

MomConnect and First 1000 Days

Momconnect has important messages about breastfeeding, nutrition and other important facts for a healthy pregnancy and the safe birth of a baby.

First 1000 Days adds to the MomConnect messages and highlights that having a baby is like caring for a plant. A lot of care must be taken before the baby is born. The mother should use contraceptives so that each baby is planned and wanted. Just like the plant has to have soil that is cared for so the unborn baby should not be poisoned by alcohol, tobacco and drugs. If the mother is experiencing stress in her life then that anxiety can pass on to the unborn baby. Mothers should ask for help at the clinic if they feel stressed or are unhappy about coping with the baby.

Fathers should go with the mother to the clinic for antenatal visits to understand what is happening. Fathers can be present at the birth to massage the mother and help her breathe so that she feels cared for and this can make the birth feel easier. Fathers should be at the birth in case the baby needs skin-to-skin contact in the first hours after birth. A supportive friend or family member can be asked to help if the father cannot.

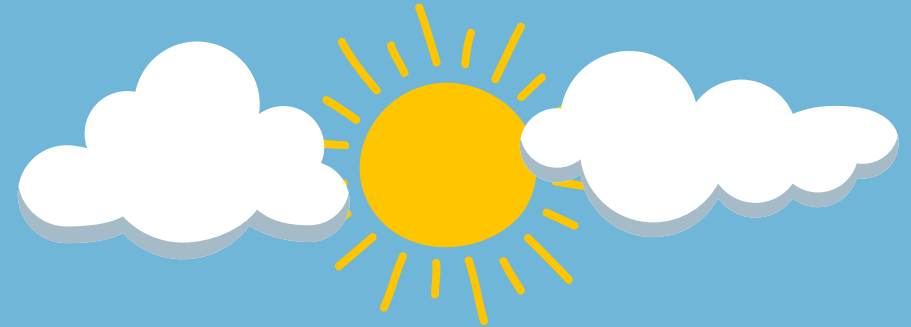
Fathers can also care for their babies by buying nappies instead of formula milk for the baby to drink. Breastmilk is free and is the best food for babies in the first 6 months of life. A father can also feed his baby when the mother expresses her breastmilk into a cup which the father can then feed the baby.

Join MomConnect when you go to the clinic

www.westerncape.gov.za/first-1000-days/

Ensure the best start

for the brightest future for your child



'FIRST 1000 DAYS' is like growing a plant?

Like a flower needs clean air, and a natural environment to grow, **so does a baby**. The water for a plant to keep growing is equivalent to nutrients for the baby to grow up healthy. The Sun for the plant is the warmth of the parents love and support. The baby has to be protected from harmful substances like the plant has to be protected from pests and harmful pesticides.



BETTER TOGETHER.

FIRST
1000 days
Right Start. Bright Future.

How can you give your child the best start in life?

- Use contraceptives correctly so that you can decide when you want to fall pregnant. In this way each baby can be a wanted and loved baby.
- As soon as you think you are pregnant have a free pregnancy test so that you have time to consider your choices.
- Book early in the pregnancy (before 12 weeks) and learn how to make sure that your pregnancy is a healthy one. Find someone who can hold your hand on your journey.



- Keep all your appointments at the clinic.
- Invite the father of your child with you to antenatal visits so that he can understand what is happening.
- Eat healthy food and have regular weight checks.
- Take zinc and iron (folic acid) pills as recommended by the health staff.

Your focus should be on yourself and your unborn baby

- Do not drink alcohol, do not smoke cigarettes, do not take drugs.
- Find ways to reduce your stress. Too much stress can affect the mental and physical development of the baby.
- Do physical exercise that you can cope with eg walk with your partner.
- Listen to your body. If you feel tired then rest.
- Learn all you can about breastfeeding. Breast milk is free, available all the time at the right temperature and is the best food for your baby for the first 6 months.
- Your unborn baby can hear so talk to him, tell him stories, sing and play music.



- Decide who will be with you when you give birth. This is someone who can massage your back, help you to breathe and give you water to drink – this can make the birth feel easier.
- Make your home safe for your baby.
- Go to the clinic as soon as possible if you are worried

Talk to someone you trust if you feel you cannot cope.