

Start Them Right

A parent's guide to eating for under 5s





Start Them Right

Give children a healthy start in life by helping them to eat well.

What children eat is important in helping them to grow healthy and strong.

How and **when** we feed children is important in helping them learn about food and eating and develop healthy habits for life.

- This book has tips to help parents and carers give their children a healthy start.
- Remember every child is different and as a parent you decide what works for you.



Acknowledgments

Thank you to all the parents, educators and health professionals who helped us update *Start Them Right*. We hope that *Start Them Right* continues to help families give their children the best start.

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More information about breastfeeding is available from:

Child Health and Parenting Service:
See page 31 for contact details

Breastfeeding Helpline:
1800 mum 2 mum (1800 686 268)

Australian Breastfeeding Association:
www.breastfeeding.asn.au

Raising Children Network:
www.raisingchildren.net.au

Breastfeeding

Breastfeeding is the natural way to feed your baby. Until around 6 months of age, breast milk is the only food or drink your baby needs.

Why breastfeed?

For baby

- keeps baby healthy and strong
- helps mum and baby feel close
- helps to fight sickness
- helps to prevent health problems later in life.

For mum

- helps recovery from giving birth
- helps mum and baby feel close
- helps to prevent health problems later in life
- breast milk is free and does not need any preparation.

Try to breastfeed your baby for the first 12 months. Any breastfeeding is good for both you and your baby. From then on breastfeed for as long as you and your baby are happy to.

How many breastfeeds does your baby need?

- Breast milk is made when your baby feeds. The more your baby feeds the more milk is made.
- A baby's stomach is very small, so it is common for new babies to feed often. In the first few weeks of life babies may feed 8 to 12 times in 24 hours.
- As your baby grows this will change. Older babies will feed less often and get faster at feeding.

- Remember all babies are different.
- If your baby has about 6 or more wet nappies in 24 hours and is growing, your baby is having enough to drink.
- A young baby will usually have 3 or more soft and runny bowel motions each day for several weeks. An older baby is likely to have fewer bowel motions.

If you are breastfeeding

- Get plenty of rest.
- Drink lots of water.
- Eat a variety of foods from the 5 food groups. This means foods made from grains, vegetables, fruit, meat and meat alternatives and dairy foods, see page 30.
- Take an iodine supplement with 150 micrograms of iodine per day.
- The safest option is not to drink alcohol.

Expressing and storing breast milk

- Expressing breast milk can be useful if you are away from your baby for any reason.
- Breast milk can be expressed by hand or by using a manual or electric breast pump.
- The Child Health and Parenting Service can help you learn about expressing breast milk and storing it safely.

Infant formula

If breastfeeding is not possible, use an infant formula until your baby is 12 months of age. After 12 months of age you can give your baby full-cream cow's milk.

Making up infant formula



1. Wash your hands and have a clean bench.



2. Follow the instructions on the infant formula tin for your baby's age.



3. Add the correct amount of cooled boiled water into a sterilised feeding bottle.



4. Using the scoop provided in the infant formula tin add the right amount of powder. Do not heap or pack down.



5. Put the teat and cap on the bottle and shake it until the powder dissolves.



6. Your baby can have infant formula cold, warm or at room temperature. See opposite on how to warm up infant formula.



7. Test the temperature by squirting a few drops of milk on the inside of your wrist. If the infant formula does not feel hot, it is okay for your baby.



8. Any infant formula left at the end of a feed should be thrown out. It is not safe to keep for later.

Using a feeding bottle

Only put expressed breast milk, infant formula or cooled boiled water in feeding bottles.

Feeding your baby is a special time

- Hold and talk to your baby during feeding time.
- Do not leave your baby to feed themselves, as they may choke.

How do you know when your baby has had enough

- Babies know when they are hungry and when they have had enough.
- Your baby may turn away from the bottle when they have had enough.
- Your baby may not always finish their bottle.
- How much your baby drinks can change from day to day.
- If your baby has about 6 or more wet nappies in 24 hours and is growing, your baby is having enough to drink.

Warming up expressed breast milk or infant formula

1. Place the bottle upright in a container of warm water.
2. Leave standing in warm water for about 2 to 4 minutes to warm.
3. Squirt a few drops of milk on the inside of your wrist. If the milk feels warm and not hot, it is okay for your baby.

