

Fact sheet

Centre for Community Child Health

Safe wrapping and swaddling

Developmental hip dysplasia is an abnormal development of the hip joint. There are a number of risk factors, but the condition has also been linked to inappropriate swaddling or wrapping in infancy.

It is very common to wrap or swaddle babies to help them to settle, but when wrapping or swaddling is done in a way that your baby's legs are held in extension or the hip joint is restricted, it can have a severe effect on your baby's growing hip joint and lead to developmental dysplasia of the hip (DDH).

Once your baby is born, wrapping their legs in a way that holds them in an extended position can affect the normal growth of the hip, which can cause it to become unstable and dislocate.

Safe wrapping involves the legs being wrapped loosely to allow them to bend at the hips with the knees apart. This position will assist proper development of the hip joint.

There is a handy visual guide to safe wrapping on the Raising Children Network: www.raisingchildren.net.au/articles/wrapping_newborn

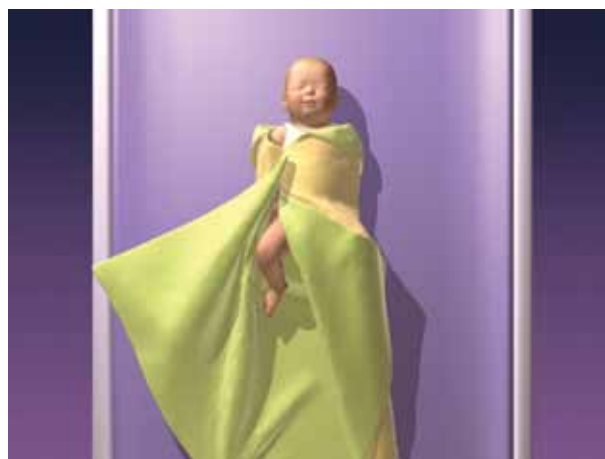


Figure 1: Safe wrapping allows your baby to bend at the hips with the knees apart



Figure 2: Completed safe wrapping

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Introducing your baby to solids

The time when your baby starts on solids can be exciting and challenging. It will also definitely be messy. If you have questions about when to start and what foods to start with, the National Health and Medical Research Council's Infant Feeding Guidelines can help.

The Guidelines recommend exclusively breastfeeding your baby up to the age of six months. Breastfeeding can continue for as long after that as you and your baby like, but around six months it's time to start your baby on solids. Even if your baby has been formula fed or has had a mix of formula feeding and breastmilk, the recommendation to introduce solids at around the age of six months remains.

First foods

The foods that you choose to start your baby on will vary. Families from different cultural backgrounds have different traditions regarding first foods and, providing your baby is getting all the nutrition they need, following your cultural traditions when it comes to weaning should be fine.

It's important to introduce food that contains iron as a first food. Iron-enriched cereals, pureed meat, poultry and fish can all be used. Cooked tofu and legumes, pureed, are other options. After an iron-rich food, vegetables, fruits and dairy products such as custard, full-fat yoghurt and cheese can be added.

As long as iron-rich foods are your baby's first food, then the Guidelines recommend that you can introduce foods in any order and at a pace that suits your baby.

Foods to avoid

There are also some foods that you shouldn't introduce to your baby before the age of 12 months because they can be dangerous.

Nuts and other hard foods

When your baby is young, some foods present a choking and inhalation risk for your baby. In the first three years of life, avoid whole nuts, seeds, raw carrot, celery sticks and chunks of apple. Nut pastes are fine to offer to your baby from around six months.

Honey

Babies under the age of 12 months should not be given honey. This is because honey may contain spores of *Clostridium botulinum* which can make your baby very sick. Never coat a dummy with honey before giving it to your child.

Milk from animal sources

Unmodified animal milks – including cow, sheep and goat – are not suitable for babies and should not be the main drink before the age of 12 months.

Unpasteurised animal milks should not ever be given to your child because of additional infection risks.