



Understanding Fatherhood

Labor Partner's Tip Sheet

Partners play a special role during labor. Since there will be a lot going on that day, print this and bring it with you. Refer to it for helpful comfort techniques to try during labor.



Set the Mood

- Dim the lights.
- Use aromatherapy.
- Play music or put on a favorite movie.



Hydrotherapy

- If your hospital has bathtubs suggest trying some hydrotherapy. Let the warm water soothe Mom—you can get in too.
- Suggest that Mom take a shower. You can spray warm water on her belly or back.
- Keep in mind that hydrotherapy works best when she is in active labor.



Massage

- Massage Mom's shoulders, legs, back, or wherever feels good to her.
- Try a light circular massage on her belly with your hands or the shower spray.
- During contractions, apply pressure on her lower back using your hands or a tennis ball.
- Try a double-hip squeeze by placing your hands on her hips, pressing in and up during contractions.
- Apply warm or cold water bottles, wash cloths, heating pads or gel packs to her sore areas.



Vocalization

- Mom may moan or make low, guttural sounds—remind her this is normal and helps with labor.



Breathing

- Suggest that Mom take deep, cleansing breaths.
- She can also try breathing quicker or adding a pattern as her labor intensifies.



Visualization

- Encourage Mom to try visualization. For example, she can imagine that each contraction is an ocean wave that crests and recedes.
- Have her visualize herself in a peaceful place, such as a favorite vacation spot. This can be helpful during labor and between contractions—she can imagine the sounds and sensations of being there.
- Have her use focal points, such as your baby's ultrasound photo or an object in the labor room.
- Remind her it can be helpful to repeat a word or positive phrase.



Positions & Movement

- Mom can try sitting, standing, squatting, getting on her hands and knees, leaning forward, and side-lying—encourage her to move.
- Slow dancing with Mom can be helpful.
- Suggest walking in the hall.
- Remind her to try using labor tools such as a fitness ball, squat bar, or birthing stool.



Pushing

- Suggest using a variety of positions.
- Remind her to try exhaling as she pushes and not to hold her breath.



How To Swaddle Your Baby Safely

Swaddling is when your baby is wrapped snugly in a blanket. When done safely, swaddling can calm some newborns and promote sleep. See the other side of this handout to read more about swaddling safely.

Many newborns bring their hands to their mouths for self-soothing or when they are hungry. The method below shows how to swaddle so you can see your baby's feeding cues.



Step 1. Spread a swaddling blanket out. Fold one corner to the opposite corner, in the shape of a triangle. Lay your baby face-up on the blanket, with their head resting above the folded side.



Step 2. Bend one arm so their hand is near their face; fold that side of the blanket over the body and tuck it securely under the opposite side of the body.



Step 3. Then, bending the other arm so their hand is near their face, fold the final side of the blanket over the body and under the opposite side, tucking it securely into the blanket.



Step 4. Fold or loosely twist the bottom of the blanket and tuck under one side of the baby.

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Swaddling Safely



SIDS

Some studies show that swaddling may increase the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome, or SIDS.

To reduce the risk:

- Always place your swaddled baby on their back to sleep.
- Put them to sleep in the same room as you, but not in the same bed.
- Make sure they don't get overheated (signs include sweating, rapid breathing, damp hair, flushed cheeks, and heat rash).
- Stop swaddling before your baby can roll over from back to stomach (around 2 months of age).



Hip Dysplasia

Babies who are swaddled too tightly may develop a problem with their hips. So make sure the swaddle is loose enough to allow their hips to move and for the legs to bend up and out.



Childcare

Make sure anyone you leave your child with knows how to swaddle and put your baby to sleep safely. Some childcare centers have policies against swaddling infants because of the increased risk of SIDS. If your childcare provider does swaddle, make sure they stop before your baby is 2 months old. And, always make sure they put your baby to sleep on their back!



Feeding Cues

Keep an eye out for your baby's feeding cues (bringing their hand to mouth, making lip movements). Babies who are constantly swaddled in the early days don't wake up as often for feedings. Frequent feedings are important in the early weeks.