Do not use the microwave or stovetop to heat up milk, this can cause hot spots in the milk and may burn your baby's mouth.

How to sterilise bottle feeding equipment

All bottles and teats need to be sterilised to kill germs and to make sure they are safe to use. To sterilise by boiling:

1. Wash bottles, teats and caps in hot soapy water with a bottle or teat brush.
2. Place bottles, teats and caps in a saucepan on the stove.
3. Cover with water.
4. Bring the water to the boil and boil for 5 minutes.
5. Allow bottles, teats and caps to cool in the saucepan then remove and use them.
6. Store any equipment that is not used in a clean container in the refrigerator.
7. Any stored equipment that is not used within 24 hours must be re-sterilised.

You can also sterilise by using a steam steriliser or a chemical solution. Follow the instructions provided by the manufacturer.

Making water safe to use

1. Boil fresh tap water.
2. If you use an electric kettle, boil water until it switches off. If you use a stovetop, boil water until it comes to a rolling boil. This means the water does not stop boiling when stirred.
3. Cool the boiled water until lukewarm. You can keep any extra boiled water in a sterilised container in the refrigerator.



Drinks for your baby

Birth to around 6 months old

- Your baby only needs breast milk or infant formula.
- Breastfed babies do not need any other drinks until around 6 months of age.
- In hot weather offer extra breastfeeds.
- If your baby is having infant formula offer cooled boiled water if extra fluid is needed.

6 months to 12 months old

- Breast milk or infant formula is still your baby's main drink.
- Around 6 months of age is a good time to start to offer some cooled boiled water in a cup or small drink bottle.
- Cow's milk should not be given as the main drink before 12 months of age. Young babies cannot digest cow's milk very well.
- It is okay to use a small amount of full-cream cow's milk in a meal such as on breakfast cereal or in a cheese sauce.

Making water safe for your baby to drink

Drinking water for babies under 12 months of age should be boiled to make it germ free. If using an electric kettle, boil water until it switches off. If using a stovetop, boil water until it comes to a rolling boil. This means the water does not stop boiling when stirred. Cool the boiled water to room temperature before giving it to your baby. Store it in a sterilised bottle in the refrigerator. See page 9 for more information on sterilising equipment.

Starting on a cup

- Bottle feeding can cause some young children to drink more milk than they need because it is easier than eating.
- Drinking from a bottle can also cause tooth decay.
- Around 6 months of age is a good time for your baby to start trying to use a cup.
- Most babies can drink from a cup by around 12 months of age.

Tips:

- From 6 months of age start swapping between using a cup and a bottle.
- When your baby can use a cup well, only put water in the bottle. This may make them want the bottle less. It is also better for their teeth.
- Encourage them to use a cup by giving them a special cup and making a big deal of them growing older.
- If a bottle is given before bed or at rest time try to change the routine. Try swapping the bottle for a cuddly toy or read a story.
- Ask your toddler to give their bottle to another baby or the 'bottle-fairy' and replace it with a special toy.



For more advice about when and how to start your baby on solid food contact:

Child Health and Parenting Service:
See page 31 for contact details.

Starting solid food

At around 6 months babies need solid food. Keep breastfeeding or giving infant formula when solid food is introduced. It is still your baby's main food and drink.

Signs that your baby is ready for solid food

- they can hold their head up without support
- they can sit up with support, such as in a high chair
- they can control their tongue and do not stick it out when given food.

How to start your baby on solid food

- Start with a small amount of pureed food on a spoon after your baby has had their breastfeed or bottle feed.
- Feed your baby when you are having your meal.
- It is normal for babies to refuse solid food at first. They are learning how to eat.
- It is normal for babies to cough or gag a little on food. They may spit the food out or it may have to be taken out. Always stay with your baby when they are eating.

Do not wait too long after 6 months to try solid food because

- your baby needs extra food to grow healthy and strong
- your baby needs more iron than they can get from breast milk or formula
- some older babies may not be as willing to try new tastes and textures.

Babies do not need food before 4 months because

- breastfeeding or infant formula is all they need
- they cannot digest food very well.

Start with foods high in iron

- Your baby needs iron to grow healthy and strong.



Pureed red meat

- Meat, poultry and fish need to be well cooked and tender.
- Remove skin, bones and any gristle.
- Add liquid such as water or casserole juices without added salt. Or add vegetables such as cooked potato, pumpkin, sweet potato, carrot or zucchini.
- Blend in a food processor or with a stick blender.



