

BEING DAD

PREGNANCY GUIDEBOOK

Quick Tips, Lists
and Info to Prepare
Dads-to-Be for
Pregnancy, Birth
and Beyond.

Earn Extra
Points With
the Wife!

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A note from the creators of the **Being Dad** DVDs and Books

This book has been created to make your life easier, make you look good in front of your baby's momma and to give you some crucial information, tips and lists for the times ahead. It's been created to whet your appetite and inspire you to seek out more information. It's by no means a comprehensive guide to everything you need – it's more a cheat sheet to give you the absolute basics.

Yes, I know you don't want to read all this, but seriously, it's like a cheat sheet to pregnancy and birth. Flick through this in bed at night so she knows you are reading it...you might earn a few extra points from her and learn something at the same time.

We've interviewed hundreds of dads around the world to find the secrets to an easier transition into fatherhood. There is no doubt that men today want to be more involved in parenting and are expected to be more involved, but many of us don't know how. The role of fatherhood has changed a lot in just the last generation so we are just learning the ropes of making dads an integral part of active parenting in many ways. Hey, you're on the cutting edge of new parenting techniques and skills.

Being a great dad starts from conception...think of birth as your baby's birthday...it's a cause for celebration. Use the nine months of pregnancy to get better prepared and informed so you and your partner can have an amazing birth experience. With the advice gathered from dads around the world, and information and suggestions from our favorite childbirth educator and birth doula, Jeanette Mesite-Frem, this book will make the next few months easier for you and your partner. Being an involved dad will also get your parenting career off to a happy and memorable start.

To really impress her with your newfound enthusiasm, order a pizza and

invite her to sit down to watch the DVD ***Being Dad*** together. It's a short film with practical advice from 40 dads from all over the U.S. You'll both laugh, learn and be inspired to talk to each other about your own thoughts, concerns and expectations regarding pregnancy and birth--we're sure of it. Let us know what you think and send us any feedback or questions at info@beingdadusa.com. ~ ***Sam, Troy, Tom & Kara***

A note from Jeanette

As a childbirth educator and birth doula, I've worked with many moms and dads as they go through pregnancy, birth and life with a new baby. I've found that dads these days want to be involved but many people don't give them the guidance on how to be involved or credit they deserve for wanting to be involved with the birth or raising the baby. I also know dads who want to be involved but just don't find all the big books as interesting as moms might like them to...so my hope is that this simple guide will help you feel prepared and involved and ultimately have an awesome birth experience.

Your participation in your baby's birth will not only be appreciated by your baby's momma, but you'll find that you feel closer to your baby. There's so much to say about pregnancy and birth but we've tried to limit this book to the most important pieces you need to know. We hope it helps! Let me know.

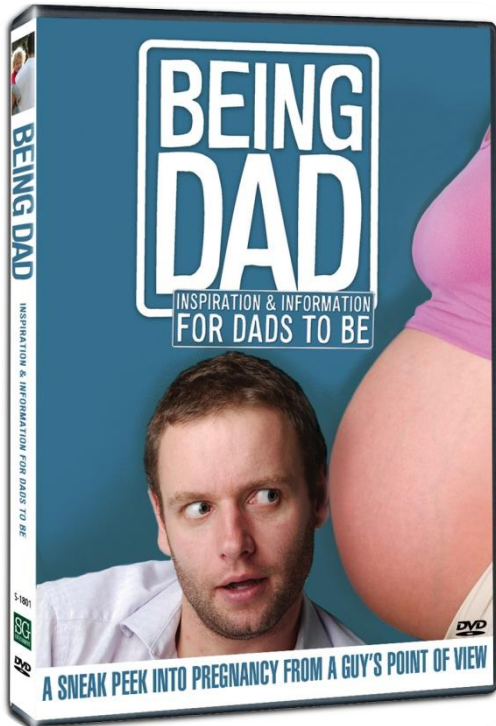
If you have questions about pregnancy, birth or babies, feel free to email me at jeanette@mothersandcompany.com ~ ***Jeanette***

WARNING: The information contained in this book should not be a substitute for the advice of your personal physician, medical practitioner or other trained health professional. You are strongly advised to consult with the appropriate health care professionals with regard to all matters that may require medical attention or diagnosis and to check with a physician before administering or undertaking any course of treatment.

20 REASONS TO KEEP READING THIS BOOK

After reading this book, you'll know:

- Important things you need to do to get ready for having a baby
- All about the need for a few hot dates before the baby arrives
- Which baby and nursery items you really need (and don't need)
- What to pack for you, mom and baby in preparation for the birth
- How to choose a birth and/or postpartum doula
- Why you should take a childbirth class and how to find a good one
- How to identify signs of early and late labor
- When it's time to go to the hospital or call your Doctor / Midwife / Doula
- How to create a calm and happy birth environment
- Simple and natural techniques to help make labor easier
- Positions that will help facilitate your baby's birth and make it less painful for you both!
- What to do and what to say during labor
- What NOT to do or say during labor
- Important birth terminology
- How to help her with breastfeeding
- Where to find support in your community & online
- Signs of the baby blues and postpartum depression
- How to help mom in the first few weeks at home
- Enough information to sound like an expert—impress mom, medical staff and yourself!
- How to be a happy and supportive partner and all-around awesome new dad



See what others are saying about *Being Dad*. Check out these links to cool reviews:

["A must watch film..."](#) by Dadz

["The perfect gift..."](#) by Pregnancy.org

See more great reviews at BeingDadUSA.com

This simple, quick-reference book is the perfect companion for the *Being Dad* DVD. Just print out the pages and tips you need as you progress towards fatherhood. *Being Dad* features dozens of new dads from all over the country who share the thoughts, fears, concerns and joys they experienced from the first time they heard, "Honey, I'm pregnant!" to the first time they held their newborn child.

Everything and more from the next chapter is covered by the dads and experts in the film and watching it with your partner is a great way to start talking about the changes ahead. Sit back, relax and enjoy. it's quite simply the best way to learn about Being Dad.

SECTION 1

PREGNANCY STUFF



The stick says you are going to be a dad. Fear not! This section provides lists and tips with the basic information you need to survive pregnancy and be prepared for birth.

Don't get caught short when the big day arrives – know your birth team.

Do you know the name and contact details for the people that will be supporting your birth? What if an emergency occurs and you need to call your OBGYN, Hospital, midwife or doula?

Here is our very first tip to make you look good. Grab your cell phone, find your partner and ask her for the name and contact number for the following people: Family Doctor, OBGYN, Midwife, Doula, Hospital or Birth Center & lactation consultant.

Tell her that you want to put them in your phone in-case of an emergency. She'll be shocked to the core that you've given it enough thought and you'll be delighted you actually have these contacts if the need arises.

If it's too early and you haven't picked your team, set a reminder in your phone to record the details. Can you imagine being in an emergency and not having this information – you'd NEVER live it down.

What an “Amazing Birth” is & why it matters

The birth of your first child will be one of the most important and memorable days of your life. Why not do your best to ensure that it's an amazing experience?

Of course, the most important thing is a healthy mom and healthy baby, but it's perfectly valid to want it to be an amazing experience.

Birth CAN be enjoyable—for her and for you. Really, no joke. Okay, maybe not every minute, but overall it should be a great memory. Having a baby is a lot of work. It's emotional. It can be spiritual. It's

very physical. But it can be fun! Come on, you're having a baby! How cool and amazing is that?!

You know you have the easy job. You're not going through the physical journey but you should be informed, prepared and supportive to make it an enjoyable experience for you, her and the baby.

An “amazing birth”, in our opinion, is one where you:

- Don't break a sweat (because you are prepared)
- Get involved with the pregnancy
- Discuss and plan the birth beforehand
- Both feel informed, listened to, cared for and respected
- Participate in the experience and in decisions that are made about the care of your partner and baby
- Make your partner feel loved and supported
- Enjoy the process and the result: becoming a parent and finally meeting the baby!!

Of course, a healthy mom and healthy baby are paramount, but start off with the goal of having a happy and even amazing experience.

Talk to your buddies and find out what they think influenced their births positively. Ask the guys who didn't enjoy their births what their advice would be for you.

You'll probably be surprised at what you hear on both sides. Welcome the positive messages, think about how to overcome the negative. Encourage her to do the same. Then let go and enjoy the process of transforming from dude to dad.

DUDE, YOU'RE PREGNANT!

When She says “I’m pregnant,” things to do NOW.

Don’t freak out, but technically you are a dad NOW! Your partner is providing a safe and healthy environment for your baby to grow and in order for her to do that you need to be supportive and keep mom happy. This is your first duty as a dad. Here are a few dad-to-dad tips from those of us who have been there.

Get into the zone of being a dad now—it’s a nine month head start to fatherhood. You may want to slip into denial about the whole thing but try not to. Start trying to bond with your baby now.

Don’t panic. Nine months is a long time. You have plenty of time to get ready, sort out your finances, get fit, get your golf handicap down and make any necessary adjustments to your new life.

Know that she’s thinking about this itty-bitty thing in her belly as a real person (with fingers toes and a name) already, and she thinks about it most of the day, especially after she starts feeling it move (beginning around 16–20 weeks of pregnancy).

Start talking about your birth team. Think about the kind of birth and birthplace you want...this is one of the most important decisions you will make during pregnancy. Look into all your options: hospitals, birthing centers and even the option of giving birth at home with midwives. It’s all about finding the most comfortable option for you both.

Check your Health Insurance policy. See what options are covered.

Think about when the right time will be to tell your employer that you'll need some time off. Plan far enough ahead for time off for the birth and as much time as possible after the birth.

Talk to your sisters/mothers/aunts/grandmothers about their births. Talk to your brothers/fathers/uncles/grandfathers. You'll be surprised at how much you learn. Talk to your buddies. Some of them will be happy to share.

