

# you've got rights!

- \* You have the right to get the support you need, when you need it.
- \* You have the right to be supported without being judged for who you are, what you do, or the choices you make.
- \* You have the right to be listened to, and to have your concerns and experiences heard.
- \* You have the right to be treated with dignity and respect.
- \* You have the right to confidentiality and privacy.
- \* You have the right to ask as many questions as you need to fully understand what doctors and other services tell you.
- \* You have the right to the information you need to make your own decisions about your own life and health, and your child's.
- \* You have the right to complain if you are treated unfairly.
- \* You have the right to enjoy being a mum, to feel good about what you're doing, and to be happy!



# where to start

## **MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH LINE**

Phone 13 22 29 for the cost of a local call.  
Free 24-hour medical advice.

## **DJERRIWARRH COMMUNITY HEALTH SERVICE**

Ph 8746 1100. Provides health services, counselling and support including the Backdoor Health Clinic, the 'Young, Pregnant and Parenting' group and a Centrelink worker.

## **THE BREASTFEEDING ASSOCIATION**

[www.breastfeeding.asn.au](http://www.breastfeeding.asn.au), Ph 9885 0653.  
Volunteer helpline available 7 days.

## **COUNCIL FOR SINGLE MOTHERS AND THEIR CHILDREN**

[www.csmc.org.au](http://www.csmc.org.au), Ph 9654 0622. Helpline staffed by volunteer single mothers, offers advice, a newsletter and runs support groups, including one in Melton.

## **PARENTLINE** [www.parentline.vic.gov.au](http://www.parentline.vic.gov.au)

Ph 13 22 89. Advice and referral, staffed by professional phone counsellors 8am to midnight weekdays and 10am to 10pm weekends.

## **MELTON SHIRE COUNCIL** [www.melton.vic.gov.au](http://www.melton.vic.gov.au)

Ph 9747 7200 for services incl family support & referral.

## **MOORABOOL SHIRE COUNCIL** [www.moorabool.vic.gov.au](http://www.moorabool.vic.gov.au)

Ph 5366 7100 for services incl family support & referral.

## **WOMEN'S HEALTH WEST** [www.whwest.org.au](http://www.whwest.org.au)

Ph 9689 9588 for information and advice on women's health and family violence, referral to support groups and women-friendly services.



# young mums ROCK!



What it's really like being a young mum in Melton and Bacchus Marsh and how to get the support you deserve.

Produced by young mums for young mums.

This pamphlet was written by young mums in Melton and Bacchus Marsh for other young mums in our community. We hope it helps you to know that others out there are going through the same stuff as you. You don't have to do it alone.

## the good stuff and the hard stuff

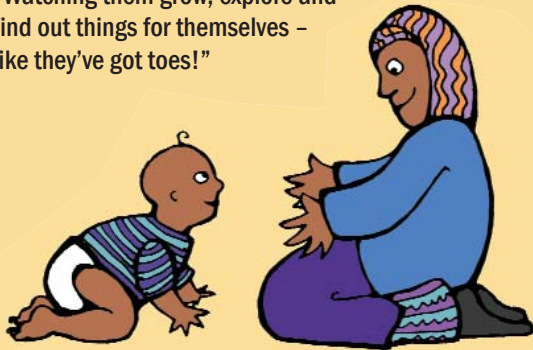
"Sometimes you get angry, then they just look at you and smile, and everything goes away."

"Younger parents are still really active compared to some older parents. And they remember what it's like to be kids!"

"When you haven't had enough sleep, everything seems 50 times worse. You want to cry."

"It's unconditional love. No matter what you do, even if you don't do everything right, they just come running up with hugs and kisses."

"Watching them grow, explore and find out things for themselves – like they've got toes!"



"You might be the more scared person in the world, but you're powerful when it comes to protecting your kids."

"I was single. What were people thinking of me being pregnant and having a child?"



"Even if you've got a boyfriend, if you're not married, you're seen as an 'unwed' mother. And if you're unwed, you're seen as unfit, somehow inferior."

"You need someone to talk to, or you'll go crazy. You'll end up in a pile on the floor, feeling very alone."

## reaching out can be hard to do

"You want help, but you assume people think you can't do it. It's hard to accept help."

"When you find a group like this, it's a relief to know you're not alone, that other people are going through the same thing."

"I like my maternal and child health nurse. I feel comfortable with her. I can tell her anything."

"They look at you as if you don't know what you're doing – you're young, you're dumb. As if they can just tell you what to do."

"My GP was absolutely amazing. He explained every step of the way, and what could go wrong. He didn't make me feel like it was bad that I was single. He made me feel everything was going to be okay."

"It's hard to walk in to see a doctor, being pregnant and young. A doctor said to us we should have waited until we had a steady job – which we did! He's just assumed."



## tips on getting the support you deserve!

- \* Do what you feel is right. Get advice, and then make your own judgements.
- \* Increase your support networks. Talk to friends and other young mums. Join a support group.
- \* Remember that your mum was a new mother once too! She might be able to give you a new perspective.
- \* Talk to your partner if you have one. They are as much a parent as you, you shouldn't have to struggle alone!
- \* Some services and support groups are free, and may include childcare. It's a break – so take it!
- \* Keep an open mind, e.g. about what it might be like in support groups. If you don't like one, try another.
- \* Ask other mums which services and groups they find most helpful and supportive.
- \* Ask your GP and Maternal Child Health nurse what other supports are available, such as groups. It can make a real difference feeling supported early on.
- \* Before you contact a doctor or other service, write down your questions. Don't be afraid to keep asking until you clearly understand what they are saying.
- \* Find out if services offer additional support, such as transport to get to the service, childcare or an interpreter if you need one.
- \* If you're not happy with the service, for example if you feel that a doctor is not giving you the information you need, ask to see someone else.