

## Becoming A Dad!

What a joyful, exciting, scary time – you are going to be a father!

### While mom is pregnant, things you can do to prepare to be a father.

- Take time off from work to go with mom to the doctor. Listen to the baby's heartbeat, see baby on the sonogram, ask the doctor any questions you might have.
- Review your life – what kind of father do you want to be. Think about the men in your life who have been good role models.
- Find out about your baby and what to expect – take a childbirth class, visit the many web sites on the Internet, talk to other dads.
- Practice – babysit for a friend or relative. Hold the baby, change his diaper, play with him.
- Talk to mom about how you want to raise your child. Come up with a plan you both agree on. Share your plan with family and friends and get their support.
- Talk to your baby in the womb. Babies can hear and will know your voice after birth. Read to baby.
- Take mom on dates. You may not have much “alone time” after baby is born.

- Learn about breastfeeding and why it is so much better for both mom and baby. Encourage mom to breastfeed.

### After baby arrives:

- Pay attention when the lactation consultant visits mom in the hospital. Help mom get baby positioned and latched on correctly - most breastfeeding problems in the early weeks are caused by poor positioning and latch. Call for help if mom has sore nipples or if baby is not gaining weight.
- Keep the stress level at home as low as possible. Protect mom and baby from too many visitors. The more you do to help mom, the less stressed she will be. Ask family to wait a few weeks before coming for an extended visit. You need time to get to know your baby and adjust to the new routine. After a few weeks, you will be glad to have company who can take care of the baby while you take a nap, run errands, or go out for a nice dinner with mom!
- Spend one day (or several hours) taking care of all of baby's needs. Then, you will know why mom looks so frazzled and doesn't get much done while you are at work. Taking care of a new baby is a full-time job! It gets easier as baby gets older – really!

- Tell mom she is still beautiful and desirable. If she needs help losing weight, go with her and the baby on long walks and don't bring home high calorie foods.
- Wear baby in a baby sling. Babies love to be held close. Plus, you can get things done!

### Being a good dad is so important!

- Be an active care giver.
- Be a partner, not a helper!
- Expect your child to act their age.
- Be there for your kids! Get involved in their lives.
- Show respect for mom and teach your kids to respect her. Make your family life better.
- Set a good example - be a role model.

### Games To Play With Baby

1. Find a sports event on TV. Sit in a comfortable chair. Place baby on your chest with her head on your shoulder. Be sure her head is straight, not turned to one side, and her arms are close to her body. Snuggle. Tell her about the game. (This helps baby lift her head and keep it centered, helping with balance and good body alignment.)

2. Give baby a tummy massage to help her release gas. With baby on her back, use the flat part of your palm or your finger tips to gently massage baby's tummy. Do this for about 3 minutes. Slowly raise baby's legs and bend her knees so her knees are close to her tummy. While supporting her knees, gently roll baby from side to side for about 3 minutes. Straighten her legs. Gently push her feet against your chest. This will give her something to push against when she tries to release poop and gas. Repeat if baby is enjoying the exercise.

3. Give baby a rubdown to help her relax. Put a small amount of a light oil (olive or almond) or baby lotion on your hands. Starting at baby's head, slowly and gently massage baby's head, face, shoulders, chest, tummy, upper thighs, calves, feet, and toes. Turn baby over and massage her back.

4. Play tug-o-war to help baby build muscles. After diapering baby, lean over her with a clean sock or wash cloth in your mouth. Get baby to grab it. Play tug of war. After a while, let her win by pulling the sock or wash cloth from your mouth.

5. Tickle and stretch baby to help her build muscles. After diapering or

bathing baby, sing baby songs. Tickle baby at the end of the song. Stretch her arms over her head. Clap her hands together. Touch her toes to her nose.

For more games, check out *Rookie Dad* by Susan Fox.

For more tips on wearing your baby, check out *Babywearing* by Maria Blois.

For parenting advice and what to expect at well-child checkups, check out *Parenting* by Dr. Shu Shum.

These books are available at [www.ibreastfeeding.com](http://www.ibreastfeeding.com).

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