Check out the section on eating during pregnancy. Mom's nutrition is essential. Cook for her—by cooking for her you are also cooking for your baby. Make sure it's healthy and you can help your baby grow and develop into tomorrow's next sports star!

Enjoy the process. The more interested you are and the more you show it, the better she'll feel and the closer you two will grow. Communicate with her—chicks dig that!

Follow your baby's development. Know what he's up to in there on a week-by-week basis.

Watch the DVD, *Being Dad: Inspiration & Information for Dads-to-be.* Get a pizza and a drink and sit down with HER for a great date-night that will make you laugh and have an interesting and meaningful conversation after the film is over. And don't forget to watch the extras!

Most importantly, remember that pregnancy isn't an illness and birth isn't a medical emergency. Be prepared so you can enjoy the experience!

The short list of things you want to do before you become a parent

You won't have as much time in the first few years of your baby's life to get away (you'll probably find that you don't want to leave your baby for too long, either). So try to fit something in before the baby arrives.

Plan a getaway for the two of you. Go fishing with your buddies. Drive across the country to visit family you don't see often enough.

Make a list of things to do, get the nod from the little lady and get planning. And be sure to plan a date night every week between now and the birth so you can spend some quality time together.

The business side of having a baby

She's thinking of the baby, wondering how breastfeeding will go, how much time she'll take off from work and what color to paint the nursery.

You're probably thinking about...nothing...?

Well, maybe you are thinking about the money, the future, your buddies, perhaps a bigger house and wondering whether you really have to buy a mini-van (no, you don't).

Make both of you more relaxed by getting your financial and legal documents in order.

Here are 7 homework tasks to complete 4-6 weeks before birth. When the baby comes you won't have time to do this!! Since you'll be getting all of this in order, think about your filing system to store all of this information and make sure SHE knows where everything is, too.

1. **Choose guardians** for your baby. Don't be surprised if this one requires a long debate.
2. **Make sure you have health insurance**, find out what your deductible and co-pay will be for your birth. Ask what else they cover. Some cover a car seat for your baby. Some cover a breast pump. Some offer other services or products. If you fall within a certain income bracket, some states may provide you with valuable and high-quality services, like food and nutritional and breastfeeding counseling for women, infants and children. Check out www.fns.usda.gov/wic for more info.
3. **Make a will** If you don't already have one, and get it filed properly.
4. **Get life insurance.** Yup, you're old enough. Your baby needs you to have it.
5. **Daycare.** If she's planning on going back to work, you need to think about who will take care of the baby. You, a relative, a daycare center, a nanny...there are many options but you'll be glad you started researching this early. Visit them, go with your gut feeling to decide (good advice for everything related to pregnancy, birth and parenting).
6. **Budget.** Some families find a budget is especially necessary when there's a baby involved. Plan early.
7. **Sign up for a 529 plan** to save for your baby's education (ask your financial advisor or your state department of education about this option).

Quick tips: how to help during pregnancy

She thinks about being pregnant most of the day and night. Unbelievable but true so just accept it. The baby is now her number 1 priority—welcome to being number 2!

Cravings are real. Respond to them. Try to encourage her to eat healthy before and after any cravings for foods that aren't as healthy for her and the baby.

Her body is changing daily. Aches, twinges, tickles, gurgles and undulations. Pay attention to them. Sometimes you'll be able to help out, sometimes she'll just want you to listen to her rants. Remember—you can't fix every problem....even though as men we feel the need to!

The baby knows your voice, so yes, it is cool for you to talk to the belly! Keep your hand on her belly until the baby moves. It's important to her.

More and more pillows in your bed may be a key to her happiness. Buy them for her as a surprise gift. There's a big long pillow available at most big bath/bed supply stores for under \$15.

Find a chiropractor who works with pregnant women and make an appointment for her to see him/her (your OBGYN may be able to recommend one). They can do wonders to make pregnant moms feel better and help make birth easier for them. And of course, get her a pregnancy **massage** (or give her a massage yourself!).

She's beautiful when she's pregnant. You know that, but **she needs to hear it.** Over and over and over again. Tell her at least 5 positive things a day and avoid talking about the size of her bum at all costs.

She will probably feel very tired most of the time. It's real. It's hormonal. She's growing a human! **Feed her. Let her sleep late. Cuddle.** It won't be just the two of you for much longer. **Enjoy** your time together while you still can.

Bonding with your baby starts before birth

For women, bonding is a more natural process which isn't surprising considering they carry the baby for nine months. What about guys? Do we have to wait for the baby to be born before we can start bonding?

We've interviewed hundreds of dads around the world and here are a few tips from some of the guys in ***Being Dad*** to help you bond with your baby while it's still in the womb.

1. Understand how you can help grow your baby through nutrition & cooking. Prepare healthy meals that will give your baby the building blocks she needs to develop.
2. Give your baby a nick name and start talking to him every day. He can hear your voice and will recognize it when he is born.
3. Go to all ultrasounds – never has the adage “a picture is worth a thousand words” been more true. Seeing is believing for most men.
4. Experiment by playing different styles of music and see what makes him move.
5. Find out the sex before the birth. This can help you prepare for life with a boy or a girl and allow you to start buying items for their nursery or future.
6. Understand and follow the development of your baby week by week. It's pretty cool knowing when he's developed legs or when he can hear your voice. We've created a humorous look at life inside the womb that you can download from www.beingdadusa.com. It's called “A Diary from the Womb”.

Better bonding will help you deal with life after birth and to be a more understanding pregnancy and birth partner to you.

How you can help build your baby.

Did you know that you can be responsible for building your baby? How would you like to help him (or her) grow bones, teeth, muscles, a brain, spinal column and all the necessary tools to play football or be a ballerina! Sure you would - It's simple.

Eating fresh, unprocessed and organic foods when possible, is vital for mom, dad and baby. A varied diet that combines protein, complex carbohydrates, vitamins, minerals and essential fatty acids can help give your baby the best start to life and help you and your partner have a healthier pregnancy.

There are a few “golden rules” that are worth considering:

- Every snack and meal should include “a **protein** and **color**”. For example: An apple with some almonds. Yogurt with some strawberries. Hummus with red peppers. Beans and cucumbers. Chicken with broccoli.
- Your baby is what mom eats and drinks. Just about everything good or bad that passes her lips makes its way into the baby.
- Avoid unpasteurized cheeses (mainly soft cheeses) and cold cuts.
- Most fish are off-limits (and that rule applies while nursing and to kids under three). There are a few healthier fish to have occasionally, haddock is one. Do a bit of research on this— it's worth it to your baby's health! Again, www.ewg.org is a great resource.
- Whatever your partner puts into her body will go into your baby's body. Think about helping her by changing your habits: stop smoking, drink less alcohol & caffeine, eat better and exercise more.

By feeding and nourishing mom - you are feeding your baby and helping him develop. Whip up a healthy grilled chicken salad with lots of greens and a few legumes and you're really building a healthy brain and nervous system.....talk about being a whiz in the kitchen.

Okay, this isn't directly food-related, but exercise helps her placenta work better...so take frequent walks together!

It's a myth that women need to double their food intake. Pregnant women only require an additional 300 calories a day! It is important however, to note that a woman's need for many nutrients like iron and folate increases substantially during pregnancy. Ask your OBGYN to recommend a pregnancy multivitamin to ensure the baby and mom get all the nutrients they need.

Be careful....loads of guys 'go out in sympathy'...keep fit and eat well because you won't have as much time when the baby comes.

Being fit and healthy will help you have more stamina for the birth and help you both cope better when the baby comes home.

For a comprehensive look at nutrition during pregnancy and to learn how you can help build your baby visit www.beingdadusa.com and download our "Build Your Baby guide" which comes complete with easy to prepare recipes.

Protecting yourselves & your baby from environmental toxins

You may not have heard this before, but did you know that lurking in your shampoo, soaps, lotions, perfumes and other body care products are toxins that you should avoid?

Why is this important? Your skin is your largest organ—and it absorbs much of what you put on it. And that goes into your blood stream, hers and into your baby.

Even common baby products contain cancer-causing and hormone-disrupting chemicals. Think of this interesting fact: in the European Union there are over 1000 ingredients banned from being included in body care products. In the United States? Just 10!

What can you do? Follow the *Shopper's Guide to Safe Cosmetics*, Check labels and choose wisely! Thanks to the great folks at EWG www.ewg.org for all their wonderful research and resources.

And consider making your own baby lotion (one of the best is straight olive oil!) from items you can find in your refrigerator or pantry. For more info on that, email info@mothersandcompany.com and they'll send you some recipes.

Your baby registry: a.k.a. “retail therapy”

The maternity industry is huge. In some ways that is fabulous for you—there’s so much more available to you than was available to your parents. On the other hand, it is an industry that sells a lot of stuff that you don’t need but your partner will want to buy. We’ve put together the following guide for what you REALLY need and what you don’t. It’s easy to waste money on unnecessary items.

Be a wise consumer. Shop around. Consider smaller stores, consignment shops, thrift shops, specialty boutiques, sporting good shops and online stores. Buyer beware though...sometimes the cheapest items are not the safest items.

And check for recalls and warnings at the Consumer Product Safety Commission’s website: www.cpsc.gov

Here is a list of things YOU DO NOT NEED

Baby positioners— unless your baby’s doctor recommends one for a medical condition

Crib bumpers (really, they look pretty but can be dangerous)

A diaper bag that has bunnies on it...get a diaper bag that you’d wear even if you didn’t have a baby. Who says you have to give up style just because you become a parent?

A big stroller— You’ll probably wear your baby in a sling when you go out during the first six months. If you really want to buy a stroller for the first six months, we recommend the simple frame stroller that your baby’s car seat/carrier (the ones with the handle) fits into. By the time your baby grows out of the carrier and you need a new stroller, you’ll have a variety of newer and lighter strollers to choose from and you’ll know more about your parenting lifestyle and needs.

