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JULY 2022, ISSUE 4

# Bump2Baby and Me

Participant Newsletter

Study hits  
the halfway  
mark!



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The first 'Bump2Baby and Me' study babies will turn one in mid-August, which is a huge milestone for each and every family but also for the study. We are super excited and can't wait to meet you and your baby at the final 12-month visit!

In this issue, we will go through what you can expect at your final visit. This is the most important stage of the project, so it means a lot to us that you have continued in the study until now. The other areas covered in this issue are a baby massage guide, preparing for labour exercises and top tips for looking after your mental wellbeing, which is especially important after baby arrives. We also share some of your experiences of life with your new baby that you told us about after the last newsletter. We hope that the tips and information will be helpful.

We can't thank you enough for your participation in this important project and we are looking forward to seeing you and your baby at your final visit!

Sharleen O'Reilly, Project Leader



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# In the Spotlight: Your final visit

When your baby reaches their first birthday, you will be invited to come back to meet with the study team for the final stage of the project.

The 12-month or final study visit is the most important one because we measure if the study was beneficial for you and your baby. Another benefit for you is that you can tell us what the experience of being in the study was like and we can use your feedback to make changes to help other women like you in the future.

At the visit we will do a few measurements and the research team will carry out a developmental check of your baby. We will be able to provide you with a report on your baby's development after the visit as an additional thank you for attending the visit. We are really looking forward to meeting you and your little ones again!

Here is what will happen at the final study visit:

## Beforehand

- ♥ We will contact you by phone approximately two weeks before your baby's first birthday to arrange the final study visit. During this call, we will discuss the visit location and what day and time would suit you and your family best.
- ♥ We will ask you to complete some questionnaires online before the visit. They are the same as the questionnaires you did at the very start of the study.



Our 'Bump2Baby and Me' study babies are having their first birthdays' soon. The whole research team wishes them a big **Happy Birthday!**



## On the Day

- ♥ You and your baby will be met by a member of the research team. You are welcome to bring your partner or support person to the visit too.
- ♥ During the visit, we will measure your baby's length, weight, and head. We will do a developmental check and will share these details with you as simple report after the visit.
- ♥ We will check your blood pressure, weight, and ask for a blood sample.
- ♥ You will also be invited to take part in a short exit interview about your experience in the study as we are really interested in hearing your feedback.

More detailed information about the date and time for your final visit and directions to the location will be sent to you in advance of your visit.

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# Participants' voices: Life with a new baby

Here are some of the tips that fellow participants shared with us about life with a new baby:

My tip would be that it's ok to ask for help regardless of what age your baby is, it's not a weakness or a failing as a mum.

Do not to beat yourself up if your baby doesn't follow the textbook e.g. if you need to wear your baby to help them to settle and you can sit down with a cuppa in front of the laptop.

[When things get tough] I'm just going to go with it and hope for a better day tomorrow (and clean the bathroom then, which is what I had planned to do today).

People almost expect you to have it all 'down' for want of a better word. When babies are newborn and during the first few weeks, family tend to offer more help but now I have to ask if I want support, even if it's for the same sort of things like cover for 20 mins just to go for a shower... I notice he is getting a lot more alert and doesn't like being left alone for too long so it's hard to find time for a different reason.

Mothers are swamped with information online about what they should or shouldn't be doing in terms of feeding and sleeping routines. At the 3-month mark, I'm still struggling to get a proper daytime routine up and running for the baby.

## 5 Top Tips

For maintaining wellbeing after pregnancy:

### 1 Sleep when you can

It is important to get as much sleep as possible, try to sleep when your baby is sleeping.

### 2 Do things you enjoy

Make time to do things you enjoy! Phone a friend, have a cuppa, visit your family if you can.

### 3 Eat well

Although it can seem very difficult, it is important to try to stay healthy for your mental and physical well-being. Try your best to eat nutritious foods such as fruit and vegetables.

### 4 Stay active

In terms of physical activity, a 20-minute walk may help clear your head and make you feel a little better.

### 5 Find support

Join a support group for mothers, it may be beneficial to share experiences with others who are experiencing some of the same things you are.

Ask for help. A family or friend support bubble is very important. Just talking about how you feel can help to lift a weight from your shoulders.



# Baby Massage

Infant massage can be a delightful experience shared between you and your baby. Touch is one of the most important early experiences your baby will have. Infant massage boosts the early bonding relationship, and can help with sleep, constipation, and soothing your baby.

**Starting position:** Place your baby lying on their back on a comfortable surface in a warm room.

1. Massage with gentle pressure 6 to 12 times, starting from their lower tummy up towards their chest and also from left to right and back again.



2. Lift your baby's legs up and move their knees towards their tummy (knees bent) and hold them in this position for about 30 seconds and release again.



3. Massage your baby's tummy with gentle pressure 6 to 12 times, in a circular, clockwise motion starting from above their left hip and going up and across their tummy and back down towards their right hip. One hand following the other. This massage technique is called the 'half-moon'.

4. Repeat steps 1 to 3, approximately 3 to 5 times depending on your baby's cues.

# Preparing for labour exercises

For the few participants who are almost at the end of their pregnancies: Need some inspiration for exercises which you could do to prepare for labour?

Click on the image below to see some ideas from the physio team at our Dublin hospital!



Have you visited the study website yet?

[bump2babyandme.study](https://bump2babyandme.study)



This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement number 847984.



**Australian Government**  
**National Health and Medical Research Council**

The project also acknowledges collaborative funding from the National Health and Medical Research Council, grant number 1194234.