



Welcome Words

Preparing for Parenthood

Planning for the Emotional Roller-Coaster

Pregnancy and childbirth are two of the most emotionally charged times in a woman's — and her partner's — life. This is when hopes (and fears) run high, making it difficult to focus on the here and now, much less to make plans. Yet planning now will leave you more time to relax and enjoy your baby. Here's a survival checklist:

Calming fears: Fears about the mother's or baby's health, about how you or your partner will react during labor and delivery, and about the future of your relationship are common. Knowing what to expect during labor and delivery, that you have options for pain relief, and that, should you need one, a cesarean is safe for your baby will help. It's also important to talk about your fears with your health care provider, and your partner and friends.

Unwanted advice: Rely first on your health care provider and/or other professionals. Beyond that, try to take advice with good humor, but not too seriously. If the person (often a well-meaning family member) persists, say that you've checked with your health care provider and are following expert advice.

For couples only: Becoming parents changes just about everything. There will be new stresses and strains, as well as new joys. Begin talking now about how you can share responsibility for the baby. Except for breastfeeding, there's nothing your partner can't do. You'll also want to think about some time alone, both as a couple and individually. Who could care for your baby for a few hours so that you can go out together? Is your partner willing to give you an evening out with friends once a week? These are easier to plan for now than they will be after the baby's arrival. Remember that physical intimacy is still important for both of you. Hugs, kisses, massages and just simple old handholding are important ways of keeping close physically when intercourse is off-limits. Don't be shy about telling each other how you feel and what you'd like in the way of help or support from each other. You'll each need reassurance that you — not just your newborn — are loved and valued by your partner.

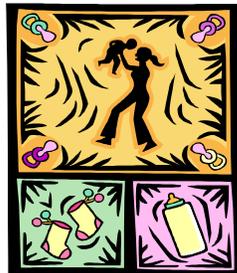
PPD: Postpartum depression (PPD) is a occur any time during the first year after birth. or sadness for more than a week and/or have lessness and helplessness (or feel that you care provider or Welcome Baby immediately. able to enjoy your baby.

Your support system: Some couples are birth alone together on a family "honeymoon." necessities. Will your partner be the one to do meals? Who will respond to phone calls and be on call for emotional and or physical support should you need it?

All couples need time to relax and adjust to parenthood, but for some, a week or longer of isolation with a newborn isn't appealing, or realistic. Most new parents appreciate support from at least one adult who can help with household chores and/or help care for the baby. A Welcome Baby volunteer may also be available to help ease your transition from the baby's delivery to settling in at home.

Single moms: It's especially important that single moms have a support system. Do you have a family member or close friend who can help you after you come home, even for the first week? You may be able to line up several people who can alternate helping with meals, errands and childcare. Who can you call for help when you're feeling blue, or totally isolated? Don't feel that you have to do it "all alone." Parenting is too hard, and far too lonely, without support from people who care about you and your baby.

Humor yourself: Whatever makes you smile, or even better, laugh out loud, is worth including in your daily routine for now and the coming months (not to mention the next 18 years or so).



hormonal and neurohormonal response that can If you experience mood swings, weepiness, irritability, trouble sleeping, loss of appetite, feelings of hope-might harm yourself or your baby), call your health The sooner you get assistance, the sooner you'll be

advised to spend the first week or so after their baby's If this appeals to you, don't neglect to plan for the laundry, grocery shop, cook, and clean up after when friends drop by? Can a friend or family member

Bringing Baby Home

Most expectant parents know that a car seat is a necessary piece of equipment: without it, your baby won't be allowed to leave the hospital or birthing center. Here's where to get help with finding and properly using a car seat.

You can also request child safety seat information by writing for the American Academy of Pediatrics Shopping Guide, 141 Northwest Point Rd., P.O. Box 927, Elk Grove Village, IL 60009. If you have questions about car seat use, call the UNC Highway Safety Research Center, 1-800-672-4527 or www.buckleupnc.org.

If you own a car seat and need help with installations or would like the seat checked, call the Durham EMS at 560-8287 to schedule an appointment.

Welcome Baby operates a car seat safety education and distribution program. Families in need of an infant/toddler convertible car seat (safe for any baby over 5lbs) or a booster car seat can call 560-7150 to register for this program. After attending a one-time class on the proper use of the car seat, families receive (on a sliding scale) the car seats their children need.



- The best and safest seat is one that fits your child's size, is correctly installed, and is used properly every time you drive.
 - Be sure your infant seat is securely installed facing backwards (preferably in the center back seat) before you go into labor.
 - **Never put a car seat in an airbag-equipped seat.**
 - All infants should ride rear-facing until they have reached at least 1 year of age and weigh at least 20 lbs.
- Remember, never hold a baby or child on your lap or buckled in with you, even for a short distance. This position offers no protection, is likely to cause internal injury to the child and it is against the law.
 - Unless you know its' history, don't borrow or purchase a used car seat. Seats involved in even minor accidents (with no visible damage) should not be used.

Retrieved from WorldWideWeb, December 11, 2006, American Academy of Pediatrics.

What to Expect in the Beginning

Falling in love with your baby doesn't happen instantly. Like any other important relationship, the parent-child bond grows over time.

Many parents report feelings of relief, excitement, happiness, pride, exhaustion, sadness (that pregnancy and the many months of anticipation are over), and disappointment (particularly if any aspect of the birth was different that you'd expected).

There's no reason to feel guilty, ashamed or afraid of any feeling. Sharing how you feel will help. For instance, if you'd planned to have your baby room in, but find this too exhausting, go ahead and change your plans.

Getting some rest is important for both you and your baby.

Expect your baby to spend lots of time crying; it's normal and doesn't reflect your performance as a parent. Babies sometimes cry to release tension before falling asleep.

Suggested Reading

The Birth Book

by William Sears, M.D. & Martha Sears, R.N.

The Birth Partner

by Penny Simkin

What to Expect When You're Expecting

by Eisenberg, Murkoff & Hathaway

The Nursing Mother's Companion

by Kathleen Huggins

The Complete Guide to Choosing

Child Care

by Judith Berezin