

Going Home - discharge advice for new parents

We hope you have enjoyed your stay at St John of God Subiaco Hospital

What should you do now?

1. Ensure you have your purple child health book, birth registration papers, medications, instructions and x-rays before you leave the hospital.
2. Make an appointment to see your Obstetrician approximately six weeks after the birth of your child.
3. Arrange for your baby to have a 6 week check with your family GP or Neonatal Paediatrician.
4. Contact your Child Health Nurse before leaving hospital to ensure an early visit.

Is your baby well?

Signs of a fit and healthy newborn:

- They will be pink with a temperature of around 36.5°C to 37.4°C and should wee and poo regularly.
- They will usually wake for feeds regularly and will feed well. When awake, they will be alert and will respond to stimulation around them. When babies are newborn, they will usually sleep for long periods.
- They will breathe faster than you (around 40 to 60 breaths per minute), with short occasional pauses.

You should seek medical review for your baby immediately if:

- Your baby is very sleepy, not waking normally for feeds or feeding poorly. If your baby is feeding poorly, their wet nappies will usually decrease in number and/or wetness.
- Your baby is breathing fast (more than 60 breaths per minute), making grunting noises every time they breathe out, is working hard to breathe (sucking in their chest) or changing colour (from pink to blue).
- Your baby has a fever (greater than 37.4°C).
- Your baby has worsening jaundice (see below) or their colour is becoming white/grey or mottled.

Neonatal Jaundice

This is a common condition characterised by a yellow colouring of the skin. Most jaundice is normal and not dangerous. Usually babies do not require any treatment and it gradually disappears over the first couple of weeks of life. Occasionally, jaundice may worsen after your discharge home. Seek medical attention as soon as possible if your baby is becoming noticeably more yellow, or if they become sleepy or

start feeding poorly. If your GP or Neonatal Paediatrician cannot see your baby very soon (within 2 hours) then you should attend your local emergency department.

The following information may also help as you adjust to being at home with a newborn:

Be aware of the signs of mastitis (inflammation of breast): flushed, hot, painful areas on the breast, elevated temperature and general flu like symptoms. Apply cool compress to the affected area prior to feeding and in between feeds. It's important to drain the affected breast either by breastfeeding or expressing. Paracetamol will help ease discomfort. Rest and increase your fluid intake. If symptoms have not settled within 12 hours, see your GP as antibiotics may be required. An untreated mastitis can quickly progress to breast abscess so prompt treatment is essential.

Episiotomy: Keep clean, cool and as dry as possible. Report any increasing pain.

Post epidural advice: If you experience persistent headache, fever, pain, swelling or redness at your epidural site, weakness in your legs or loss of bowel/bladder control, contact your doctor immediately.

Normal uterine healing - lochia (vaginal loss) sometimes increases following breastfeeding or postnatal exercise and may vary in colour from dark red to pale pink or brown and may continue for 6 - 8 weeks. This should not be excessive, offensive in odour or consist of large clots. If this occurs contact your Obstetrician, GP or the Emergency Department at your local hospital.

Postnatal Depression: It is common and quite normal to feel tired, teary and overwhelmed at times. However if you are feeling this way most of the time or have concerns, discuss your feelings with your GP or Child Health Nurse. Support is available throughout the community. St John of God Raphael Services (1800 524 484) can offer more information and specialised support.

Finally, take care of yourself by ensuring you get enough rest and are eating well and remember it takes time to adjust to your new role.

Handy Numbers for when at home

Pregnancy Birth and Baby Helpline	1800 882 436
Health Direct WA	1800 022 222



Breastfeeding Support Services

Supporting new parents during the important first nine months



Breastfeeding is ever changing as your baby grows and develops. If you are having difficulties, seek help early by contacting our hospital, your Child Health Nurse or the Australian Breastfeeding Association.

Breastfeeding Support Service

One on one support with a Lactation Consultant for more complex issues surrounding breastfeeding. Fees may apply.

Contact: 9382 6078. **Location:** Breastfeeding Clinic, Level 3, St John of God Subiaco Hospital.

Breastfeeding Circle

Small group with a Lactation Consultant supporting breastfeeding mothers during the first three weeks following discharge. This service is free.

Contact: 9382 6708 or 9382 6291 **Location:** Raphael Services, 192 Cambridge Street, Wembley.

Thursdays by the Lake

Free to mothers attending St John of God Subiaco Hospital.

Early Weeks

This program is for new parents with babies up to approximately 12 weeks old. Facilitated by a Midwife/Lactation Consultant, a variety of parenting and baby care topics will be discussed. Partners welcome. This program is free.

Day and time: Thursday 12.30pm - 2.30pm every second week during school terms.

Open House

This program is for parents with babies from three to nine months. New topics are discussed every fortnight and may include feeding, settling support and parenting. The friendly, informal environment offers an opportunity for mothers to network with other new mums. Bookings not required and partners welcome. This program is free.

Day and time: Thursdays 9.30am - 11.30am every second week during school terms.

Solo Mothers

A network and support group for women parenting alone and their little ones. Suitable for pregnant mothers and children up to two years. This program is free.

Day and time: Monthly on Wednesdays during school terms 1.00pm - 3.00pm

Venue: Lake Monger Recreation Centre, 144 Gregory Street, Wembley.

Enquiries: Please call Parent Education on 9382 6708.