, like the corner of a room (not the bedroom or playroom)
    - Start the timer—1 minute for each year of age. For example: 2 years old = 2 minutes, 3 years old = 3 minutes, 4 years old = 4 minutes
    - If your child leaves the time-out area, bring her back there. If she throws a tantrum during time-out, ignore it unless there is danger of harm.
    - Make sure your child is supervised at all times.

- Withdrawal of privileges
    - Take away a privilege when your child is misbehaving. For example, if your child does not keep his toys, remove them for a period of time.
  - Reward system
    - Reward your child when she displays good behaviour.
    - Try not to use material rewards all the time, e.g. new toys or screen time. You can use a star chart or encouragement chart. If your child collects enough “stars”, you may reward her with a surprise, e.g. stickers, a notebook or a storybook.
7. Be consistent—both parents should agree on the disciplinary approaches to use.
  8. Try not to give in to your child’s demands when she throws a tantrum.
  9. Make instructions short and do not phrase them into questions. Get your child’s attention before giving instructions.

### **Why should physical punishment be avoided?**

Instead of teaching responsibility and self-control, spanking or hitting often increases aggression and anger in children. It teaches a child that causing someone pain is OK if you’re frustrated—even with those you love.

Children who are spanked may be more likely to hit others when they don’t get what they want.

### **What about verbal abuse?**

Yelling at children and using harsh words to cause emotional pain or shame has also been found to be ineffective and harmful. It can lead to more misbehaviour and mental health problems in children.

Remember that as a parent you can give yourself a time-out if you feel out of control. Just make sure your child is in a safe place, and then give yourself a few minutes to take a few deep breaths and relax. When you are feeling better, go back to your child, hug each other, and start over.

#### **Reference:**

1. KK Women’s and Children’s Hospital
2. Office of the Mufti (MUIS)
3. <https://familiesforlife.sg/pages/fflp>

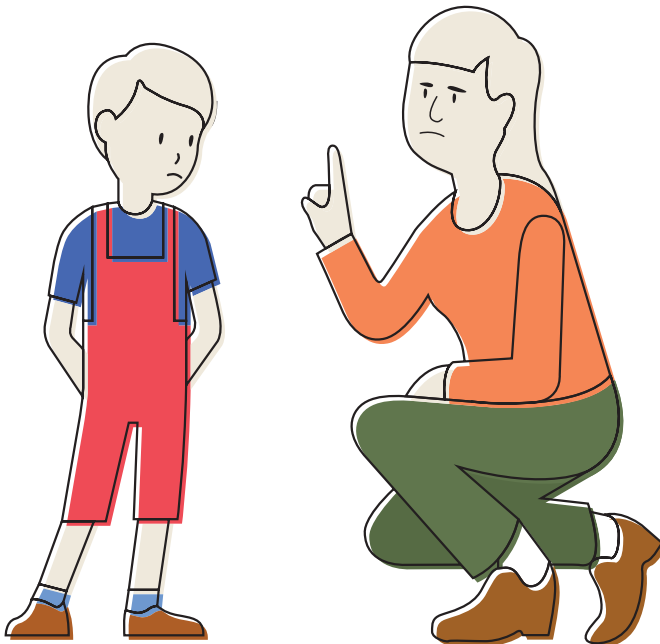
## Mendisiplinkan anak dengan cara yang berkesan

Mendisiplinkan anak dengan berkesan dianggap satu cabaran bagi segolongan ibu bapa. Malangnya, tidak wujud satu cara yang terbaik untuk setiap keluarga.

Sebagai ibu bapa, apa yang anda tuturkan, cara anda bertutur, perkataan-perkataan yang anda gunakan, tingkah laku di rumah akan diperhatikan oleh anak-anak anda. Mereka belajar dari rumah apa yang mereka lihat di depan mata, apa yang baik dan juga apa yang buruk. Anak-anak akan mencontohi ibu bapa. Dengan itu, elakkan daripada hilang sabar dan menjerit atau memukul anak dalam keadaan marah. Memukul, menjerit dan menggunakan kata-kata kesat kepada pasangan anda atau anak sehingga dia berasa malu, sakit atau tertekan sudah tentu akan menjejaskan emosi, keyakinan diri dan kesihatan mentalnya. Kanak-kanak yang biasa dipukul juga akan memukul orang lain apabila tidak dapat apa yang diinginkan. Mereka menganggap memukul orang lain itu "normal" kerana sering melihat ibu bapa memukul adik beradik mereka atau pun sesama sendiri.

Sifat sabar penting dalam mendisiplinkan anak. Jika anda terlalu marah dengan perbuatan nakal anak anda, tarik nafas seketika. Beristighfar. Ambil wuduk. Apabila anda rasa lebih tenang, barulah anda boleh mula mendisiplinkan anak anda dengan suasana yang lebih berkesan dan dengan cara yang sesuai.

Sebagai ibu bapa, cermin diri anda terdahulu. Mendisiplinkan anak perlukan kerjasama yang padu antara suami isteri.





