Does your child have a Personal Health Record?

'Thank heavens for my Blue Book,' a friend said recently. 'What with having a fam-
ily and a job, there’s always so much to remember - but if I need to check when
the children’s next immunisation is due, or to write down the phone number of my
local early childhood health centre, it’s all there in the Blue Book.'

The 'Blue Book' is another name for the Personal Health Record. This booklet,
bound in a blue plastic cover, is produced by the NSW Department of Health, and
given to all parents in NSW after the birth of a baby. The book is useful for parents
because it provides an important record of their child’s health.

How is the Blue Book used?
It works like this. Before you leave hospital, the details of your baby’s birth and of
the first examination of your baby after delivery are recorded in the book by hospit-
al staff. After that, each time you take your child to the doctor, the early childhood
health centre, or to hospital, take the Blue Book with you. This means the doctor,
nurse or other health professional can write down details of each consultation (the
date, the reason for the visit and what action was taken) in the book.

Babies and young children also need regular health and development checks by a
doctor or child and family health nurse, formerly know as early child health nurse,
to check on their progress, and to identify any problems needing treatment. The
Blue Book has information for parents on when children need these checks, and
pages for health workers to record test results.

There are also pages for parents to write down details and answer questions
about their child’s growth and development (the child and family health nurse, for-
merly know as early child health nurse, can help you fill these in). Some of these
details - like when your baby first said 'Mama' or 'Dada', or walked for the first time
- are family milestones which you’ll enjoy looking back on in years to come.

The book also includes a page of useful telephone numbers including emergency
services and information services for parents, as well as a page for parents to re-
cord telephone numbers for their personal use - such as phone numbers of the lo-
cal hospital, doctor, dentist and the child’s school. In other words, it’s a great way
to keep important information together in one place.

What are the advantages of the Blue Book?
Caring for the health of children involves parents and health workers working as a
team - the book helps parents and health professionals keep track of a child’s
health and development. It also means that each time you take a child to see a dif-
ferent health professional, the Blue Book provides him or her with the child’s medi-
cal history - this is particularly helpful in cases where parents aren’t fluent in Eng-
lish.
How long do parents use the Blue Book for?
The Blue Book is designed so that it can be used from birth until your child turns 18. It’s important to use the book up until your child starts school. And you are encouraged to continue using the book throughout your child’s childhood and adolescence.

How do parents get copies of the Blue Book?
The book is given to all women after the birth of a child - it is usually given out by hospital staff, along with other documents such as the birth registration form. Parents of babies or small children who don’t have a Blue Book - perhaps because they’ve mislaid their copy, or because their children were born outside NSW - can ask the local early childhood centre about how to obtain a copy.

If you need help making phone calls in English, ring the Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS) on 131 450.


Telephone numbers are correct at time of publication but are not continually updated. You may need to check the numbers in the telephone directory.