

Fisted hands

Helping your baby open their hands

Fisted hand



Infant is holding their hand in a tight closed fist. The thumb may or may not be inside the palm (called indwelling thumb).

Fisted hand with indwelling thumb

Opening hand timeline

Fisted hands normal in infants

Infants have a palmar reflex at birth. When you place a toy or finger in their palm, they tightly close their hand around it. Fisted hands may also be a sign of hunger, distress, or reflux.

At 3 to 4 months

Infant will begin to open their hands to reach for toys.

At 5 to 6 months

The palmar reflex goes away. Infant will start to grab and hold toys on their own.

Helping your infant

Use your thumb to massage baby's palm.

- Use a circular motion.

- Start at the center of the palm and move outwards.
- Place toys and rattles in infant's hands to explore.
- Use different textures. Give infant toys in all positions. This will help infant with reaching and grasping.

Talking to your doctor or therapist



Talk to your doctor or therapist if your infant is older than 6 months and is keeping their hands fisted most of the time or not using their hands to play.



Example of toys for reaching and grasping

Rehab Services

682-885-4063

These instructions are only general guidelines. Your healthcare provider may give you special instructions. If you have questions or concerns, please call your healthcare provider.