Small receiving blankets—the extra large ones work better for swaddling, burps and keeping baby covered (and they can be used for years because your child won't grow too big for them for a long while)

Too many pieces of baby clothing, since you don't know what size your baby will be when it's born and you may not know the gender.

Plastic baby bottles, cups, plates, bowls and spoons that have bisphenol-A, phthalates or lead in them. For more information on this and many other important environmental and household toxins, see www.ewg.org.

Along these lines, there are three wonderful resources about products, thebabyplanners.com babybargains.com and consumerreports.org

Items worth getting from friends & family

Baby clothes, strollers, bouncy seats & swings and cloth diapers (reuse, recycle, reduce, right?)

Check to ensure that anything you get from friends, family, yard sales and elsewhere haven't been recalled...see www.cpsc.gov

Items worth getting from a specialty maternity/baby shop

Quality nursing bras that are properly fitted for her by a certified nursing bra fitter.

Slings and baby carriers, so you can wear your baby. Babies cry less when close to you, so go hands-free and you'll both be happier!

Cloth diapers. Save over \$1000 per year. Save trees. Put something healthier next to your baby's skin. They're not as difficult to use or wash as you might think. Some of the dads you see in ***Being Dad*** happily use cloth diapers on their babies.

Glass **bottles** and BPA- and phthalate-free plastic accessories (teethers and plates made from cornstarch are awesome inventions).

A healthier crib mattress. Flame retardants and the plastics used in commonly available mattresses and other baby items give off fumes that are not good for your or your baby's health. Try a wool-covered mattress or latex mattress.

Breast pumps - If you do get a breast pump, **go electric** and choose a pump that is made by a company that specializes in them. And check with your insurance, they may provide you with one of the best pumps at no cost to you.

Extra-large receiving blankets for swaddling your baby (but they can be large enough to last several years as your baby grows)

Toys that are made from healthier plastics, wood and cloth (batteries not needed!)

Strollers that are lighter, stronger and more versatile than the ones found in your typical baby store.

The Itzbeen baby care timer (great for labor, too!)

Some specialty shops and maternity centers also offer **classes and workshops** that you should consider: childbirth classes, newborn care, breastfeeding, CPR, cloth diapering, baby wearing...the list goes on! These classes tend to be smaller and tend to provide more information and discuss options you might not have heard about otherwise. Plus, you'll meet a group of people in your community that will be able to help you after your baby is born. Also, Baby Groups are a tremendous resource to help you transition into an effective and prepared parent. If you can't find a group in your area, the next best thing is the BABYGROUP DVDs, for 0-6 months and 6-12 months.

Let's talk about SEX— from one dad to another

Sex during pregnancy can become problematic. Her libido may rise and fall without warning and you may feel strange about sex in late stage pregnancy. Both of these are common for pregnant couples and they can cause some tension. Here's what you need to know and how to avoid problems.

Having interviewed hundreds of dads around the world we know that for some guys, sex in late stage pregnancy feels wrong.

It's normal for you to feel this way and the most common reasons are:

- You feel like someone else is 'in the room'
- If you are having a girl it really feels inappropriate
- You are worried about hurting the baby—you're not that big pal!
- You are worried about hurting your partner
- You are worried that sex will induce birth prematurely
- Logistics! How can you get in there?

These are **totally normal** feelings, but remember, your partner might perceive your lack of interest as a sign you don't find her attractive, so it's important to tell her how you feel. Show her this page or **watch Being Dad** so she understands it's not unique to just you..

FACT– Providing practical help with chores and making sure she's well rested will improve the chances of her feeling up to it.

FACT– Semen contains prostaglandins that can assist with inducing labor when the time comes, if the baby and her body are ready (and it might work better if she has an orgasm, too!).

Tips to help her feel comfortable with sex during pregnancy

When it comes to making her feel comfortable there are a few things that you can do. Understand that from now on, your sex life can still be fabulous but it will be different. You'll need to be open to being more communicative about sex and understanding each others needs and expectations.

- Try the following positions: side-by-side, all-fours, seated, her on top
- Be tender, romantic (look it up on www.dictionary.com) and patient
- Tell her she's beautiful—a LOT
- Keep your weight off her stomach and breasts
- Use pillows and cushions around her curvier parts for extra comfort
- Experiment with new positions and take it slow
- Consider all forms of sexual contact, not just intercourse (massage, mutual masturbation, oral sex, etc)
- Talk about it – COMMUNICATION IS THE KEY
- Don't be pushy or sulk if she's not in the mood
- Don't expect that she will definitely have an orgasm but know if she does it could be more intense than normal!
- Don't be too vigorous
- Enjoy just being together (**yes, that means cuddling!**)

FACT– During late stages of pregnancy, female orgasms can be more intense than ever experienced before. Go on son! – get in there!

The (dreaded) childbirth class

For most guys the thought of a weekend in a childbirth class is worse than a paper cut to the eyeball. That's why picking the right one is VERY important. Get involved with choosing the class you will attend so you can find one that appeals to you both.

What is the philosophy of the childbirth educator? The word "Lamaze" has become universal to mean childbirth class, but there are different training programs for educators across the country. Lamaze is one of the largest (www.lamaze.org), but Bradley, Birthing from Within, HypnoBirthing and BirthWorks are also respected national programs.

There are some regional programs that train high-quality educators too, so find out more about the philosophies of the different classes that are available in your area.

1. **Do I have to go?** - This is NOT a question to ask....unless you like the bite of a seething, hormonally charged, pregnant viper.
2. **How many couples will be in the class (maximum)?** We recommend a class with 9 or fewer couples. Makes it more interactive and you're more likely to get your questions heard and answered.
3. **Are there handouts?** Most adults are better learners if they see it, hear it and do it. Use them to your advantage—she needs your help remembering everything (have you heard of "mommy brain"? It really does happen!)
4. **What kind of activities will we do in class?** You don't want to be bored... look for a class that gets you moving and

practicing techniques for labor (she'd probably love you to go to massage therapy school while you're thinking about classes!)

5. **Ask how they involve dads in their classes.** You're BOTH having a baby and dads shouldn't feel like they're just along for the ride. You're super-important in this process!
6. **What other classes are offered?** Newborn care, breastfeeding, CPR and others are also important classes to take so you both feel ready for the new and most important job you've ever had! You wouldn't start a new job in a new career without some training, would you.
7. **How long do classes run?** The minimum number of TOTAL hours we suggest is 12.

One-day classes just can't give you all the info and practice that you'll need to be truly prepared for an amazing birth.

A Natural Childbirth class should be even longer. These longer classes give both moms and partners a chance to really practice relaxation techniques, positions, massage, using tools for labor (like nubby dog toys, tennis balls and play-doh!).

Ask your buddies—find one or two who really loved their class and consider taking classes with those childbirth educators!

BELIEVE US – When you find yourself in the midst of active labor and the delivery, you'll be glad you went to the classes

Choosing your Birth Team

When choosing your birth team, it's important to find people who you feel comfortable with. Don't sit on the sideline, get involved with the selection process because your birth experience will be much better if you are around people you get along with and have confidence in.

Does it really matter who helps deliver your baby? Absolutely! Think carefully about it. Choose together.

A few different people who can “catch” your baby include: obstetricians, hospital midwives, birth center midwives or homebirth midwives (or, even you! preferably with the guidance of a trained professional). Talk to many people about their medical providers and interview a few different people. You'll probably be surprised at what you learn!

Obstetricians (OBGYNs) are doctors who specialize in gynecological and obstetric surgery and vaginal birth (there, we said it. Vagina.) They are trained to care for higher-risk mothers, so some say they are trained to look for problems vs. trust the birth process, but that depends on the doctor's experience and personality. OBGYNs can also care for low-risk moms.

Family doctors can catch babies when mom and baby are healthy and labor is going well.

Midwives approach birth as a healthy and normal event while monitoring mom and encouraging her and her body to do what it was designed to do: give birth. Midwives work in a variety of settings: homes, hospitals and birth centers.

Ask important questions:

There are many questions you should ask the people you're considering to assist you in childbirth. Compare answers, personalities and other factors you consider important, then choose the medical provider who feels like the best fit for you both. Ask about things like:

- What is their philosophy about birth?
- Do they encourage their patients to get epidurals?
- How do they feel about (and what is their experience with) un-medicated birth?
- How do they feel about birth doulas?
- Who else is in their practice and do they share your provider's philosophy about birth?
- Most doctors and midwives do not deliver babies every day of the week. They have designated days each week that they are at the hospital or birth center to care for patients who are in labor on those days. It's possible you could have a provider at your birth that you've never met.
- Ask them about their statistics: What percentage of births are induced? Receive epidurals? Are Cesarean deliveries? How long they spend with moms in labor? How many babies they've delivered?...and anything else you're curious about.

Questions to ask Birth & Post Partum Doulas

A “birth doula” (pronounced *doo-la*) is a woman trained and experienced in childbirth who provides information, emotional support and physical support to a woman and her partner during labor and birth. They act as a coach and work more closely with you than midwives or doctors.

A “postpartum doula” is a woman who help parents (at home) with breastfeeding, newborn care, shopping, meal preparation and light housework. They are usually paid per hour and help new parents settle into their new roles without the added stress of doing it on their own.

Most couples who have a doula with them say they can’t imagine giving birth without one, so it’s definitely worth considering whether or not to hire a doula.

Don’t let finances get in the way, either. There are doulas for any budget and they are worth every penny!

Questions to ask:

- What do you do?
- What do you NOT do?
- What do you charge and what services does that cover?
- How many births have you attended?
- How do you work with me (the dad)?

To find a doula and find out how they were trained and certified, see www.alace.org, www.dona.org, www.cappa.org or www.Lamaze.org
Interview a few before you decide which one is right for you.