Pureed baked beans, legumes or tofu

- Well cooked legumes, lentils and tofu. For example chickpeas, red lentils or kidney beans.
- Add liquid such as water or casserole juices without added salt. Or add vegetables such as cooked potato, pumpkin, sweet potato, carrot or zucchini.
- Blend in a food processor or with a stick blender.



Baby rice cereal

- Make cereal into a smooth paste with breast milk or infant formula.

Tips:

- If offering canned legumes like baked beans choose the no added salt variety.
- There is no need to add sugar or salt to your baby's food.
- If your baby is only eating small amounts of pureed food, freeze food in ice cube trays so you can defrost a small amount at a time.

Foods not to give babies

Some foods can cause food poisoning and can make babies and young children sick.

Do not give:

- Honey to children under the age of 12 months.
- Uncooked eggs (raw or runny).
- Raw milk. By law milk sold in Australia should be pasteurised.

Food allergies

There is still a lot we do not know about allergies. These tips might help:

- If possible breastfeed your baby and keep breastfeeding when they start solid food. Continue to breastfeed until they are at least 12 months old.
- Do not delay starting solid food. Offer solid food at around 6 months of age, but not before 4 months.
- When starting solid food there are no foods that should be avoided. Foods can be introduced in any order, although iron rich foods should be offered first.

Foods that commonly cause reactions are foods containing nuts (including peanuts), eggs, dairy, soy, wheat, fish and shellfish. All babies, even those at high risk of allergy should be given these foods in the first year of life. Signs that a baby might be having a reaction include swelling of the face, vomiting, watery poos, skin rashes or wheezing.

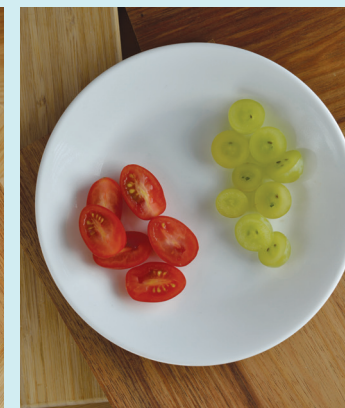
If you think your baby has a food allergy or there is a history of food allergy in your family and you want more information before starting solids contact the Child Health and Parenting Service or your GP. See page 31 for contact details.

Safe eating

- Children under the age of 3 years are at risk of choking because they are still learning to eat, chew and swallow.
- Always stay with your child while they are eating.
- Ask your child to sit down to eat.
- Make foods safer to eat by cooking, chopping, mashing and grating:



Grate, cook or mash hard fruit and vegetables.



Chop small round fruit and vegetables in half.



Give nut paste rather than whole nuts.

The next step, add different foods from each of the five food groups

- The five food groups are grain (cereal) foods, vegetables, fruit, meat and meat alternatives and dairy foods. See page 30.
- Foods can be introduced in any order.
- Gradually vary the texture from pureed to mashed, then minced and chopped foods as your baby gets older.
- Changing the texture will help your baby learn how to bite and chew. They do not need teeth to be able to do this.

Offer finger foods

- Finger foods can be given as soon as your baby can sit up by themselves.
- Cut food into small pieces so they are easy for your baby to pick up.

Tip:
Finger foods are great to pack and take for baby to eat when you are away from home.

Grain (cereal) foods

Choose mostly wholegrain or high fibre varieties.

Vegetables

Cook hard vegetables until soft and puree or mash. Grate or mash fresh vegetables.

Fruit

Choose soft fresh fruit and cook hard fruit until soft.

Meat and alternatives

Choose lean meats and trim off excess fat and gristle.

Dairy foods

Choose full cream dairy foods for children under 2 years old.

Puree



Baby cereal



Pureed sweet potato



Pureed apple



Blended tuna casserole



Plain yoghurt

Minced and Mashed



Porridge



Mashed avocado



Mashed banana



Scrambled eggs

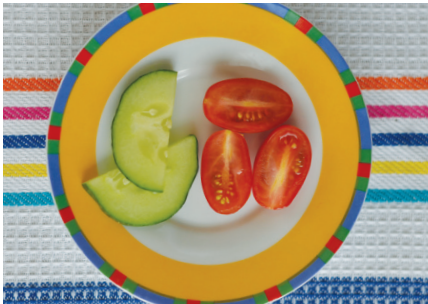


Fruit and yoghurt

Finger Foods



Toast fingers



Cherry tomatoes and cucumber slices



Watermelon slices



Meat balls



Cheese sticks



For more advice about your babies eating, daily routine or how they are growing contact:

Child Health and Parenting Service
See page 31 for contact details.

