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## Maternal and child health – visit 8 - eighteen month visit

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### Summary

- This is your eighth key age and stage visit with a maternal and child health nurse in your local area.
  - Maternal and child health nurses work in partnership with families to care for babies and young children until they start school. The service is free for all Victorian families.
  - You will visit a maternal and child health nurse at 10 key ages and stages from birth to three and a half years.
  - Your nurse can help you with things like feeding your child; sleep and settling, making sure your child is growing, learning and developing well; being a parent and looking after yourself.
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### What happens at my eighteen month maternal and child health visit?

At this visit, the nurse will review your child's growth, health and development and complete a hearing risk assessment. You will also be asked to answer **My Health, Learning and Development – green book**. It is under the Parents' Evaluation of Development Status (PEDS) section. Try to complete these questions before your visit.

This visit will focus on:

- addressing the PEDS questions in your green book
- helping your child to eat healthy food
- **taking care of your child's teeth**
- being sun smart (learning **how to protect your child from the sun**)
- how play helps learning and development
- family **relationships** and wellbeing
- **immunisations**
- how to prevent injuries.
- social communication

Remember, you and your nurse can talk about other issues or concerns if they arise.

### Don't forget your 'green book'

When your child was born, you should have received a copy of **My Health, Learning and Development – green book**. This book belongs to you and your child and is full of information about early child development, and services and support.

Make sure you take your green book with you each time you see your nurse so you can jot down any issues, and record information on your child's growth and development.

If you don't have a green book, let your nurse know.

### What is my child doing at this key age and stage?

At this key age and stage, your child is learning lots by exploring the world around them. As a parent or carer, you may find it hard to keep up with how busy they are – emptying drawers and 'helping' you clean. Try a playgroup in your local area to meet other families, explore and play.

They might be:

- walking and starting to run
  - saying some words and understanding lots more
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- feeding themselves with a spoon or cup
- recognising themselves in a mirror
- playing alone, but still liking to be near familiar people.

### **What to tell your nurse**

Please tell the nurse if your baby is:

- NOT enjoying eye contact or cuddles with you
- NOT coming to you for affection or comfort
- NOT understanding any words
- NOT pointing or waving
- NOT trying to communicate with you
- NOT showing any signs of pretend play
- NOT walking.

### **Activity ideas for this key age and stage**

Try some of these ideas to help your baby learn and develop:

- explore outside – talk to them about the trees, birds or cars
- give them old clothes, a plastic bowl or a cardboard box and let their imagination run wild!
- encourage them to meet other children at playgroup or in the playground
- share lots of books, stories and rhymes
- praise them when they learn a new skill, (such as feeding themselves).

### **Where to get help**

- **Your local maternal and child health service**
- Your **GP (doctor)**
- **Your local council early childhood and family services**
- **Maternal and Child Health Line** Tel: **13 22 29** – available 24 hours a day for the cost of a local call throughout Victoria
- **Aboriginal Health Service (VAHS)** Tel. **03 9419 3000**
- **Parentline** Tel. **13 22 89**
- **Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS National)** Tel. **131 450** – available (24 hours, 7 days a week) for callers who speak other languages.
- **National Relay Service** (24 hours a day, every day) – Speak and listen Tel: **1300 555 727**, TTY Tel: **133 677**, SMS relay Tel: **0423 677 767**. **Captioned, internet and video relay calls are also available through this service.**

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Maternal and Child Health and Parenting

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