Informed consent:

Your doctor or midwife will recommend tests and procedures during pregnancy, birth and postpartum and you need to decide which ones you feel comfortable accepting and which ones you'd rather decline.

Did you know that it's your right and responsibility to be informed about mom's and baby's medical care (and to participate in decisions about that care)? When discussing a prenatal test or procedure, an intervention, medication during labor, or a baby care technique, be **"BRAINY"**:

B ask, "what are the Benefits?"

R ask, "what are the Risks"

A Ask, "what are the alternatives" (waiting might be one)

I ask, "What does our Intuition tell us?"

N know that you can say "No, thanks"

Y know that you can say "Yes, please"

Finding support for breastfeeding (Yes. Before the birth)

Breastfeeding sounds pretty simple doesn't it? There's a baby, two nipples and a heap of milk....put the baby on the nipple and you're away! **Wrong**. It can be a lot more difficult than you think and can be very stressful for mom and baby – and therefore stressful for YOU.

There are a few different sources of support for breastfeeding and it's great for you both to touch base with them before you have the baby.

Take a breastfeeding class (*yes, YOU are supposed to go to that class!*).

Breastfeeding counselors and La Leche League leaders have a vast knowledge of breastfeeding and how to help new moms and babies breastfeed successfully. Counselors and LLL leaders also know when to refer you to lactation consultants or medical providers (search the internet for *breastfeeding + your town* and www.lalecheleague.org)

Lactation consultants (who should have “IBCLC” after their name) are women who have thousands of hours of training in breastfeeding knowledge and experience in supporting women who are facing challenges. To find one near you, visit www.ilca.org.

Other breastfeeding mothers can provide great support to other moms. Encourage her to find a new moms group or a breastfeeding support group. You'll find more information on breast feeding later on in this book.

A few things to consider when choosing a birth place

You're worried she's going to give birth in the car or on the kitchen floor, right?

Relax, that is rare, especially for first-time mothers.

Labor is usually long enough that there is plenty of time to get to wherever it is you've decided to welcome your baby into the world.

There are three options as birth places in the US:

- hospitals,
- birth centers
- your home (yes, people still do this—about 1% in the United States but about 30% in the Netherlands).

All three can be safe options, but there are many factors to consider. It's a personal and medical decision. Ultimately, you need to consider mom's health and the baby's health and whether mom is considered low-risk or high-risk. When considering your options impress her by asking some well thought-out questions.



Hospital questions

- Will you feel comfortable there?
- What are the differences between the hospitals in your area?
- Is there one-on-one nursing or are the nurses caring for many patients at once?
- How high is that hospital's Cesarean birth rate compared to others in your area?
- Are there showers or bathtubs in any of the labor rooms?
- Do they have birth balls?
- What is their policy on taking pictures and video?
- Is an epidural available at all times?
- Are there monitors that allow mom to walk down the hall and around in her labor room?
- What kind of nursery do they have? Some hospitals can care for very small or very ill babies while others need to transfer those babies to another hospital.
- Do they provide childbirth classes? If yes, also consider out-of-hospital classes as an option.
- How can you schedule a tour?
- Is there always a lactation consultant there during the day?
- Do they have a rooming-in policy so that babies aren't separated from their parents?

Birth Center questions

- Will you feel comfortable there?
- How far is the birth center from a hospital?
- Is the birth center hospital-owned or independently?
- How do they determine who gets transferred to a hospital?
- Are there tubs or showers in every birthing room?
- Where do they recommend you take childbirth classes?
- Do they provide doulas or do you bring your own?
- Do they have birth balls, squat bars, etc?
- How can you schedule a tour?
- Is the midwife with you at all times during labor?
- How long do you stay there after the birth before you go home?
- Does someone from the birth center come to visit you at home in the first week?

Homebirth questions

- Will you feel comfortable there?
- How far do you live from a hospital, in the rare case you need to be taken there?
- What is the home birth experience of the midwives that will be caring for you?
- What does the midwife do for you pre-natally? During the birth? After the birth?
- What equipment and medications do they bring with them?
- How do they decide when to come to your house?
- Do they accept payment in instalments?
- How or when do they decide to transfer you to a hospital?
- Who else comes with them to your birth and what are the roles of each person?
- What supplies to you need to prepare for your birth at home?
- How often does the midwife come back to visit after the baby is born?

Getting ready for the big day

One Month to Go: Tasks Every Dad *MUST* Complete

1. Choose a car seat for the baby and have it inspected by a certified child passenger safety technician (car seat inspector).

Choosing a car seat can be mind-boggling. Do your research so you feel comfortable that you've chosen the safest car seat for your car. Consumer Reports and the book *Baby Bargains* are great resources. Don't just go with the cheapest seat or the one with the cutest pattern.

If you plan to get a used car seat from a friend or relative, only get it from someone you trust entirely. Ask them if it was in a car accident. If the car was totalled or close to totalled, don't use that seat! Check the date on the bottom of the seat to make sure it's not "expired," and check www.cpsc.gov to find out if it's been recalled.

Having the seat installed in the car is your domain, and when you are leaving the hospital with your baby is not the right time to try to figure it out. Have it installed and inspected in your car in advance. This is serious stuff. Hospitals will not let you take the baby home if the car seat isn't properly installed. Check out the very important instructions at the National Highway & Transportation Safety Administration's website (www.nhtsa.gov).

2. Set up the crib and paint the nursery.

Your partner is in nesting mode (or will be soon) and nothing will make her feel more prepared than seeing the baby's room set up in advance. Like most guys, you'll want to leave it until the last minute to buy nursery stuff, but get it in early and make her happy!

3. Organize one last hot date together

This will be the last chance you get to spend time as just the two of you for a long time. Taking her out on a date (call it your “babymoon”) somewhere special and spending some quality time together will make you both feel great!

4. Consider a “push present”

In some countries it is becoming common for men to give their partners a “push present”. It could be something small, like cooking a nice dinner, arranging a schedule for people to come and help her after the baby’s arrival or even a nice piece of jewelry. Moms love gifts, especially gifts that show that you appreciate what she endured to help create your new little family. Now of course this isn’t necessary, but it’s sure to win you maximum brownie points...you’ll probably need them soon!!

5. Childproof your house—for your baby’s safety and your sanity

Your baby won’t be crawling around for several more months, but it’s a great idea to get the safety items in place now, so you won’t have to worry about it later when you’re busy with a baby!

10 tips for child proofing your home

1. Ensure all trash containers have lids that can be securely fastened.
2. Install child locks on drawers and cupboards in kitchen, bathroom and laundry.
3. Keep chemicals and cleaning agents out of reach (even better—switch to all-natural and non-toxic cleaning products like vinegar and baking soda).
4. Install safety bars and locks on windows in baby's room.
5. Ensure smoke detectors are installed and operational.
6. Lower the hot water temperature to 120 degrees.
7. Install screens for electric, bar and gas heaters.
8. Get non-slips mats for kitchen and bathroom floors.
9. Install child-resistant outlet plugs.
10. Make sure you're TV is firmly anchored and shelves can't be pulled down by a little one.

Children under the age of 4 have the highest accidental death rate among children. It pays to safeguard your house before birth. See www.meghanshope.org for more information.

Packing bags for the birth

In most cases your partner will have packed her bags for the hospital in plenty of time, but In case of an old school emergency and end up needing to pack a bag for her, follow this list of items that will make her happy and impress her beyond belief.

For Her

Clothes

- ✓ Comfortable pants & t-shirts
- ✓ Pajamas, slippers and a light robe
- ✓ Comfy shoes & socks
- ✓ Comfortable nursing bras
- ✓ Shirts that open in the front for easy breastfeeding
- ✓ Something comfy but stylish to wear home from the hospital (there will be pictures taken!)
- ✓ A book or some magazines

Bathroom essentials

- ✓ Hairbrush and hair bands/clips
- ✓ Sanitary pads or adult diapers. Yes, we said adult diapers. Come on, prove your love and go to the store and get them...she'll really know that you care. And, you'll both be sure she won't leak as she bleeds postpartum! Hospitals and birth centers usually provide pads (and disposable underwear...they call them Victoria's Other Secret) but bringing her own overnight pads may be more comfortable.
- ✓ Any make-up, lotions and potions you might want to have
- ✓ Tools for labor (essential oils for aromatherapy, music and a player, play dough, massage lotion and a massage tool for when your fingers get tired)

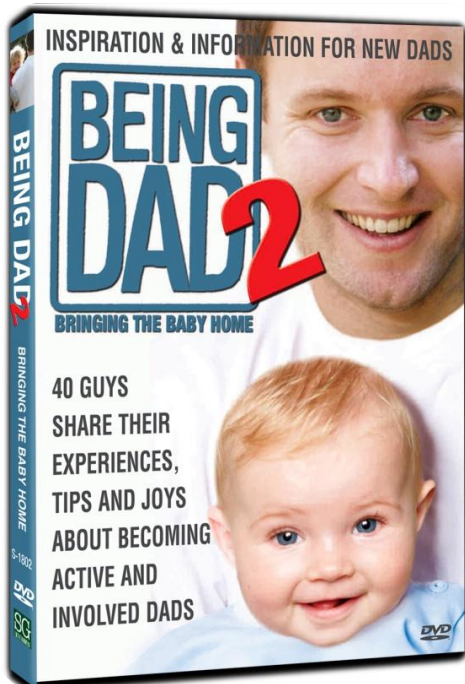
- ✓ Lip balm
- ✓ Phone list and emails addresses so you can make sure you call everyone in the proper order without forgetting someone and emails so you can send pictures!

