

## Fisted Hands

All infants are born with their hands closed (fisted). The thumb is in the palm and fingers are closed tightly around it. By the time I am a month or two, people around me will start complaining that I love pulling their hair, chains/ necklaces or the sheet covering me. I am not doing this purposely, this is a reflex. This reflex helps me to hold your finger or my rattle later on. I have learnt to move my legs and my hands together whenever I see people who are familiar to me. Slowly my hand movements need to increase.

If by the time I'm three months old I move my legs a lot and hardly move my hands, then please hold my legs and encourage me to reach and touch with my hands. By three months my hands should be open at least fifty percent of the time so not to miss the different and interesting sensations all around me. I love taking my hands to my mouth and sucking hungrily at my fingers. I love the feel of one hand on the other and moving my fingers in play. I am ready to touch the colorful shiny toys hanging above my bed. I get excited when my hands accidentally touch the rattle hanging above me and there is a sound. By four to five months I am ready not only to hold toys, but I have started reaching for toys above my head to hit and hold them. I love touching my mother's face.

By three months, if my fists are still closed or I don't hold toys, here are some activities that may help.

1) Shake my hand gently in a downward movement.

2) Make a small pouch slightly bigger than my palm filled with different materials (cotton, mustard seeds, bajra, small thermocol balls). The pouch is secured around my palm by elastic/velcro that is neither too tight nor too loose. This will help keep my fingers and thumb open and in opposite directions. The pouch can be made of cloth having different textures e.g. velvet, cotton, jute or silk. You can even make me lie on my tummy and put my hands out in front with this pouch.

3) Put honey in my palms so that I feel uncomfortable and try to wipe it off by opening my palms and rubbing them together.

4) Open my hands by bringing my fingers and thumb out gently, kiss my palms, blow air on them. Put your finger in the center of my palm and make circular patterns. Talk to me while you

do this so that I enjoy these activities too. Slide beads or edible sweet or savory rings around each finger so that I use my fingers of my other hand to take them out.

5) Give me your finger to hold by placing my fingers and thumb around it.

6) If I am being bottle fed, take my hands to the bottle, put my fingers around them and put your hand over mine.

7) Hold and bring my hands to the middle of my body while I sit on your lap facing a big mirror crumpling old newspaper, crinkly, shiny wrapping paper or just clapping my hands.

8) Let me splash in warm water, this helps me to relax my grip. Put some of my toys in it for me to hold. Pour warm water slowly into my open palm.

9) Wet a sponge, place it in my hand, put your hand around mine and gently tighten your grip around my hand so that I can squeeze the sponge. This will strengthen my weak grip and develop my ability to hold things. However, if my fist is tight already do not do this activity with me since it will further tighten my muscles.

10) As I grow older take my hand and beat it on a small play drum.

11) Attach a piece of stiff sponge into the palm of my hand with Velcro or elastic. Help me dip it in a puddle of paint and press colours onto newspaper.

12) Put mur-mure, mustard seeds, bajra rajma, chana, uncooked macaroni, cornflakes, poha in a bowl and assist me in moving my hands in it.

13) Fist my right hand with your hand while isolating my index finger and allow me to press the light and fan switches or baby piano keys.

14) Help me press bubble wrap by keeping it between my thumb and index fingers.

15) Take a handkerchief across the palm, between the thumb and the index finger, and cross it at the back of the palm. Tie it on the wrist with the palm facing upwards. This is intervention for management of wrist drop and cortical thumb.