



# Dr Deborah Carrington

PERINATAL GP & LACTATION CONSULTANT

## Welcome and Information for New Patients

Hello, and welcome to Active Health. I look forward to getting to know you and your little one. As a Perinatal GP and Lactation Consultant, I have a wide scope of practice in supporting families before, during and after pregnancy. I am passionate about providing caring, holistic and evidence-based care for families as they navigate the joys and challenges of welcoming a new family member into their lives.

Due to the demand for services, and to ensure I can offer appointments in a reasonable time frame, I am currently only taking appointments for infant feeding support, sleep consultations, preconception counselling, antenatal care or postnatal care. I do not have capacity for ongoing general practice appointments at this time.


My appointment schedule is structured a little differently from the other GPs to enable me to give the time needed to properly help mothers and babies. Please let reception know what type of appointment you need (you do not need to divulge any confidential information) so they can triage it appropriately. If you are needing urgent help with breastfeeding or other newborn concerns, please let reception know as I will always do my best to fit you in as soon as possible.


I am now offering home visits to increase access to breastfeeding and sleep support, particularly for our mums in Portland and nearby areas.


I love little people and you are welcome to bring other children and any support people to your appointment if you choose to. I don't mind a bit of chaos in the consulting room!


### **Why do I need to book in both Mother and Baby?**

For postnatal appointments, feeding issues and sleep concerns, I need to take a history (and possibly examine) both mother and baby. It is a medicolegal requirement that I write proper notes for both patients. This also means you can claim a Medicare rebate for both mother and baby, which reduces the out-of-pocket cost significantly compared to seeing a non-GP lactation or sleep consultant.

(03) 5522 1200 

Active Health Portland, 148-150 Percy St, Portland VIC 3305 

[www.drdeborahcarrington.com](http://www.drdeborahcarrington.com) 

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## What are Mother and Baby Appointments for?

Some of the issues I can help with include:


- Breastfeeding or bottle-feeding difficulties
- Unsettled babies
- Problems with sleep
- Reflux/colic
- Oral function assessments (and tongue tie release when needed)
- Concerns about milk supply or baby's weight gain
- Introduction of solids
- Immunisations
- Postnatal mental health
- Six-week checks
- Contraception (including Implanon insertion and removal)
- Cervical screening tests
- ...and much more – I am a GP as well as a lactation consultant so I can help with most perinatal concerns, not just feeding issues


## What should I bring to my appointment?


Please bring your Medicare cards, baby's green book and any other information you may have regarding the pregnancy or birth. Where possible, please bring your baby ready to have a feed as this is an important part of the assessment. However please don't leave your baby hungry if they can't wait for the scheduled time!


## Can I book in for antenatal care?

Absolutely you can! It's one of my favourite parts of this job, and it is so exciting meeting your babies once they are born. It's good to book in as soon as possible once you find out you are pregnant so we can start arranging your blood tests and dating scan. Depending on the hospital you wish to deliver in, I will refer you according to the timing of their preferred pathways. I can do GP Shared Antenatal Care with Warrnambool Hospital for low risk pregnancies. I am happy to see you as often as you wish throughout the pregnancy in addition to your hospital appointments.

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## **I am concerned my baby may have a tongue or lip tie. Can you help with that?**

Yes, I can. There is currently a lot of conflicting information out there regarding tongue ties and lip ties, and this can cause confusion and anxiety for parents trying to make decisions about this. I will undertake a full history, observe a breastfeed or bottle feed and take you through a physical assessment of your baby's oral anatomy before discussing treatment options with you. If it is clinically appropriate, I can perform a tongue tie release procedure. It is important to ensure that your baby has had the Vitamin K injection at birth if a tongue tie release is to be performed.


## **How can I book for a Mother and Baby Appointment?**


Please ring the clinic on 5522 1200 and one of our friendly receptionists can make the right appointment for you. Currently we are not taking online appointments for this as we need to ensure an adequate amount of time is allocated for both mother and baby. Initial appointments are allocated an hour due to the time required for a full assessment.

To book a home visit, you can either contact reception on 5522 1200, or complete an online query form on my website [www.drdeborahcarrington.com](http://www.drdeborahcarrington.com). If you are needing urgent support with breastfeeding, I will be in touch to arrange a home visit as soon as possible.


## **Do I need to be a permanent patient of Active Health to attend?**

No, not for Mum and Baby appointments. I very often see patients for help with feeding or sleep, or oral tie concerns who have a regular GP elsewhere. I am very happy to see you for these issues and then return you back to the care of your usual doctor. I will need to take some basic information for your file such as allergies and past medications, but can register you as a visiting patient. I am always happy to provide a letter or handover to your regular GP if required.

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## What training have you done?

I graduated with honours from the University of Melbourne and was awarded the Richard Gutch Medal for achieving the highest results in Victoria in the 2016 RACGP Fellowship Examinations. I hold a Diploma of Child Health from the University of Sydney and have completed studies through Australasian Lactation Courses. I have completed accreditation in Neuroprotective Developmental Care with Possums Education and am an International Board Certified Lactation Consultant. I am also a mother of four young children with plenty of first-hand experience with the challenges of parenting.


## What are the fees?

Private fees do apply to all appointments. I have a different billing structure from the other GPs at Active Health, due to the different types of appointments and the specialised service I provide for women's health and paediatrics.


The nature of this specialty care requires long appointments, and the Medicare rebate is sadly now so low that it is not possible to cover the costs of running the practice if I bulk bill all patients. I want to keep healthcare accessible, and so have kept the gaps as low as I can whilst still meeting costs.


Access to healthcare is a priority at Active Health, so I will be providing a discounted fee with a lower gap for families with HCC and Pension Cards. If you are experiencing severe financial hardship this can be discussed confidentially on an individual basis. Payment plans are available.

For feeding, sleep or other postnatal concerns where Mum and Baby are booked in together in a combined appointment, there will be a private bill for only one (the other will be bulk billed). This minimises the out-of-pocket cost, making this a more affordable option than seeing a non-GP private lactation or sleep consultant.

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