Eating is a time for learning and exploring

- It is normal for a baby to refuse food at first. Do not worry, just try again another time.
- It is okay if your baby does not eat much when they first start solids. They are still getting most of their nutrition from breast milk or infant formula.
- Most babies need to be offered a food many times before they learn to eat it. Let your baby touch, feel, smell and taste the food. This can be messy but helps your baby learn about food and eating.
- Eating at the same time as your baby will help them learn from you.
- Do not add solid food to your baby's bottle as this will not help them learn to eat.

Tip:

Put a plastic mat or newspaper under your child's chair if you are worried about the mess.

As your baby grows

- You may find they are eating more solid food and need less milk feeds.
- Food can be offered at family meal times and they may breastfeed or have infant formula in between.
- This will be different for each baby and every family.

How much food does your baby need

- Every baby is different.
- Babies are born knowing when they are hungry and when they are full.
- How much your baby eats will change from day to day.
- Offer a breastfeed, infant formula or solid food at regular times over the day.
- When offering food, trust that your baby will eat when they are hungry and stop when they are full.
- When babies are not interested in eating they will:
 - turn their head away from the food
 - push the spoon away from their mouth
 - lean back in their chair.



All babies will learn to eat food of different textures at different ages. By around 12 months most babies will be able to manage foods eaten by the rest of the family.

Family meals

You do not have to make a special meal for your baby or child. You can just make small changes to the family meal:

- Blend, mash, chop or cut the food into smaller pieces.
- Do not use salt or sugar in your cooking.
- Add stronger spices and herbs such as chilli to the family meal after you have removed some for your baby or child.

Tip:

Sometimes family life can get busy. Plan meals ahead of time, cook extra and freeze for another time.

For advice about your child's eating, their behaviour or how they are growing contact:

Child Health and Parenting Service
See page 31 for contact details.

Children and eating

Childhood is when healthy food habits are started

- Children are born knowing when they are hungry or full.
- Children have small stomachs and need to be offered regular meals and snacks over the day.
- It is good to offer children food about five times over the day as part of your daily routine. For example offer your child food from the 5 food groups (see page 30) at breakfast, lunch and dinner and for a snack in between each meal. See page 26 for food ideas.
- Let them decide how much they will eat.
- It is normal for some children to eat more or less than others.
- Forcing or bribing a child to eat can make them forget how it feels to be hungry or full.
- Try not to reward children with food. Reward them by giving praise, reading a story or playing a game instead.
- Try not to use food or drinks to comfort or to keep children quiet, or entertained.

Tip:

Let older children help with meals. Let them set up the table or wash the vegetables.

- Eating is an important social time. Eat together as a family as often as you can. Turn off the TV and electronic devices, and put toys away so there is less distraction.

Foods to enjoy sometimes

Try not to label foods as good or bad. Talk about foods we eat from the 5 foods groups every day to grow healthy and strong, and the foods we eat sometimes.

As a parent, you choose when you offer foods like chocolate, lollies, biscuits, cakes, pastries, deep fried foods and sweet drinks. Offer them sometimes as part of a family meal or snack. Too many of these foods can leave little room for foods that help children grow. It is okay to say no to these foods outside the times you choose to offer them.

It is normal for children to be fussy with food. This is part of growing up.

Children may

- eat more some days than others
- eat some foods sometimes and refuse them at other times
- take a long time to try new foods.

Help your child to try new foods by

- Offering a new food as part of the family meal.
- Letting them touch or smell the new food.
- Talking about the new food, such as how it grows, where it comes from and what it tastes like.
- Eating the food yourself.
- Try not to fuss if your child will not eat a food. You can always try another time.

Remember some children need to see, touch, smell and taste a new food many times before they will eat it. Be patient, trust that your child will learn to like different foods over time.

If your child does not want the meal offered

- Keep calm and take it away.
- Set your child up for success by offering an everyday food that you know they enjoy as part of a meal. This way you know your child will be likely to eat something and feel satisfied.
- There is no need to prepare a separate meal.