## IX. Managing the sick child

When children fall ill, it can be a stressful time for parents. It is very common for young children to have viral illnesses, especially in their first few years. However, as children grow older their immune systems generally become stronger, and the amount of time spent sick usually decreases.

Some symptoms that are frequently encountered in a sick child include fever, vomiting, and diarrhoea.

### Fever in children

The human body has a thermostat which helps us to regulate our body temperature. Normal body temperature is between 36.5°C and 37.5°C. With infection or other illnesses, various chemicals are released in the body. This re-adjusts the thermostat, resulting in fever.

#### A few points to note about fever:

- Fever is the body's way to fight infection. However, it is not just caused by infections alone.
- The higher the fever, does not indicate the severity of the illness that is causing the fever.
- Overwrapping and a generally hot environment can cause the body temperature of a young child to be slightly above normal.
- High fever per se does not cause brain damage. A small percentage of children between 6 months to 6 years may have seizures with high fever. However, febrile seizures (fever fits) usually do not lead to brain damage.

#### What measures at home can be done first for fever?

1. Encourage your child to take plenty of fluids.
2. Dress your child in light clothing to allow heat exchange.
3. Keep the room environment cool and well-ventilated.

#### What medications can I use to manage fever in my child?

1. Paracetamol - First-line medication
  - Give 6 hourly if temperature is below 38.5°C, and 4 hourly if temperature is 38.5°C and above.
  - Do not use for infants less than 3 months old.
  - Follow the dosing instructions carefully.
2. Ibuprofen - Used when fever is persistently above 38.5°C, 1 to 2 hours after paracetamol.
  - Give 6 hourly in children above 1 year old.
  - Can be given 8 hourly in infants 6 months to 1 year old.
  - Do not use in infants less than 6 months old.
  - Follow the dosing instructions closely.

#### Consult a doctor if your child:

- Is feeding poorly, vomiting or lethargic
- Is very young, especially aged 6 months old and below
- Has difficulty breathing
- Is drowsy
- Has severe headache or change in behaviour
- Has abdominal pain or discomfort
- Has rash
- Has reduced urine output (less than 5 wet diapers a day in a younger child)
- Has persistent fever

Fever in mild viral infections usually lasts 2 to 4 days.

### **Vomiting in children**

Most vomiting is caused by a viral infection of the lining of the stomach/intestines or by food poisoning. Often, a child who is vomiting may also develop diarrhoea.

Occasionally, the vomiting may be caused by a more serious illness, such as intestinal obstruction [blockage of the bowels], which will require surgical attention. Other more serious causes of vomiting include brain infection, bleeding or growths in the brain. This is usually associated with symptoms such as severe headache, irritability or change in behaviour.

#### Consult a doctor if:

- Your child is aged 6 months and below
- Your child shows any signs of dehydration (such as reduced urine output, dry lips or tongue, no tears when crying)
- Your child does not want to drink, or is drinking less than half of his usual amount
- The vomitus is bloody or greenish in colour
- The vomiting is persistent
- Your child starts acting very sick (e.g. lethargic, doesn't seem interested in playing or interacting)
- There is drowsiness or a change in behaviour
- There is swelling of the abdomen
- Your child complains of abdominal pain or headache
- Your child appears pale

#### Expected course of vomiting in mild viral infections of the stomach/intestines

The vomiting usually stops in 6 to 24 hours.

Anti-vomiting or anti-nausea medications are not safe for home use in children. The mainstay of treatment is ensuring good hydration (i.e. your child is still able to drink enough fluids to hydrate himself) and close observation. You can continue to give your child milk, or try offering fluids like glucose, barley or rice water, or dilute apple juice. Avoid giving just plain water alone.

If in doubt about your child's vomiting, please see a doctor.

### **Diarrhoea in children**

Diarrhoea is the frequent passage of loose watery stools due to an infection of the intestines. The infection may or may not be accompanied by vomiting. This infection is known as gastroenteritis.

Gastroenteritis is commonly caused by viruses such as rotavirus. Rarely, it can be caused by bacterial infections such as salmonella, E coli or campylobacter.

A major problem with gastroenteritis is dehydration. This occurs when your child loses too much fluid from the diarrhoea and vomiting.



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### Consult a doctor if your child:

- Shows signs of dehydration such as reduced urine output, dry lips or tongue, no tears when crying, loss of weight
- Does not want to drink, or is drinking very little fluids (less than half their usual amount)
- Is lethargic or drowsy
- Is vomiting
- Has blood or mucus in the stools
- Has frequent and/or large amounts of diarrhoea
- Complains of persistent abdominal pain or discomfort (or constantly crying or curling up the legs in a pre-verbal child)
- Has swelling of the abdomen
- Has prolonged diarrhoea

Diarrhoea in mild viral gastroenteritis usually lasts 2 to 4 days.

### Are there any medications for diarrhoea?

- The main treatment in gastroenteritis is to ensure your child is drinking well to replace the fluids lost and remains well-hydrated.
- Generally, medications used to stop diarrhoea in adults are not used in children due to side effects.
- Occasionally, your doctor may prescribe some medications for stomach pain or vomiting.
- If your child is still in diapers, you can apply suitable barrier creams to protect the nappy area.