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Baby Supplies Checklist

As a new parent, there are some need-to-have and nice-to-have items that can make life easier. It is recommended that you visit [Recalls.gov](https://www.recalls.gov) to see if a new or used product has been recalled.



Feeding Items

- Nursing pillow
- Milk storage bags
- Breast pump (electric or manual)
- Burp cloths



Diaper Needs

- Changing table (with safety strap)
- Diaper changing pad
- Diaper bag
- 75 disposable diapers, per week
- 2 boxes hypoallergenic baby wipes, per month
- Diaper pail
- 48 cloth diapers (if using cloth diapers)—diaper service for cloth diapers
- 3 diaper covers (if using cloth diapers)



Sleep Items

- Full-size crib (that meets safety regulations)
- Firm crib mattress
- Bassinet or cradle
- Crib sheets (fitted)
- Mattress pads



Bath Items

- Baby bathtub
- Hooded baby towels
- Baby washcloths
- Unscented baby shampoo
- Mild bath soap
- Soft baby brush



Health Items

- Digital thermometer
- Diaper rash ointment
- Bulb syringe (choose one that you can take apart for washing)
- Acetaminophen infant drops (check with your pediatrician before using)
- Infant nail clippers or a file



Clothing

- 4 undershirts or onesies
- 2 sleepers
- 1-2 sleep sacks
- 4 pairs socks/booties
- 5 drool bibs
- 4 outfits each size (0-9 months)
- Appropriate seasonal wear



Miscellaneous

- Convertible or rear-facing infant car seat (buying new is recommended)
- 3-5 receiving or swaddle blankets
- Portable/travel crib
- Baby carrier
- Nursery monitor/camera
- White noise machine
- Stroller/jogging stroller
- Bouncy seat



Room-by-Room Safety Checklist

These room-by-room tips can help make your home as safe as possible for your growing family. Go through each room and use these recommendations to childproof your home.

Kitchen:

- Keep a fire extinguisher in the kitchen
- Store sharp objects (such as knives) out of reach
- Keep medicines and vitamins out of reach
- Lock away any poisons and household products, such as cleaning supplies and alcohol
- Install ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCI) outlets around any water source
- Unplug appliances that are not in use and tie up long cords
- Make sure the highchair is sturdy and has a safety belt



Bathroom:

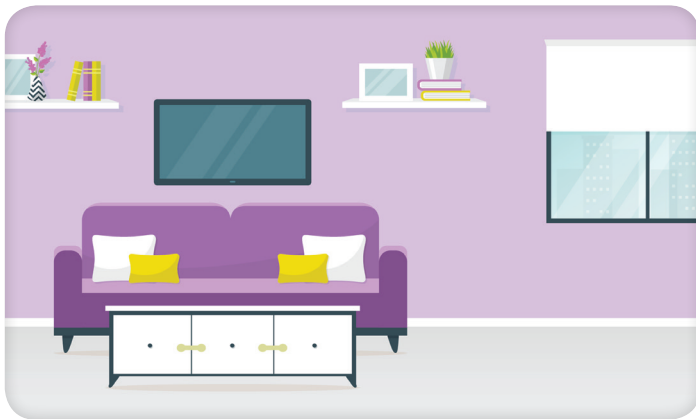
- To avoid burns, set your hot water heater to 120°F (48.9°C) (or lower) and consider putting anti-scald devices on faucets
- Test bathwater with your wrist or elbow before bathing your child (some bath toys have built-in hot water sensors)
- Never leave water in the tub (drain after every use)
- Install locks on the toilet, keep the lid closed, and keep the bathroom door closed
- Keep vitamins, medicines, and personal care products locked up or out of reach
- Buy products with child-safety caps
- Keep electronics away from sources of water
- Use a non-skid rug on the floor
- If your bath tub has a smooth surface, use an anti-slip mat or decals



Understanding Infant & Child Safety

Living Areas:

- Have a working smoke alarm and carbon monoxide detector (they should be located at least 15 feet away from any fuel-burning appliance)
- Place space heaters at least 2 feet away from anything that could catch fire
- Gates need to be properly installed at the top and bottom of all stairs
- Secure tall and heavy furniture (including televisions) to walls using furniture straps or anchors
- Remove poisonous houseplants
- Place covers on all electrical outlets (if you use individual outlet caps, choose bigger ones that are not choking hazards)
- Remove area rugs or add non-skid backing under them
- Remove or cushion sharp-edged furniture
- Consider replacing wax candles with LED candles
- Window covering cords should be out of reach of children
- Install window guards or stops on all windows



