



## Baby Massage

### **What are the benefits of baby massage?**

There are lots of ways baby massage can benefit not just your baby, but you and your partner as well. Massage may help your baby to:

- develop mentally, socially and physically
- stay relaxed and not get upset
- cry and fuss less
- Colic and Constipation
- Teething
- sleep better

You may find that giving your baby a massage lifts your mood and helps you to feel more empowered as a parent. The time you set aside for a massage can be your special time together. As you massage your baby, it comes naturally to chat to her/him and have plenty of eye contact with her. This is one reason why massage can help mums with postnatal depression, or who are at risk of depression, to interact with their babies.

Baby massage can be great for dads, too. Some dads may miss out on a lot of the hands-on care of their babies, especially if they are at work and their baby is breastfed.

A regular massage with dad can become a routine, perhaps at bedtime, that helps to bring your baby and partner closer together. It can also help your partner if he is feeling stressed.

### **Benefits to Carer/Parent**

Closer relationship with their child. Lowered blood pressure. Reduces stress and promotes relaxation. Improved overall general health and wellbeing. Feeling confident and empowered to aid their child in times of distress and discomfort. Encourages confidence in handling baby.

### **When is the best time to massage my baby?**

Babies lead the class! Ideally, we try to pick a time when your baby is between feeds. It's also best not to start just before her nap. But don't worry, if your baby is asleep, we can provide a doll to practice the routine on. Or if your baby is alert, we have plenty of toys to entertain them. If your baby needs feeding, there is a separate room if you wish to feed in private. There is also use of hot water for formula or food.

If your baby is sleeping and feeding often, you may wonder when this golden time for massage is going to come around! You'll get to know when your baby is most content to have a massage. You may like to make it part of your baby's bedtime routine, perhaps after a bath and before a bedtime feed.

A massage before bedtime will help your baby to wind down after the stimulation of the day and become calm, ready for sleep.

## **What do I need before I start a massage?**

Have everything that you'll need to hand, including:

- Massage oil (Provided by Amazing Beauty)
- Towels or muslin squares to mop up any accidents  
(please bring your own towel as your baby will feel more comfortable with the familiar smells of your home)
- Clothes to dress your baby in afterwards
- Your usual nappy-changing kit
- No jewellery

Using oil or cream will make it easier for your hands to glide over your baby's skin and may be more relaxing for your baby. It's up to you whether you use a baby moisturiser or, if your baby has dry skin or eczema, a medical emollient, vegetable oil, or baby mineral oil for massage. (Please seek your GP's advice) Vegetable oils that are high in linoleic acid, such as safflower oil, are kinder to your baby's skin than oils high in oleic acid, such as olive oil.

**If your baby has eczema**, it is best to use her prescribed cream or emollient during the massage.

## **How should I massage my baby?**

We start week 1 with a Legs massage routine only.

For the first few times, you may just want to massage your baby's legs until he/she gets used to the sensation. It's a good place to begin because your baby is used to having her legs touched during nappy changes.

Reading your baby's cues is the most important aspect of massage. Your baby will tell you when the massage needs to end and which strokes she's likes or dislikes. If your baby starts to cry during the massage, she is telling you that she has had enough.