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# Hands-on approach to infant wellbeing

PEDIATRIC nurse Kerrie Spence saw a gap in the health system for natural therapies when caring for sick children – infant massage.

Ms Spence, of Mt Eliza, completed a training course and is now a qualified infant massage instructor. She works as a nurse during the day and teaches infant massage in her spare time.

Infant massage can relieve discomfort caused by constipation and other health issues.

It has been shown to improve the immune system and is an opportunity for parents to develop a closer relationship with their child, she said.

It can also help mothers with postnatal depression.

Ms Spence runs Soothing Hands Infant Massage with fellow pediatric nurse Amy Smith, offering classes on the Mornington Peninsula.



**Gentle touch:** Kerrie Spence uses massage to help ill children. **Picture:** Jane Steel

"We perform massages on infants and teach classes," Ms Spence said. "We are expanding our business and will soon be teaching through our place of work, Peninsula Health."

Soothing Hands has been running for six months. Ms Spence told of being approached by a mother in need of help. "The mother told me that her child rarely slept and was always screaming. I showed the mother how to massage her baby and the results were almost instant."

The baby slept for almost three hours. On waking, he was very calm and was

feeding better. The mother was ecstatic and could not believe her eyes, Ms Spence said. She regularly massages her son Tyler, aged four.

"He is still a willing participant when I need to practise my massages. He asks me daily for a massage," she said.

The Infant Massage Information Service will run certificate training courses in March and September.

■ For more information, visit [www.infantmassage-imis.com.au](http://www.infantmassage-imis.com.au) or call 1300 137 551. To contact, Soothing Hands Infant Massage, call 0424 641 170.