If you are concerned your child is eating too much

- Remember how much children eat will vary from day to day.
- Offer regular meals and mid-meal snacks. Offer a variety of foods from the 5 food groups.
- Let your child eat from the foods you choose to offer.
- Being too strict with food and the amount you offer can make your child want to eat more.



Drinks for children

12 months and beyond

- Keep breastfeeding for as long as you and your baby are happy to.
- Infant formula is not needed after 12 months. You can give your baby full-cream cow's milk.
- From around 12 months of age your child does not need more than 500 mL or 2 cups of milk a day.
- Too much milk can stop children from eating other everyday foods because it fills them up.
- When your child is 2 years old, they can have low fat or reduced-fat milk (not skim or fat free milk).
- Sweet drinks such as juice, cordial and soft drink are high in sugar and are not good for teeth.

Make water the main drink

- Tap water is the best everyday drink for children and adults.
- Give water whenever your child asks for a drink.
- Have water on the table at mealtimes.
- Show that you enjoy drinking water by drinking it too.
- Take a water bottle when you go out.

Tip:

Fun items such as reusable straws, drink bottles or decorated cups can make drinking water fun.

A guide of what and how much to offer

An example of a days food for a 1-2 year old



Breakfast

- Breakfast biscuit with full-cream milk
- Fresh fruit



Snack

- Fresh fruit
- Small cup of full-cream milk



Lunch

- Vegetable omelette
- Toast



Snack

- Sliced vegetables
- Cheese



Dinner

- Pasta and bolognese sauce
- Cooked vegetables
- Fresh fruit and yoghurt

An example of a days food for a 2-3 year old



Breakfast

- Wholegrain cereal flakes with milk



Snack

- Crumpet
- Small cup of milk



Lunch

- Egg and lettuce sandwich
- Fresh fruit



Snack

- Vegetable sticks and hommus dip



Dinner

- Homemade hamburger
- Oven-baked potatoes and pumpkin
- Salad vegetables
- Fresh fruit

An example of a days food for a 4-8 year old



Breakfast

- Baked beans
- Wholegrain toast



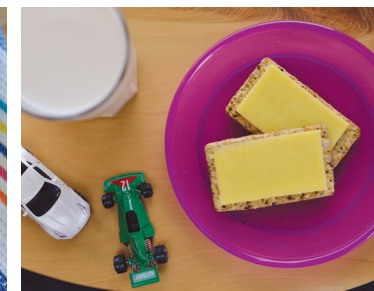
Snack

- Pikelets
- Fresh fruit



Lunch

- Tuna and salad wrap
- Fresh fruit



Snack

- Cup of reduced-fat milk
- Wholegrain crackers and cheese



Dinner

- Roast chicken
- Mashed potato
- Cooked vegetables
- Canned fruit and custard

Food ideas

Breakfast

Breakfast gives children energy for the day. Eating foods from the 5 food groups helps them grow healthy and strong.

- Tub of yoghurt or a glass of milk and a piece of fresh fruit.
- Porridge with canned or fresh fruit.
- Toasted English muffin or crumpets with cheese.
- Scrambled eggs on toast with tomato.
- Homemade fruit smoothie – blend soft fruit and milk.
- Baked beans.
- Vegetable omelette.
- Wholegrain cereal biscuit with milk and canned or fresh fruit.
- Wholegrain cereal flakes with milk and canned or fresh fruit.
- Fruit bread.



Fresh fruit and yoghurt



Toasted English muffin with cheese



Porridge with canned or fresh fruit



Fruit bread

Lunch at home

- Toasted sandwich with:
 - baked beans and cheese
 - tuna, cheese and tomato
 - ham, cheese and pineapple
 - creamed corn, cheese and asparagus.
- Mini pizza made with an English muffin and topped with cheese, pineapple and ham.
- Left-overs like spaghetti bolognese, vegetable stir fry or fried rice.
- Sweet corn scrambled eggs made with eggs, creamed corn and grated cheese.

Lunch away from home

- Cheese and cucumber sandwich.
- Tuna, corn, lettuce and mayonnaise wrap.
- Roast meat, lettuce, carrot and cheese sandwich.
- Slices of cold roast meat, cheese, cherry tomatoes and cucumber slices.
- Vegetable and egg slice.
- Pasta salad with corn, peas and capsicum.