### Is there any way to prevent my child from getting gastroenteritis?

- It is difficult to prevent your child from coming into contact with the germs that cause gastroenteritis. These germs are present in the community all the time.
- However, good hygiene habits will minimise the risk of spreading infections.
- For newborns and infants, bottle hygiene is very important. Milk bottles need to be sterilised before each feed, either by boiling or with the use of sterilisers/sterilising tablets.
- For older children, frequent handwashing, especially before meals and after using the toilet, should be taught.

**Reference:** KK Women's and Children's Hospital

To seek further advice on common paediatric conditions such as fever, cough, diarrhoea, vomiting, and common injuries, follow this link for the KKH Urgent Paediatric Advice Line [U-PAL].

<https://www.kkh.com.sg/UPAL>

## Penjagaan anak yang sakit

Kanak-kanak yang sedang membesar selalunya aktif dan suka bermain dengan riang. Namun begitu, mereka boleh demam, muntah-muntah atau cirit-birit secara tiba-tiba. Penyakit ini tidak semestinya disebabkan oleh sebarang jangkitan virus atau bakteria tertentu. Sebaik-baiknya, kanak-kanak yang terjejas boleh dipantau seandainya keadaan tidak memudaratkan. Sebagai ibu bapa, kita mesti peka dengan perubahan tingkah laku anak kita.

Jika keadaan mereka bertambah baik, mereka boleh dibenarkan makan dan minum sedikit demi sedikit. Kanak-kanak yang keadaannya semakin parah selepas pemantauan yang teliti, bawalah mereka ke klinik atau hospital tanpa lengah.



## X. Children with special needs

*Special needs* refers to any physical, emotional, behavioural or learning difficulties that causes someone to require special support. Underlying diagnoses may include developmental delays, medical or genetic diseases and psychiatric conditions. Children with special needs or disabilities may require accommodations so that they can reach their full potential.

Sometimes special needs or disabilities are temporary, (e.g. someone who is recovering from a fracture may have temporary special needs) but often they are lifelong.

If you are a parent of a child with special needs, you might feel emotionally overwhelmed.

Here are some resources that you may find useful:

1. Families for Life: Special Needs - <https://familiesforlife.sg/pages/fllp-modules?fllpgroup=9>

Access a wide range of articles, including how to nurture and instill confidence and skills in your child, as well as handling sibling relationships and other interactions.

2. Caring for Caregivers by SG Enable - <https://www.enablingguide.sg/caring-for-caregivers>

Caring for children with special needs can be rewarding and fulfilling, but the journey may not be easy. Do take time to care for yourself too!

If supported well, children with special needs can thrive. As a community, we should accept and support all children with special needs, as well as their caregivers.

### Anak istimewa

Anak istimewa ialah ketentuan Tuhan. Keluarga yang mempunyai anak istimewa perlu tahu bahawa ada banyak peruntukan untuk anak-anak istimewa seperti yang tertera. Ini akan membantu ahli keluarga tersebut lebih memahami menangani anak-anak istimewa. Ini akan mewujudkan sifat kekeluargaan yang lebih bermanfaat dan lebih bersikap toleransi. Dengan sokongan yang mendalam, anak tersebut akan membesar dan mencapai potensinya yang terbaik. Ini juga akan membolehkannya menyesuaikan diri ke dalam masyarakat dengan lebih mudah seperti anak-anak lain.



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### Editors

- A/Prof Suzanna Sulaiman, Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, KKH
- Dr Nur Adila Ahmad Hatib, Department of Paediatrics, General Paediatrics Service, KKH

### Content Contributors

- Dr Dhilshad Bte Muhd Abdul Qadir, Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, KKH
- Dr Muhammad Fairuz Bin Abdul Rahman, Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, KKH
- Dr Muhammad Ashraf, MOH Holdings
- Dr Muhammad Nur Dinie, MOH Holdings
- Ms Shakira Khaliq, Division of Nursing, KKH
- Ms Nazimah Bte Mohamed Sani, Division of Nursing, KKH
- Ms Siti Nurzakiah Binte Zaran, Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, KKH
- Ms Siti Munawarah Binte Maarooof, Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, KKH
- Ms A'bidah Binte Yahya, Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, KKH
- Ustaz Ahmad Khushairi Abidin, Registry of Muslim Marriages, Singapore
- Ustaz Mohamed Tajuddin Noor, Association of Muslim Professionals, Singapore
- Dr Leonora Chiam, Department of Psychological Medicine, KKH
- Ms Sharon Lee, Division of Nursing - Lactation Services, KKH
- Nutrition and Dietetics Department, KKH

### Project Management and Research Team

- Mr Zul Ikmal Zulkefle, Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, KKH
- Mr Mohamad Azri Ahmad, Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, KKH
- Ms Fatin Insyirah Bte Fadil, Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, KKH

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The information provided in this book is for general information purposes and is provided on the understanding that no medical advice or recommendation is being rendered. Medical treatment has to be individualised and can only be rendered after adequate assessment of your condition through appropriate clinical examination.



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