Nursery/Child's Bedroom:

- Have a working smoke alarm and carbon monoxide detector
- To reduce the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) always lay your baby down to sleep on their back, have a firm, tight-fitting mattress, remove everything else from their crib, and use a sleep sack, not loose blankets, to keep them warm.
- Use a crib that meets current standards, and position it in the room away from furniture, windows, blinds, and drapery cords
- Furniture (including the crib) should not have openings of more than 2³/₈ inches
- Look for the JPMA certification seal on your baby equipment
- Secure tall and heavy furniture to walls using furniture straps or anchors
- Register all products so you are alerted if there is a recall
- Always keep the sides of mesh playpens and portable cribs in a locked position
- Remove any strings that are on baby products (pacifiers, bibs, and toys)
- Store all baby supplies, diapers, and toiletries within your reach, but out of your baby's reach
- Use a toilet paper roll as a small parts tester to make sure a toy is not a choking hazard
- Use toy chests/storage with removeable lids, lids with holes, or spring-loaded supports to prevent accidental suffocation



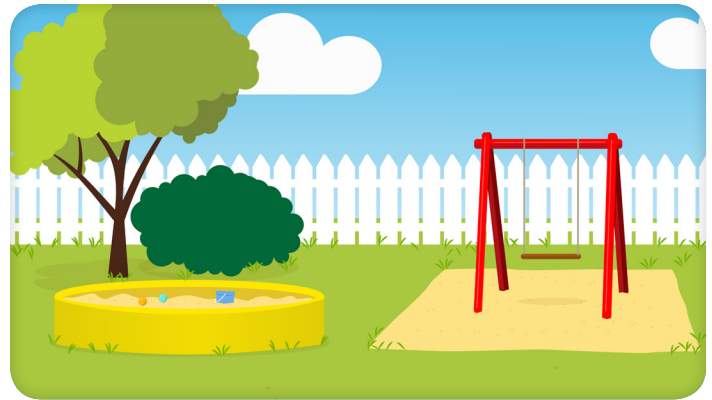
Understanding Infant & Child Safety

Other Bedrooms:

- Have a working smoke detector and carbon monoxide detector wherever anyone sleeps
- Store vitamins, medicines, and household products locked or out of reach
- Secure tall and heavy furniture to walls using furniture straps or anchors
- For newborns, have a dedicated sleep area in your room (bed sharing is not recommended), so they can room-in for at least the first 6 months of their life (ideally for the first year)
- Place covers on all electrical outlets (if you use individual outlet caps, choose bigger ones that are not choking hazards)

Garage/Shed:

- Keep all poisonous products (including windshield wiper fluid, fertilizer, gasoline, and antifreeze) locked up or out of reach
- Keep all containers of flammable liquids (such as paint and solvents) stored in their original containers and away from things like water heaters and furnaces
- Keep a fire extinguisher in the garage at all times
- Empty all buckets after use and store them upside down
- Install an automatic garage door opener with an approved safety mechanism
- Do not warm up your car inside the garage; do it outside instead
- Install a carbon monoxide detector in your garage



Backyard:

- If you have a pool, make sure it has a four-sided fence and self-closing, self-latching gate
- If you have an in-ground pool, make sure it has anti-entrapment drain covers and a safety vacuum release system (children can become trapped underwater by suction in the drain)
- Inflatable kiddie pools should be surrounded by a fence, just like any other pool, or emptied when not in use
- Cover and lock hot tubs when not in use
- Pick up items in your yard that could be dangerous to your children (ladders, garden tools, hoses, and chemicals)
- Remove poisonous plants and flowers
- Do not leave your grill unattended and make sure propane, matches, and lighter fluid are locked up after use
- Check all play structures for signs of wear or breakage and fix them before allowing your children to use them
- Have shock-absorbing materials (pea gravel, mulch, or rubber surface) under all play structures and covering at least 6 feet in all directions

Play and Milestones: Birth to 6 Months Old

Play is important to your baby's development, and you are his favorite toy! So hold, sing, talk, and play with your baby often! Enter the date your baby reaches each milestone into the white boxes below.