For Baby

- ✓ Socks
- ✓ An outfit for the ride home
- ✓ Extra-large swaddling blanket
- ✓ Cute baby hat
- ✓ Newborn diapers
- ✓ Car seat (installed and inspected)

For You

- ✓ Healthy snacks and drinks (canned soup is great—and maybe a few chocolate bars!)
- ✓ Clothes and toiletries for during labor and staying overnight after baby arrives
- ✓ A good book about babies and some magazines that you like
- ✓ iPod and mini speakers – play her favorite music during the birth and after
- ✓ Camera and mobile phone (make sure they are charged and bring the cords and an extra memory card).
- ✓ Mini DVD player or something to play movies on
- ✓ Your sense of humor
- ✓ Patience
- ✓ Support



*Here's what others are saying about **Being Dad 2**. Check out these links to cool reviews:*

["Informative, humorous..."](#) by Rockin Mama

["A wealth of knowledge..."](#) by An Island Review

See more great reviews at BeingDadUSA.com

Now that you're about to finally become a dad, you'll want to check out **Being Dad 2** to learn from other new dads what fatherhood is like after you bring the baby home. **Being Dad 2** features even more new dads from around the world as they share the experiences and joys of becoming active, involved dads. The DVD follows several dads home and shows how they balance work, home and relationships as a new and exciting dimension is added to their lifestyles.

A broad variety of topics is covered, from the blur of those first few weeks, through sleep deprivation and building a routine, to strengthening relationships with a partner. Dads discuss diaper changes, traveling with babies, separation anxiety, immunizations, illnesses and more. If you thought Being Dad was helpful, just wait until you see **Being Dad 2!**

SECTION 2

LABOR & BIRTH



This section gives you all the basic information you need to have a happy birth experience. Print it out and refer to it at the birth.....who says you can't use cheat sheets? Not us!

Birth plans

Now that you know so many options that are available, think about what your “ideal” birth experience is.

It's unlikely that you'll have your “ideal” birth, but it is possible and it's definitely worth putting some time and thought into...try to make it happen and have lots of flexibility!

You know that when you make a plan, it may not go as you planned. There's always plan B and C. Birth is no different.

“Birth plans” should first be a tool that both of you use to figure out what you want for your baby's birth.

Then take your top ten most important things on a list with you to talk with your medical provider and find out how they feel about some of your choices for labor and birth.

For a sample birth plan, visit www.pregnancy.org

The Big Day: Labor and Birth

7 warning signs during pregnancy & labor

At any time in the later stages or pregnancy, or during labor, call her medical caregiver immediately if any of the following occur:

- A fever above 99 degrees.
- Bleeding.
- She senses the baby isn't moving the way it usually does at a particular time of day or night.
- She just doesn't feel right (Don't try to convince her she's fine. She might be, but have her talk to her medical caregiver).
- Vomiting and/or Diarrhea that doesn't go away (and she can't keep liquids down).
- Burning when she pees.
- There are more, but you should learn those in a good childbirth class.

5 signs of premature labor

Call your doctor or midwife and get to a hospital if you have these signs and she's less than 37 weeks pregnant!

- More than five tightening and cramping sensations in the belly in an hour (each one would last 30 seconds or more).
- Pressure in her pelvis or vagina (like the baby is closer to coming out).
- Abdominal cramps without diarrhea.
- Liquid leaking from her vagina (or bleeding).

Is this it? 4 signs that she's in labor

- **Bloody Show** – red or pinkish mucus may suggest dilation of the cervix has started.
- **Contractions** – As contractions get stronger and closer together it's a good sign things are happening. Beware of Braxton-Hicks which are just practice contractions. Keep a log of length of contractions and the gap between them (from start of one til the start of the next). The longer, stronger & closer together they are, the closer you are to becoming a dad!
- **Backache and thigh ache**
- **Water breaks**—might be a trickle or a gush. It's rare for her waters to “release” (a better word, we think—really, what is broken!?) before going into labor (10-15% of women).

Don't rush to the hospital or into the birthing pool just yet. If you get to the hospital too early they are likely to send you home again, and if you call your midwife or doula to come to your home, she'll probably reassure you and tuck you into bed!

Go back and check your notes or handouts from your child birth classes for more information, and always call your medical provider if you suspect something might be happening.

When it's time to call your baby catcher

When she experiences contractions lasting a minute each and coming every 5 minutes it's time to call your doctor, midwife or doula. (Note: if your doctor considers you to be higher risk they may have given instructions as to when they want you to call or leave for the hospital – be sure to know if you have any special needs!) In some cases, other symptoms may occur that will necessitate making the call, including:

- Water releases (some say “breaks”, but let's not think of something as broken, here...it's all positive. Look at the color of the discharge and let your caregiver know if you notice anything unusual – green, brown or black color.
- Heavy vaginal bleeding, constant abdominal pain or fever above 99 degrees.
- Contractions before 37 weeks.
- Persistent headaches, intense pain or tenderness.
- Sometimes moms can feel that something “isn't right”. If she is concerned or feeling unwell, contact your caregiver.

Your job is to stay calm and be reassuring. If things start kicking off in the middle of the night don't roll over and go back to sleep – it's time to start being her birth partner, and getting excited that your baby is on its way!

A quick guide to the 3 stages Of labor & birth

Stage 1: dilation (opening)

She's "going to get huge", as Ina May Gaskin, a world-famous midwife says. As she describes it, when you (the guy) gets excited, blood rushes to your penis and it swells and "gets huge". During birth, blood rushes to her vagina and it swells and then opens for the baby—gets "huge"—it's meant to do that. Don't rush it. Encourage her to get huge just like she might encourage you (at another time).

Stage One is separated into three phases: early (0-3 cm), active (4-7 cm) and transition (8-10 cm). During labor, the cervix (the opening of the uterus) happens because the uterus (a very large and dynamic muscle) tightens (*contracts*). This happens on-and-off for many hours and in true labor, the sensations (contractions, waves, surges...there are many words used to describe them) gradually increase in length, strength and number until the cervix is fully dilated to about 10 cm.

Early labor: encourage calm, joy and rest

There's no exact guide but early stage labor contractions can last 6-12 hours (or longer). Try and get your partner to rest and stay hydrated—it may be a long day or night ahead. You'll know when the contractions are getting more regular and painful.

There's no need to break out the stop watch just yet coach! In early labor, she can pretty much talk through contractions and describe them to you (and smile between them).

Here are seven ways to help both of you rest, focus on the fact that you're about to become parents and enjoy some time together during early labor.

1. Watch movies.
2. Listen to her favorite music.
3. Read something that she finds relaxing...it doesn't have to be poetry...the newspaper, a celebrity magazine...use your imagination.
4. Take a bath or shower (together might be nice...).
5. Give her a massage.
6. Find your birth plan and review it together.
7. Grab a quick meal. It may be a while before you eat again.



Active labor— Now it kicks into high gear

This is where the cervix dilates from about 4 cm – 7 cm. Active labor, on average, is shorter than early labor (4-6 hours). Contractions will be more uncomfortable. If she can't talk normally anymore and is really working hard to cope with them, those are good signs that it's getting close.

Use pain management techniques and offer words of encouragement and support. If you're not already there, active labor is the time that you'd go to the hospital or birth center.

Transition—labor gets really serious

This last part of the opening of the cervix (from 7 cm – 10 cm, or complete dilation) is known as transition. This is the hardest part of labor, but it's also the shortest, usually less than 2 hours.

She may go into a zone or ask for drugs. She may need your intense support at this time or she may snap and yell at you. If she says “don't touch me!” that's a great indication that she's in transition.

She may vomit...that's another great sign that things are moving along. She may start to feel rectal pressure. “What? Why would she feel it there?”, you ask? Good question and most people are surprised about this fact. The baby's head has to pass by the colon and rectum before it gets to the vagina, so moms actually describe pushing as feeling like the biggest poop they never imagined taking. Romantic, no. The truth, yes. That's what you get from us *Being Dad* folks—the plain truth.

Stage 2: Pushing and Birth Important Points to Know

Put on some energetic music at this point and bring out the lemon essential oil to wake up the room! It's time for the big arrival of your baby!

Unless your doctor or midwife tells her otherwise, the best times to start pushing are when mom feels like she needs to push and wants to push, or her body just does it... she just automatically pushes without thinking about it, and when her cervix is fully dilated so there's room for the baby's head (ideally the head will have already passed down through the cervix and pressed against mom's pelvic floor muscles).

Do you know about those muscles? These are a set of muscles that sit in our pelvises like a funnel. The strength of these muscles holds up the internal organs and help guide the baby into the best position for birth. You should learn in your childbirth class how to tone them with Kegel exercises—both of you should do them daily.

By this time you are likely to have a midwife, doula or caregiver with you to help guide your baby out. The baby is now making its way down the birth canal and you can expect that mom will have a desire to “push” at some point.

As the uterus contracts and relaxes the baby inches forward then back. Trying different birthing positions may be needed to find the one that's most comfortable.

Keep an eye out for the top of the baby's head and keep on being supportive. Hold her hand, mop her brow, and get her a drink or some crushed ice. Tell her she's doing great and that you love her.

The pushing stage can last from anywhere from several minutes to several hours before the baby is born.

You're about to see your baby for the first time and when that baby comes out you'll need some tissues to wipe away those tears of joy! Marvel at the bravery of your baby's mom and the beauty of your child!

Stage 3: Placenta and Repair

Important points to know

After the baby is born and resting comfortably on mom's belly or chest, he or she will be adjusting to breathing outside of the womb, adjusting its temperature and looking around at the both of you as you adore your new child. Tears of joy. Camera flashes. Awe.

After a few minutes, mom will start having contractions again as the placenta separates from the uterus. Her doctor or midwife will let her know when she should give one more push (usually not painful) and the placenta will come out.

After the placenta is "delivered" then you'll probably be invited to cut the umbilical cord. Then, while you and mom are gazing in amazement at baby and each other, you won't even notice the doctor or midwife will be stitching up any incisions or tears and making sure mom is ok.

