



Parents with young children

**Health Guidelines for new
families in the Faroe Islands**



New in the Faroe Island

Health Guidelines for Parents with young Children

When you are new in a foreign country and have young children, there are often many things which are very different to your home country. This leaflet is intended for mothers and fathers, to provide you with the most important advice which is given to parents in Faroe Islands about infant health.

Health visiting nurse

The health visiting nurse is a nurse who is trained within the field of child health. The nurse is able to provide useful advice if you are in doubt about anything, and she will help to ensure that your child has a healthy start to its life in Faroe Island.

Breastfeeding

The healthiest food for your newborn infant is your breast milk. Breastfeeding protects both your child and you against many illnesses. If this is your first child, you may need help with breastfeeding to begin with. Only give your child breast milk for the first four to six months. Then your child can start to eat solids with a spoon.

The health visiting nurse will be able to provide advice on breastfeeding. She will also advise you on what type of food your child needs once your breast milk is not sufficient to fully meet your child's needs.

Infant formula

If you are unable or do not wish to breastfeed, you need to give your child infant formula. It is safest to buy Danish products, because they are subject to legislation which ensures that the formula resembles human milk to the greatest possible extent. The composition of foreign products may be such that it cannot be guaranteed to give your child the nutrients it needs.

Always follow the instructions on the packaging, and never save on powder or use more than specified, as otherwise the composition of the formula will not be right for your child.

The health visiting nurse can also give you useful advice about cleaning bottles and teats.

In Faroe Island, it is recommended that children only use feeding bottles until they are 12 months old. Then they need real food several times a day and only milk in a cup for their bodies to grow up strong and healthy.



Milk after the first six months

It is recommended that your child is only given breast milk or infant formula for the first year. Once your child is 12 months old, you can give it cow's milk. From the age of about six months, your child can start learning to drink milk and water from a cup.

Between one and two years of age, it is best to give your child semi-skimmed milk. Once your child is two years old, you can give it skimmed milk. This is also the healthiest milk for the rest of the family to drink.

If your child drinks 350-500 ml. a day, it will get all the milk it needs. If you give your child more milk than this, there will not be space in your child's stomach for solid food.

Vitamin D

In Faroe Island, it is recommended that children up to the age of two years are given vitamin D supplements every day. Vitamin D is necessary to ensure that your child develops strong bones, as there is not enough vitamin D in breast milk. Your child needs 10 micrograms of vitamin D a day in drop form, which is given on a spoon. Do not add the drops to milk in a bottle, because if your child does not finish the bottle, it will not get all the vitamins.

Vitamin D is also produced by the skin when it is exposed to sunlight. If you have dark skin, it is recommended that both children and adults take vitamin D supplements every day. This is because dark skin does not form as much vitamin D as pale skin, and everyone needs vitamin D to stay healthy.

Iron supplement

Your family doctor or the health visiting nurse will tell you whether your child needs iron supplements.

Weaning your child

It is recommended that you start weaning your child (i.e. giving your child food and not just milk) once it is about six months old.

It is a good idea to start with porridge or stewed fruit, or mashed vegetables with potatoes. Gradually, as your child learns to eat food and chew it, you can give it food which has just been mashed with a fork, and later on food which has simply been cut into small pieces. Feed your child meat or fish every day, ideally at several meals, and it should also be given fruit daily. You can also give your child bulgur wheat, couscous, rice, pasta etc., so it learns to eat a varied range of foods from an early age. The best bread for everyone in the family is dark bread. In Faroe Island, both children and adults eat rye bread. You can give your child rye bread from about eight months of age.



Once your child is about nine-to-ten months old, it can eat the same food as the rest of the family.

The health visiting nurse will give you good advice on how best to combine your dietary habits with what a young child needs to eat and what is available in the shops in Faroe Island. This will ensure that your child has every chance of growing strong and healthy.



Vaccinations and medical examinations

Your child can be examined by your family doctor free of charge when it is five weeks old, five months old and 12 months old as well as when it is two, three, four and five years of age.

You will be offered a vaccination for your child free of charge when it is three months old, five months old, 12 months old and 15 months old, as well as when your son or daughter reaches four and five years of age.

All young children are vaccinated against the following diseases:

- Diphtheria, tetanus, whooping cough, polio
(3 months, 5 months, 12 months and 5 years)
- Meningitis – a particular type
(3 months, 5 months and 12 months)
- Measles, mumps and German measles
(15 months and 4 years)

Some children are also vaccinated against hepatitis B. This is decided by the doctor.

Avoid smoking indoors

It is healthiest for your child if it grows up in a home where it is not exposed to tobacco smoke. If you smoke, it is recommended that you try to stop. If this is not possible, then it is best for your child if you only smoke outdoors. In so doing, you will protect your child against a wide range of diseases such as pneumonia, bronchitis and inflammation of the middle ear.