Milestones	How to Interact and Play
Birth-2 Months	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gazes at faces Recognizes your voice Reacts to a loud sound Tracks objects with eyes Lifts head briefly when on tummy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hold your baby often (try skin to skin, too). • Try to read your baby's cues and respond to any cries. • Gaze into your baby's eyes. • Hold out objects with contrasting colors for your baby to see. • Hang a mobile over her changing table or crib (remove when she can push up on hands and knees, about 4 months). • Do supervised tummy time several times a day. Get down on the floor with your baby. Stop when/if she gets frustrated. • Talk often to your baby, using her name.
3-4 Months	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Smiles Actively listens Lifts head to 45° angle Coos and gurgles Bats arms Kicks legs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talk and sing songs to your baby. • Respond to and imitate the sounds that he makes. • Hold things for your baby to kick and bat at with his arms and legs. Try a crib gym. • Say the names of his body parts when you dress him. • Introduce your baby to safe and interesting textures like soft fur, rough facial hair, and smooth board books. • Take him out for walks and show him the world.
4-6 Months	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supports head Holds onto an object Sits with support Pushes up on forearms Rolls over front to back 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make up a song or rhyme with your baby's name. • Attach a baby-safe mirror to a wall, crib, or playpen. • Play "This Little Piggy" when changing her diaper. • Provide safe and easy objects for your baby to hold onto like your fingers, rattles, and safe stuffed animals. • Give her supervised time to play on the floor.

Play and Milestones: Birth to 6 Months Old (continued)

Developmental Delays

Call your baby's doctor if your baby isn't doing the following:

By the end of 1 month:

- Not responding to sounds

By the end of 3 months:

- Not tracking objects with eyes
- Not cooing or gurgling
- Not smiling
- Not supporting head well

By the end of 6 months:

- Not holding head up
- Not bringing objects to mouth
- Not rolling over from front to back
- Has a stiff or floppy muscle tone



Understanding Fatherhood Quiz

- Dads who are involved with caring for their child:**
 - Report greater life satisfaction
 - Are more likely to feel disappointed
 - Have higher self-esteem and self-confidence
 - Cope with work-related stress better
 - A, C, and D
- Some ways you can be involved in pregnancy include:**
 - Learning about pregnancy by going to prenatal visits, reading books, or taking classes
 - Talking to your partner about what she is experiencing physically and emotionally
 - Start preparing for after birth, such as planning time off from work or looking into childcare options
 - All of the above
- Registering baby products online or sending in the product registration card is important because:**
 - It provides proof that you own these items
 - You can be notified if there are any safety recalls
 - The company will send you free stuff
 - All of the above
- It is recommended that both Mom and Dad hold their baby skin to skin because it:**
 - Helps your baby feel safe and calm
 - Regulates your baby's heart rate and body temperature
 - Is an opportunity to bond with your baby right from the start
 - All of the above
- If you are feeling overwhelmed by your baby's crying, it's recommended that you put them in a safe place like their crib or bassinet and walk away to calm down.**
 - True
 - False
- All dads will feel an instant connection to their baby right after birth.**
 - True
 - False
- Infant massage is a way to bond with your baby and may promote better sleep and enhance an infant's immune system, motor skills, and brain development.**
 - True
 - False
- When Mom is having a hard day or feeling emotional it is best to:**
 - Focus on solving the problem
 - Be curious and just listen
 - Validate her feelings and be supportive
 - Avoid talking about emotional or tough subjects
 - B and C

Continued on back



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- 9. Paternal depression can occur in 5% to 10% of new fathers, most commonly in the first 3 to 6 months after childbirth.**
- A. True
 - B. False
- 10. Men typically express depression:**
- A. Through irritability, anger, and social isolation
 - B. By withdrawing from the family and overworking
 - C. Using alcohol, drugs, or gambling to cope
 - D. All of the above

Answer Key 1. E 2. D 3. B 4. D 5. A 6. B 7. A 8. E 9. A 10. D