Natural “pain management” techniques: Before the epidural or all the way

Labor and birth are natural processes that women and babies have been going through since the dawn of time. And labor and birth happen best when mothers feel supported and respected and allowed to do what feels natural to them. Much of labor is literally in her head—her brain produces hormones that stimulate contractions (some prefer to call those cramping sensations in her belly “surges” or “waves”) and how she copes with labor depends on her brain making hormones called oxytocin and endorphin. You’ll learn more about these in a childbirth class and by reading a good book like:

Ina May’s Guide to Childbirth by Ina May Gaskin

Pregnancy, Childbirth & the Newborn: the Complete Guide

by Penny Simkin, Janet Whalley and Anne Keppler

The Birth Partner: a Complete Guide to Childbirth for Dads, Doulas and All Other Birth Companions by Penny Simkin

Support and encouragement have a huge influence on how well mom can “let go” and “surrender” during labor and feel confident that she can “open” to birth her baby with her own power. This is the space where you, as her birth partner, have the opportunity to be a source of support and encouragement to her.

Your role as dad is whatever role you choose. Love her, encourage her, massage her and bring a birth doula with you to add to what you offer. Pay attention (take notes) in childbirth classes so you’ll feel ready to help her during labor.

If she plans to use an epidural to deal with labor pain, she'll still have several hours of labor to deal with before she can get it, so practicing different pain management techniques, using different methods and practicing different positions is going to be important.

You will be super-helpful to her if you take notes in classes and help guide her during labor (and even continue some of the stuff that works for her after she gets an epidural).

There are many great natural ways of coping with labor in a positive way—ways that enhance the body's ability to give birth easily and without suffering.

Natural childbirth is NOT about suffering. Misery in childbirth is not acceptable—and if she gets to a point where she's suffering vs. coping well, that is a perfect time to opt for pain medication.

Women who want to have a natural childbirth may not be in the majority, but they have a right to be supported to achieve their wishes.

You are very important in supporting her wishes.

10 Natural pain relieving Techniques you can help with

Mental Relaxation Techniques

These require practice in the months and weeks leading up to the birth. Taking a HypnoBirthing class or a Natural Childbirth class enables you both to practice ways of relaxing and letting go.

Physical Comfort Measures

Hot and cold packs applied to areas of the body that are experiencing pain, discomfort or cramping can help a lot. Be sure to have these ready in advance and ask her if she'd like to try them, but don't insist on it! Make sure you don't use heat or cold on her if she has pain medication, though, it could burn her or freeze her skin. Sipping warm tea or cool water can also help—it's your job to keep her hydrated.

Shower or Bath

During the early stage of labor many women find a shower or bath both relaxing and effective in reducing the discomfort of contractions. If you've got a big tub at home, why not take a bath together—it may be the last one you get to take together for a long time and it might even inspire some sex in early labor (a great thing!). What a memory!

Position Changes

Depending on how the baby is positioned and how the labor is progressing, trying different positions will most likely help with the delivery and reduce her discomfort.

We recommend all moms try at least five positions more than once each: walking, squatting, hands-and-knees, rocking on the birth ball and lying on her side.

Mantras

You might want to chant “Wiggle This Baby Out”, “Let Your Uterus Do All the Work”, “Open” or whatever positive statement she thinks might help. Some moms call their baby’s name. Others are very quiet. The key is for you to be calm, encourage her and remind her that this is all good and the more she lets go, the easier it will be.

Birth Balls

These are plastic’s gift to pregnant women. Most women find them very helpful in pregnancy, amazingly helpful during labor and nice to bounce on with baby during the first year or so.

Squat Bar

Some hospitals have a bar that can attach to the hospital bed—use it! Be creative!

Aromatherapy

Smelling wonderful scents of essential oils like lavender and peppermint can absolutely change the mood in a room and have a positive affect on mom’s hormone levels.

TENS (Transcutaneous Electrical Nerve Simulation)

A TENS Unit is a clever electrical gizmo that stimulates the body's own natural painkillers with a small electric current that runs across mom's lower back and can be turned up or down as needed. It feels like a cat pawing her back. It's not commonly used in the US, but is available through physical therapy offices and some doulas and childbirth educators know where to get the devices. It's worth looking into. **Do NOT use this near water!**

Medical Intervention - Gimme the drugs!

Sometimes the pain gets to a point where mom asks for help. She have planned and preferred to avoid it, but now feels like she needs relief as soon as possible. Whatever the reason, before accepting drugs for childbirth or in life, it's important to understand that risks and benefits and how to limit the possible side effects. Remember, informed consent, but ultimately, it's her decision to make and yours to support.

Here's what is available for her:

Nubain and Stadol are strong painkillers given by injection and IV. They might help her relax and “take the edge off”. These can also make her feel dizzy and may make baby tired and slow to respond after the birth (if administered close to the time of delivery).

An epidural is the gold standard of painkillers for labor. It's placed in the back of the mother (a catheter is fed through a needle into the epidural space) that numbs the body from the waist down. There can be side-effects and risks. For example, it can increase the length of labor, raise the possibility of needing an assisted delivery with a vacuum or forceps, and she might be more likely to develop a fever that will necessitate antibiotics.

Discuss this together with your childbirth educator and doctor/midwife. They've been doing this a while and can explain how to delay or avoid getting an epidural should that be mom's wish. If, on the other hand she feels up front the wants one, or decides during an intense labor, they can explain how to reduce the side effects and risks.

Most women have pleasurable experiences with epidurals, which is why they are popular, but it's important to know the risks and side effects before they occur.

Don't let that happen to you. Be informed. An epidural can affect recovery and breastfeeding too, so do your research and feel better prepared.

Making birth easier by changing positions During labor and while pushing

So you thought she'd be giving birth on her back like you see so much on TV and in movies? Well, think again. It's not comfortable for most women to be on their back during labor for more than a few minutes or a few pushes here and there. Women around the world rarely choose this position when given a choice. Here are a few "Pros" and "Cons" for different birthing positions you might consider and try:

Standing – Pros: Excellent for utilizing gravity, reducing pain & speeding up labor. Cons: Can make it difficult for the doctor or midwife to control proceedings.

Walking – Pros: Utilizes gravity, can reduce pain and speed up delivery. Cons: Not appropriate if mom has high blood pressure or if she has an epidural.

Sitting – Pros: Uses gravity, conserves energy and can assist with the baby's descent. Cons: May not be appropriate if mom has high blood pressure.

Using a birth ball – Pros: More comfortable on mom's behind and perineum. It can help relax the pelvis and is great for resting her arms and head on. Cons: Mom may feel unbalanced if sitting on it and it can be harder for medical staff to monitor baby when mom is on the ball.

Sitting on a toilet – Pros: Utilizes gravity and subconsciously she's used to "letting go" there. Cons: It's not the most idealistic environment, and she may find it causes too much pressure on her perineum.

Semi-Sitting – Pros: Comfortable, utilizes gravity, good for the doctor, midwife or you to see what's going on. Cons: Limits mobility of sacrum (the back of the pelvis), which decreases the space in the pelvis for the baby.

On back with legs raised – Pros: Doctor, midwife and nurse can see well and can help get baby under the pubic bone. Cons: Requires mom to push baby against gravity (literally "up toward the ceiling"), typically uncomfortable, increases perineal tears, increases usage of tools and incisions for birth... generally to be avoided.

Side-lying – Pros: Provides many benefits, including a good resting position for mom, speeding up labor, and a lower risk of tearing. You'll need to support her leg in this position! Cons: Can feel awkward for mom, hips can become sore if on one side too long.

Leaning against you or a wall – Pros: Promotes better, less painful contractions and can relieve backache. Cons: Can be tiresome on her legs (and yours!).

Kneeling – Pros: Good for use with a birth ball, encourages good positioning of the baby, comfortable for most moms around the world, reduces pressure in multiple areas, and applies more even pressure on the perineum. Cons: Can be hard on the knees and legs when kneeling for long periods of time.

Squatting - Pros: Utilizes gravity, opens up pelvis and helps with baby rotation. Cons: Uncomfortable. See how you do squatting with a bowling ball for 5 minutes – tough on the legs!!

Hands and knees – Pros: Good for back labor, turning a posterior baby or big babies. Cons: Hard for mom to see what's going on, some medical providers aren't used to catching babies in this position.

5 Ways using gravity will benefit her

1. Contractions are more effective and regular
2. Dilation of the cervix is improved
3. Ability to relax between contractions improved
4. Can reduce time of labor
5. Can result in a less painful labor

5 Signs that she's doing well in labor

1. She can relax her shoulders and jaw during a contraction
2. She vomits (yes, throwing up is actually a good sign)
3. She moves her body in a rhythmic motion during contractions
4. She's relaxed during contractions
5. She can still smile even between contractions, or she falls asleep between them

7 “Must do’s” for you during labor

1. Be actively involved (it’s your baby too)
2. Be patient – labor can take many hours so expect a long day/night
3. Be flexible – know your options and experiment to find what part of your birth plan may or may not work as planned. Be prepared to try plan B. She’ll be impressed if you recall some of the information from your childbirth class.
4. Toughen up – you may be trying to help but she gets annoyed with you – or just annoyed, period. She may need to vent and you may be the target. Don’t take it personally.
5. Be her advocate but don’t play doctor – don’t be afraid to ask questions of the medical staff or be afraid to make decisions and tell them what you think.
6. Be there – that’s most important of all. Even if you are skittish about the birth, just being there is essential!
7. Encourage her physically and visually, by staying close and looking at her lovingly, confidently and supportively (not with a look of fear on your face).

