

# Baby's Best Chance



Parents' and Caregivers' Handbook  
of Pregnancy and Baby Care



BRITISH  
COLUMBIA



Perinatal  
Services BC

Provincial Health Services Authority



8<sup>th</sup> edition

# My Circle of Support Contact Information

## Personal Support Team

Name/Title

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Contact Information

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## Health Care Support Team

Name/Title

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Contact Information

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## Introduction

Welcome to the 8<sup>th</sup> edition of *Baby's Best Chance: Parents' and Caregivers' Handbook of Pregnancy and Baby Care*, published by the Government of British Columbia and Provincial Health Services Authority.

The first *Baby's Best Chance* was published in 1979 in honour of the Year of the Child. In this edition, we provide you with updated information that's based on current evidence and guided by the real-life experiences of parents and caregivers. We've also revised the book to reflect the incredible diversity of families in British Columbia.

The joys and challenges of parenthood are influenced by many things, including our childhood experiences, our families and our culture. At the same time, we each have the opportunity to create our very own parenting journey. We hope this book provides you with resources that will help you create the journey you envision for yourself and your family.

*Baby's Best Chance* is intended to offer general information about pregnancy and parenting, with a focus on ensuring the health and well-being of you and your baby. It also provides guidance on how you can access additional support, should you need it.

Of course, each pregnancy and every family are unique, and as parents and caregivers we learn as we go. As you use *Baby's Best Chance*, remember that no parent is perfect. Your loving presence, not your perfection, is one of the greatest gifts you can give to your baby.

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*Baby's Best Chance* is the first of 2 books on pregnancy and early childhood development available from the Government of British Columbia. The second book, *Toddler's First Steps: A Best Chance Guide to Parenting Your 6- to 36-Month-Old*, covers development, nutrition, health, parenting and safety for toddlers. Both books are available through public health units and online at [healthlinkbc.ca](http://healthlinkbc.ca).

The 8<sup>th</sup> edition of *Baby's Best Chance* continues to be evidence-based and aligns with best practices.

This book is updated every 2 years. If you have suggestions for the next edition, please email us at [chbcadmin@phsa.ca](mailto:chbcadmin@phsa.ca) or [psbc@phsa.ca](mailto:psbc@phsa.ca).

# How to Use This Handbook

*User-friendly.* That's the goal we had in mind when we created *Baby's Best Chance*. So whether you prefer to read a book cover-to-cover or to flip through for specific information, you can find what you need quickly and easily.

*Baby's Best Chance* is divided into 6 main sections:

Section 1, **Pregnancy**, is all about you and your developing baby as you navigate your way through each trimester.

Section 2, **Birth**, gives you the information you need to help you prepare for labour and birth.

Section 3, **Life With Your Baby**, is full of the practical information that will help you settle in to care for your newborn.

Section 4, **Baby Care**, details everything from diapering to sleep to crying, with a focus on keeping your baby safe and healthy.

Section 5, **Baby Development**, provides information on typical milestones and how you can support your baby's development in all areas – from their brain and language skills to their physical, social and emotional growth.

Section 6, **Feeding Your Baby**, covers your baby's nutritional needs, with comprehensive information on breastfeeding or chestfeeding, infant formula and helpful tips on introducing solid foods.

Chestfeeding is a term that is becoming more commonly seen and used when discussing infant nutrition. It's a term that can be used by anyone, but often used by trans-masculine or non-binary parents to describe how they feed and nurture their baby from their bodies. Language is constantly changing. Using the term "chestfeeding" is not just about human anatomy. It's about helping all parents and caregivers feel they can find the support and resources they need to feed their babies. To learn more about chestfeeding go to: [transcarebc.ca/](https://transcarebc.ca/)

We've also included a number of additional pieces that can help you navigate the book:

## Looking for insight into a particular topic or information on a key word?

Turn to the **Table of Contents** on pages 1 and 2 or the **Index** on page 167.

## Need information on the services and supports available to help you and your family thrive?

See the **Resources** section on page 125.

## Not sure what a word or concept means?

Check the **What is...?** boxes that appear throughout the book.

## Interested in information on healthy eating?

See **Canada's food guide** on page 148.

## Want to speak with a health care professional in person?

Phone **HealthLink BC**, an invaluable free service of the Government of British Columbia. **Call 8-1-1** toll-free or 7-1-1 for the deaf and hard of hearing. Services are available in 130 languages, 24 hours a day. Speak with a registered nurse (anytime), a pharmacist (nightly, from 5 pm to 9 am), a registered dietitian or a qualified exercise professional (9 am to 5 pm, Monday to Friday).

## Want quick info at a glance? Look for the coloured boxes.

Throughout this guide, you'll find boxes in a variety of colours. Look to these for essential bits of information that will help you navigate pregnancy and life as a new parent or caregiver – everything from healthy eating tips to money-saving how-tos.

Our **What is...?** boxes explain key words and ideas in easy-to-understand terms.

Our **Try This** boxes suggest simple first steps you can take to help you get comfortable with each new aspect of pregnancy and parenting.

Our **Key Takeaway** boxes sum up the section's not-to-be-missed information.

Our **Partners** boxes suggest ways your support team can get involved.

Our **Did You Know?** boxes offer handy bits of insider information that can help build your understanding.

Our **Family Story** boxes give you a peek into the experiences of other soon-to-be and new parents.

Our **How To** boxes help you master the practical tasks of parenting by breaking them down into easy-to-follow steps.

Our **Money Sense** boxes share tips on how to save money on everything from prenatal supplements to child care.

Our **Brain Builder** boxes offer simple ideas on how to support your child's brain development through everyday activities.

Our **Be Aware** boxes draw your attention to common things that may be unsafe for your child.

Our **Danger** boxes alert you to hazards that can pose a serious risk to your child.

Our **Medical Emergency** boxes help you recognize whether a situation calls for immediate medical help.

Our **Seek Care** boxes point out things that warrant a call to your health care provider or HealthLink BC.

## The Body

Throughout *Baby's Best Chance* you'll see references to various body parts. Whenever possible, we've tried to use easy-to-understand terms. In some cases, though, the more formal name is used. If you come across a word you're not sure about, use these illustrations for reference.