When your baby goes to sleep

It is recommended that your child always sleeps on its back until it is able to turn onto its side by itself. This will reduce the risk of cot death. When your child is awake, it is best if it spends as much time on its front as possible. This will ensure that your child develops strong arm and back muscles.



Accident prevention

Young children are often involved in accidents because they cannot predict what happens. Young children are often hurt after falling, for example from the changing table, off a bed or sofa or down the stairs, or by being burned, for example after coming into contact with hot coffee or tea or other beverage, boiling water in an electric kettle, or by getting their fingers or toes caught in a door etc.

It is always a good idea to check your home for potential hazards as if you were a child. Then you can ensure that your child does not suffer an accident.

Bringing up your child

In Faroe Island it is not permitted to hit your children – even in connection with disciplining. The health visiting nurse will be happy to advise you on the best way to raise your child.

Good Childrearing provides your children with:

- Self-esteem
- Self-worth
- Trust in their parents
- Trust in the world around them
- Trust in themselves
- Pride
- Happiness and joy
- Sense of responsibility
- Self-sufficiency
- Care for others
- Consideration for others

And notice:

- A baby cannot be coerced or persuaded
- A baby cannot be loved too much
- A baby needs tenderness, caring, love, food and dry nappies
- Babies cannot put off or defer their needs
- Babies are not cunning or deceitful, and they make no effort to fool or trick their parents. Babies do not understand any of this.



Dental care

From the moment the first milk teeth erupt, your child must have his teeth brushed with a small amount of fluoride toothpaste twice a day.

Children up to the age of 18 are entitled to free public dental treatment. Children's dental services are administrated by the municipalities.



Child Care Services - counselling and Health visiting nurse's home visits

Health services for families and children from pregnancy up to the end of school age (16-17) are free of charge. The aim of this service is foremost preventive and health promotive. Gigni provides health care service to families with newborns, small children, school children and teenagers in the Faroe Islands.

Health visiting nurses examine the children in their home regularly. The health visiting nurse visits the family and examines the baby and provides parental guidance and health information starting as soon as possible after the family is back home from the hospital.

Foreigners moving to the Faroe Islands with children must contact Gigni in order to receive home visits and services provided by the health visiting nurse. This includes families with children older than 18 months. Parents are always welcome to contact Gigni if they need advise, counselling, homevisits etc.

If considered necessary, Gigni is working close together with the family doctor, mid-



wives, staff at daycare centers or schools, the local social worker at the child protection office and others. This is always done in close collaboration with the parents!

The Child Health Service, Gigni, provides children, youths and parents advice and help on a range of issues related to health and the wellbeing of children from pregnancy until the child leave the public school system.

Gigni has health visiting nurses represented at every school and besides giving pupils annual health checks, subjects related to health and welfare are taught in class-sessions. Activities that aim to prevent a negative out turn for the wellbeing of a child or youth are also performed in school. All pupils are offered a personal interview with the health visiting nurse at least once a year.

Gigni's health personnel can be contacted through the local school or you can contact Gigni by calling or sending an e-mail to their main office in Tórshavn. Counselling is free and can be arranged at the health personnel's office at the local school or in the home of the family.

If the child or the family has special needs, the nurse's home visits can continue up to school age, otherwise the service after the child is 18 months old until it start in school is by requests from the family or after referral from other practitioners.

Children, youth and families can have the right to a more extensive counselling service at any time if special needs arise. Examples of such cases could be: children and youths with disability, behavior difficulties, where the parents go through separation or divorce, when alcohol abuse is in the home, when families experience domestic violence, when crisis affect the surroundings, decease, death or financial problems affect the child or youth.

You are always welcome to contact Gigni and the health visiting nurse at any time if you need parental guidance, counselling, home visits or if you have questions according to your child's physical, mental or social health.

To get in contact with Gigni the family can call the main office on tel 562300 or send an email to gigni@gigni.fo.

The family does not need any referral to get counseling or home visits from Gigni.

Reference:

New in a foreign country – Health Guidelines for Parents with
small Children, 2016 by the Danish Health Authority
(Sundhedsstyrelsen), 2nd Edition.

Opdragelse med hjertet – om udvikling og konflikter med små
børn, Børnerådet og Komiteen for Sundhedsoplysning,
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Løgtingslóg nr. 63 frá 17. mai 2005 um fyrirbyggjandi heilsuskipanir
fyri børn og ung sum broytt við løgtingslóg nr. 9 frá 12. Mars 2014

Kunngerð nr. 88 frá 24. september 2007 um fyrirbyggjandi
heilsuskipanir fyri børn og ung



Breastfeeding helpline

If you have any doubts or questions regarding breastfeeding - then please feel free to call the number below. A breastfeeding counselor will guide you and answer any questions you might have.

Call 56 23 23

**The helpline is available every day from 2 pm. to 3 pm.
including Saturdays and Sundays.**



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