10 more tasks for you during labor

1. Offer her water...offer her a drink after every contraction.
2. Offer her food...she needs to eat when she feels like it. You need to eat, too.
3. Help her change positions at least every 45 minutes (even during pushing, but more frequently then)
4. Get her to take a bath or a shower (or both). You'll both be surprised at how much it helps her feel better during contractions.
5. Give her a foot and hand massage
6. Play music—whatever she wants. Really, even if you don't like it.
7. Offer her lip balm, brush her hair, and put a cool cloth on her forehead.
8. Encourage her verbally and emotionally, by saying positive things, like “this is all normal”, or “you're doing great” or “let go”...your words (and sometimes your silence) have the power to be reassuring!
9. Ask a lot of questions of her medical providers, especially when interventions or medications are suggested.
10. Take pictures or journal how her labor is going—she'll appreciate reading your version of your birth story (and so will your child!)

10 encouraging phrases you can say during labor and birth

It may seem awkward to start saying some of these things, but once she's in labor, you'll believe them! And sometimes saying nothing is exactly what she needs! There are some simple things you can say that will help her—moms in labor are very receptive to positive feedback. Try to only be positive (and encourage everyone else to only say encouraging statements).

1. You're doing great
2. The baby is moving down. You are helping her come out
3. The nurse says you're doing great
4. I'm here with you – we're almost done
5. I love you
6. Everything is going to be ok
7. Look into her eyes and smile – seeing that you are calm and happy will comfort her
8. Encourage her to rest between contractions
9. Tell her to keep breathing during contractions
10. I'm sorry for doing this to you (just kidding)

Things NOT to do during labor

- Don't panic – stay calm. Birth is not a medical emergency and labor pains are healthy. Being prepared and understanding how it's all likely to unfold will help you and mom. Enjoy the birth and be relaxed.
- Don't say "push". P-U-S-H is a four-letter word. If she is unmedicated, she'll push when her body naturally pushes. If she has an epidural, she may need some direction from her medical team but hearing encouraging words from you is preferable to your repetition of "push"!
- Don't yell—it's not a football game. Talk calmly and quietly to keep the mood relaxed.
- Don't stick a camera or video in her face if she says no.
- Don't peek over the curtain during a Cesarean unless the doctor invites you to look. Even then, you may not want to.
- Don't bounce a birth ball around the room (birth is not a sport).

There's No Right or Wrong Way: There's only HER Way

Just like her, you've probably had a fear of birth for a while. That's common. You might even have a preference, for one reason or another, for her to "go natural" or "just get the epidural".

Ultimately, it's important for you to hear what she wants, take a good class and, like you're probably used to already, support her in whatever she wants.

Yes, this is your baby too. And yes, you get a vote, but her vote counts twice as much (sorry, dudes).

13 steps to take in the very rare Case of an emergency birth

If your partner goes into labor and the baby comes so quickly that you are forced to deliver the baby, here's what you need to do:

1. STAY CALM and stay with your partner.
2. If you were planning on birthing in a hospital or birth center, call 911 and they will send emergency medical technicians; if you were planning a homebirth, call your midwife and consult with her.
3. Wash your hands thoroughly and gather clean towels and bed sheets.
4. Reassure your partner that you are there for her and that everything will be ok.
5. Help your partner find a comfortable birth position (on her knees bending forward, squatting or laying on her side are the most comfortable positions for most women—not on her back.
6. Look for the baby's head.
7. When head is visible ask your partner to stop pushing and just blow.
8. After the baby's head is out, feel around the baby's neck to ensure that the umbilical cord is not wrapped around it. If it is hook your fingers under the cord and gently loop around the baby's head.
9. You'll need a firm grip on the baby as it comes out. He'll be slippery.
10. Pass the baby to mom's naked belly and then cover the baby in a towel or blanket to keep it warm against mom's warm skin.
11. Don't touch the umbilical cord unless it's wrapped around the baby's neck.
12. By now you should either have medical care that has arrived or medical professionals on the phone with you.
13. RELAX...the baby's out. Enjoy the moment, make sure mom's awake and don't forget that the placenta will be coming soon and after it has come out of mom, then you can cut the umbilical cord.

SECTION 3

TO THE HOSPITAL AND BACK HOME



Now the fun really starts. This section prepares you for surviving the first few weeks of Being Dad. This can be a difficult time of adjustment so we've put together some do's and don'ts to make the transition easier of the whole family!

7 Things you should do while the Baby is still in the hospital

1. Continue doing skin-on-skin with your baby.
2. Sleeping when the baby sleeps (which will be most of the time),
3. See a lactation consultant.
4. Practice diaper changes, bathing and swaddling—essential skills you are going to need.
5. You may hear differing opinions about how to best care for your baby or what position is best for breastfeeding, but you know yourselves and your baby—do what feels right to you.
6. If you have a hospital birth, make the most of bath and feeding times. Practice makes for a more relaxed dad. And moms say that they find their partners more sexy when they watch them interacting tenderly with their children.
7. Buy a copy of Being Dad 2 – bringing the baby home. Our follow up DVD that follows new dads and provides you with lots of great advice from guys just like you that have just been through it all! Available at Barnes and Noble and www.beingdadusa.com

The Milk has arrived – what you need to know about breast feeding

For some dads, breastfeeding can make them feel a bit 'left out' but it's a very important process and one that you should strongly support.

Breast milk is the best source of essential nutrients made specifically for your baby. The first few days of your baby's life, mom will have a substance called colostrum that comes from her breasts. It's yellowish, the texture of honey and full of nutrients that are perfect for your baby's first few days and antibodies that will protect your baby for the first month of life. If mom doesn't plan to breastfeed, consider at least getting the first few days of colostrum into the baby using a cup or spoon (try not to introduce a bottle in the first week if possible).

Some moms can find breast feeding very stressful and it can also be downright painful. If this happens, you need to help her and support her as best you can. That includes calling someone for help!

What's in breast milk?

Breast milk comes in usually on day 4 or 5 and changes daily to match your baby's growing body and brain's needs. It contains the perfect balance of water, fat, protein, carbohydrates, hormones, vitamins and minerals that match your baby's needs and growth demands.

Formula has about 50 ingredients. – Breast milk has over 350!

It's really unbelievable if you think about it: there are people living on the space station right now but we can't reproduce breast milk.

Cool facts about breastfeeding:

- It's FREE!
- There's (usually) nothing to clean up.
- Prevents illnesses including respiratory and intestinal problems
- Protects against food and respiratory allergies
- Boosts intelligence
- Reduces risk of obesity in later life
- Can help the health of mom too

And don't forget that you too can feed the baby with breast milk. Get involved: if your partner pumps her milk with a breast pump, then you can get involved by feeding your baby with a bottle.



What are you looking for that tells you your baby is drinking plenty of milk?

- Is your baby waking on her own and eager to nurse?
- Is your baby peeing clear or very pale urine at least...
- *1 pee on day 1*
- *2 pees on day 2*
- *3 pees on day 3*
- *6 pees from day 4*
- Do the diapers feel really heavy and you know they are wet?
- Your baby is pooping every day (at least 1/2 cup of poop) and the poops are yellow and seedy by the 4th day of life or within 24 hours of mom's milk 'coming in'.
- Your baby's eyes are alert, bright and white.
- Your baby's skin is a healthy color.
- Your baby moves her arms and legs actively.
- New born babies sleep a lot, but when your baby is awake she is alert and content.
- Baby is back to birth weight by day 2-7 and gains 7-10 ounces per week for 3 months

How much sleep can you expect?

The average newborn sleeps 16 hours per day but only in short periods of two to four hours. As a result most new parents feel sleep deprived because it's difficult to get an unbroken sleep. If you are worried about your baby's sleeping patterns or you'd like to learn more about encouraging your baby to sleep longer we suggest the following resources:

The Baby Sleep Book by William Sears

Sleeping with Your Baby: A Parent's Guide to Co-Sleeping by James McKenna

You may have heard that it's okay to let your baby "cry it out"... this is not true and is no longer believed to be good for babies, especially those younger than six months.

Newborns need their parents and caregivers to respond to them quickly—it helps them build trust. They can not be spoiled and they do not know how to manipulate you (until they are much older!).



5 tips for getting more sleep as new parents

1. **Be prepared for broken sleep**, but really it should be called sleep “interruption” not sleep deprivation, since you should be sleeping when the baby sleeps (as much as possible!). Here a few ways to make the hours add up to more like a whole night’s sleep.
2. **Share the burden** and take turns getting up to settle the baby.
3. Change your sleeping patterns – have **earlier nights and nap** when you get the chance
4. **Keep baby close** by for easy access—if you hear your baby starting to wake up you can feed him or her before the crying starts. Did you know that babies show 15 feeding cues before they start to cry?
5. **Sleep together**, at least in the same room. Sleeping apart can create problems. You need to be a team. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that you keep the baby in your room for the first few months, but does not recommend co-sleeping. However, there are many pediatricians, family doctors and midwives who recommend co-sleeping, but with guidelines to make it safer.

Avoid sleep deprivation—it can have serious consequences. Allow friends and relatives to come over and help you so you can get more rest.

Essential dad skills

Bonding with your baby is as important for you as it is for mom and baby. There are many ways to bond with your baby—try them; you'll enjoy fatherhood even more by getting to know your baby!

Skin-to-skin contact (yup, take off your shirt and baby's shirt and cuddle) is one of the most important things you can do for your baby. This is especially good for mom and baby (and breastfeeding success) but it's also wonderful for you and baby.

Baby wearing – “wearing” your baby in a sling or baby carrier helps your baby cry less (some say 40% less!) and makes your hands free to do other things (including rest!). Most of the world wears their babies, so take a cue from them and find a carrier that works for you. Go to a local baby shop and take your son or daughter and try them out to find the best fit!

Bathing – a great way to bond with your baby and for you to spend some one on one time and give mom a rest. It can be nerve-wracking the first time so ask your nurse or midwife to be there with you the first time. They can be sure you know how to hold the baby, tell whether the water is too hot and what parts to wash and how.