Keep lunches safe

Use a frozen ice brick and insulated lunch box.



Roast meat, lettuce, carrot and cheese sandwich



English muffin topped with cheese, pineapple and ham



Vegetable and egg slice



Slices of cold roast meat, cheese, cherry tomatoes and cucumber slices

Food ideas continued

Snacks

Food offered between meals should be from the 5 food groups and not just something extra or a 'treat'.

Children have small stomachs and may need about 5 small meals a day to grow healthy and strong.

Offer snacks made from the 5 food groups every day.

- Fresh fruit - apple, pear, grapes, strawberries or mandarin pieces.
- Canned fruit and custard.
- Dip and vegetable sticks - cucumber, carrot, celery or snow peas.
- Rice cakes with avocado and tomato.
- Bread and cheese.
- Grilled bread fingers with cheese and pineapple.
- Pikelets topped with berries and yoghurt.
- Celery sticks filled with peanut butter and sultanas*.
- Cup of milk.
- Homemade banana smoothie - blend banana and milk.
- Baked beans.
- Cooked pasta spirals and grated cheese.
- Boiled egg.
- Air popped popcorn*.
- Creamed rice and fruit.

*Not for under 3 years.

Children under the age of 3 years are at risk of choking. Make foods safer to eat by cooking, chopping, mashing and grating.

Tip:

Fruit and vegetables in season are usually cheaper.



Celery sticks filled with peanut butter and sultanas*



Pikelets topped with berries and yoghurt



Cup of milk



Cooked pasta spirals and grated cheese

Family meals

- Meals such as savoury mince, meat and vegetable stew or soup made in the slow cooker. Try adding lentils or legumes like kidney beans or chickpeas for a change.
- Shepherd's pie made with savoury mince, topped with mashed potato. Try sweet potato for a change.
- Roast chicken, corn on the cob and salad vegetables.
- Oven-baked or grilled fish with homemade baked potatoes, carrot, corn and peas.
- Omelette with grated or diced vegetables such as zucchini, mushroom, onion, tomato or corn.
- Homemade chicken nuggets made with chicken breast cut into pieces and coated in egg and crushed cornflakes or bread crumbs.
- Jacket potato topped with baked beans and grated cheese.
- Tuna pasta made with tomato pasta sauce, canned tuna and vegetables such as grated zucchini, carrot, mushrooms or capsicum.
- Pizza made with a store bought base and topped with tomato paste, pineapple, ham, mushrooms, tomato, capsicum and cheese.
- Easy Mexican made with pan fried chicken, vegetables such as capsicum, corn, tomato, spices, cheese and natural yoghurt and served in a tortilla wrap.
- Stir fried tofu, lean meat or chicken with vegetables and served with rice or noodles.

Tips:

It is okay to use frozen or canned vegetables.

Freeze some meals to have when life gets busy.

It is okay to use store-bought items like tomato pasta sauce, pizza bases or roast chicken to save time.



Jacket potato topped with baked beans



Easy Mexican tortilla wrap



Homemade chicken nuggets



Stir fried chicken with vegetables and rice

Australian Guide to Healthy Eating

Enjoy a wide variety of nutritious foods from these five food groups every day.
Drink plenty of water.



Use small amounts



Only sometimes and in small amounts



Contact information

Further information on topics covered in this book are available from:

Healthy Kids:
Tasmanian Government
www.health.tas.gov.au/healthykids

Child Health and Parenting Service (CHaPS):
www.health.tas.gov.au/children/child_health
Parent Line: 1300 808 178

For 24 hour information and support across Tasmania.

CHaPS Statewide: 1300 064 544

To be directed to the nearest Child Health and Parenting Service near you.

Australian Breastfeeding Association:
www.breastfeeding.asn.au
Breastfeeding helpline
1800 mum 2 mum (1800 686 268)

Raising Children Network:
www.raisingchildren.net.au

Australian Dietary Guidelines:
www.eatforhealth.gov.au/guidelines

An Accredited Practising Dietitian:
www.daa.asn.au/for-the-public/find-an-apd/

Your family General Practitioner (GP)

For further information on the Start Them Right book please contact:

Public Health Services
Department of Health Tasmania
Email: community.nutrition@health.tas.gov.au



Tasmanian
Government



A Tasmanian Government
and Community Partnership