Swaddling – babies are accustomed to being in the womb which is snug and warm. Swaddling, or wrapping the baby up firmly in an extra-large (but thin) blanket, makes them feel secure and keeps them warm and is a sure-fire way to get them to stop crying and to go to sleep...become a swaddling expert early on. Just make sure your baby is well-fed and diapered before trying this...and we recommend you wrap them with their hands near their face so they feel more like they did in the womb.

Infant Massage – who doesn't love a good massage? Lightly but firmly massaging your baby is a great way to bond and communicate with your baby. Learn more at an infant massage class or get a video about it. You'll be amazed at how much better your baby sleeps and digests, too!

Changing a Diaper – sounds easy and is easy so roll up the sleeves and get into it from the get-go. Remember, mom's in charge of "input" and you're in charge of "output". Fair, eh? Consider cloth diapers. Why? Cloth diapering can save up to \$1000 per year, prevent waste from going into landfills (where they take centuries to decompose) and save trees. Babies who wear cloth diapers also have less diaper rash!

The baby blues **(What are they and what can you do?)**

The baby blues are common mood swings experienced by moms after childbirth. Symptoms usually appear 3 to 4 days after the delivery and can last for several days. Symptoms may include:

- Mood swings (laughter one minute – tears the next!)
- Feeling a little depressed
- Lack of concentration
- Loss of appetite
- Inability to sleep

Keep an eye out for these symptoms and be as supportive as possible. Remember your partner's body has been through a tough nine months and hormones are rampant. These symptoms should disappear within 10 days – if not, you need to be aware of postpartum depression and help her as much as you can.

Postpartum depression

(What is it and what are the warning signs?)

Postpartum depression is real and nothing to be ashamed about. It can affect men as well as women so it's important that you are aware of the warning signs and symptoms. It can be treated with therapy and support and it can also affect men so be on the lookout for the following symptoms:

1. Feeling sad and low or unnatural highs
2. Frequent crying and tearfulness
3. Feelings of restlessness, anxiety or irritability
4. Loss of interest in life & desire to do anything
5. Loss of appetite
6. Sleep-related problems
7. Rapid weight loss or gain
8. Showing little interest in your baby

Postpartum depression can set in anytime within six months of childbirth. If you, or your partner, experience these symptoms you should contact your family doctor.

5 activities to do together When baby comes home

After nine months of pregnancy and the birth you finally have your baby at home. Now what?? The first few days can be daunting and it's easy to stay indoors. While the following list may sound obvious here are a few suggestions you can try to get used to being a family and living with a baby:

- Go for a walk around the block
- Go to a nearby store or mall
- Take a drive (a lot of babies like to sleep in the car)
- Visit friends and relatives
- Go out for lunch or dinner

As silly as it sounds once you get back into a routine and understand that you can still do these basic day to day things you'll feel much more comfortable and relieved.

11 tips for coping at home

The first few months

1. **Insist visitors call** before dropping by and don't let them stay too long (ask them to run errands before they come!)
2. **Accept offers to help** out
3. **Pre-cook meals and store** in the freezer in the weeks leading up to birth
4. If possible, find someone to **clean your house** once a week for first few months (or accept the fact that it won't be as clean as usual)
5. Try to get some **exercise**
6. **Get out** of the house every day
7. Try to spend some **time alone together**
8. **Hire a postpartum doula**
9. Have a plan for **one activity each day** (an appointment with the baby's doctor, running to the store to get something, going to visit a friend, going to the grocery store), but don't overdo it, mom's body needs to heal
10. Ensure that mom stays **hydrated and nourished**. Every time the baby eats, she should eat. You, too.
11. **Take showers**. You don't think you'll forget or have a hard time remembering, but you'll be surprised how challenging it is. Take turns caring for the baby while the other takes a relaxing shower.

Checklist of 7 reasons that baby may cry

Sometimes babies just want to express themselves (be honest--don't you feel better after a good cry?), but good parenting includes working to make sure you've taken care of all their needs and desires. So, check for the following:

1. Is the baby hungry?
2. Does diaper need to be changed?
3. Too hot or too cold? (learn how to take your baby's temperature)
4. Does something hurt (diaper too tight, clothing tags, body position)?
5. Does baby need to be swaddled?
6. Does baby want to be cuddled?
7. Wants to be rocked/taken for a walk?
8. Overstimulated? Babies take everything in. Sometimes they do well with lots of commotion. Other times they just want peace and quiet!

If none of these seem to work or help, it's okay to ask your mom or mother-in-law for advice.

You'll learn through experience what you can do to calm your baby. If you're worried about your baby because they are **listless and not responding to things that normally** calm them, make an appointment to **see your doctor right away**. Go with your gut feeling.

Remember one important rule: **Never shake your baby!** If your baby's crying is getting you upset, **put the baby down in a safe place** and walk to another room until you calm down. Your calm body helps your baby calm down.

A crying baby can be frustrating and stressful to a new parent – particularly in combination with sleep deprivation. It's important to realize that **crying is the primary way babies communicate**. It's also their main source of exercise. **Listen** and you'll be surprised what they tell you.

Don't worry about spoiling your baby by picking it up all the time—your baby is smart, but not smart enough, yet, to manipulate you.

Finding help in your community

And on the internet

- Ask your friends
- Do an internet search on “childbirth + *your town*”
- Ask your medical providers who they recommend
- Ask any parents that you know!
- Ask local doulas and the staff at your local maternity/parenting shop. It’s great to get your crib from a big chain store, but those small shops have so much to offer. Check them out.
- Online communities can be a great place to get support, but beware of taking advice from strangers, especially medical advice.
- And of course, be careful about giving away personal information (create a new email address without personal information in the address and use that one online).
- See the end of this book for a short list of the best resources to find online, books and organizations.
- Research Parenting DVDs. They can provide a quick source of advice, on any topic or concern, that you can watch and learn together.
- Find a baby group, mom’s group or other place where new parents can get together with their babies, share experiences and learn from a qualified expert.
- Talk to each other. That’s how you got into this parenting thing in the first place.

12 ways to help mom in the first 2 weeks

1. Cook for her and make some extra meals that can go in the freezer for later (or even better, get your friends to bring meals!)
2. Make sure the fridge and cupboards are well stocked with healthy food, milk, water and other necessities (and a few treats)
3. Sign up for a mail-order movie service or VOD service on cable TV.
4. Be there...no sneaking off with the guys after work. Eventually you'll both get time to get away and be with friends (and remember, babies are portable!)
5. Try to work reasonable hours to help out with feeding and bathing.
6. If she's pumping breast milk, do at least one bottle feeding a day.
7. Get up at least once during the night to feed and soothe the baby.
8. Let her sleep in on the weekends.
9. Don't let too many visitors invade your house.
10. Tell her she's doing a great job and that you love her.
11. Be supportive of her breastfeeding the baby.
12. Massage her feet while she's holding the baby/feeding the baby.

Resources

Childbirth Education & Doula Organizations

Lamaze International - www.lamaze.org

Association of Labor Assistants and Childbirth Educators - www.alace.org

DONA International - www.dona.org

Childbirth International - www.childbirthinternational.org

Websites Worth Visiting (great reading, references and downloads)

www.beingdadusa.com

www.mothersandcompany.com/Resources-links.aspx

www.fatherhood.org

www.pregnancy.org

www.childbirthconnection.com

www.motherfriendly.org

www.marchofdimes.org

Films Worth Viewing

Being Dad: Information & Inspiration for Dads-to-Be (dads doing pregnancy)

Being Dad 2: Bringing the baby home (Helps new dads become active fathers)

Both *Being Dad* DVDs are available at www.beingdadusa.com

Orgasmic Birth (A look at all that's possible with natural childbirth)

The Sleepeasy Solution (Sleep advice for babies over 4 months old)

Lots of great Parenting DVDs can be found at www.theparentingspace.com

Books Worth Reading

Pregnancy, Childbirth & the Newborn by Simkin, Whalley and Keppler

Ina May's Guide to Childbirth by Ina May Gaskin

The Birth Partner, 3rd Edition by Penny Simkin

The Thinking Woman's Guide to a Better Birth by Henci Goer

Birth as a Healing Experience: the Emotional Journey of Pregnancy Through

Postpartum by Lois Freedman

Any book written by William and Martha Sears

Easy Labor: Every Woman's Guide to Choosing Less Pain and More Joy

During Childbirth by William Camann and Kathryn Alexander

You Are My World: How a Parent's Love Shapes a Baby's

Mind by Amy Hatkoff

Baby Bargains by Denise and Alan Field

FROM DUDE TO DAD: TRANSFORMATION DONE

Thoughts for day one

So it's finally over and you're a dad...now what? It's quite likely that your partner will be exhausted, sore and very emotional for a few days so here are a few tips to make things easier for her:

Limit the number of visitors on the first day. You'll want to show off the new bundle of joy but too many visitors can be overwhelming. Keep it to immediate family and close friends and try not to have too many visitors at one time. Don't forget the napping--space out the visitors so you both can get some much needed rest.

Stay with her and the baby—take as much time off work as you can. She needs to know you are there to support her and your time with the baby will help you bond as a family and with your baby.

Give her your “push present” (even a card with some sweet words goes a long way).

The first few days of being a dad

The first few days of being a dad can be, exhilarating, emotional and downright tiring. It's a great idea to take a day or two off work to help you spend time with the baby and be there to support your partner.

It can be a real emotional rollercoaster so you need to know its ok to feel over-awed. For some dads there is an enormous feeling of relief that the nine months of pregnancy is over. Now the real work begins.

Time to check out the DVD Being *Dad 2: Bringing the Baby Home*.

CONGRATULATIONS! YOU'RE A DAD!



For more great resources on being a dad
visit our website www.beingdadusa.com