



DAD

little word...



YOUR GUIDE TO THE FATHER SITUATION

**REALLY?**

So you're going to be a father? Or maybe you already are a father, but you have another child on the way? Congratulations! You will be one of the two most important people in someone's life. You and the mother of the baby will be loved and needed in more ways than you will know.

Don't freak out! This can be one of the best times in your life. In this book we'll take a look at all things fatherhood. You have a big job even before the baby is born. If you have worries or doubt about the pregnancy, this book will help. Hopefully, you will also see that playing an active part in the pregnancy with your partner will help the baby be healthy after delivery.

**SO...**

Your future fatherhood may not have sunk in yet. But you might as well get a grip on it now! Things get crazy, but when your daughter or son reaches up to you and wants you to pick her up out of her crib? Well, you'll be smiling and it will have really sunk in.

**GOT BABY?**

That bundle of joy will touch your heart and you will be proud of what your child will do, the joy she inspires in you and the tough times that you'll face together.

What about you, Dad? **READY?**  
**LET'S DO THIS THING.**

**DISCLAIMER.** This book provides general information about pregnancy and prenatal issues. This information does not constitute medical advice and is not intended to be used as a solitary reference on the subject matter, for the diagnosis or treatment of a health problem, or as a substitute for consulting a licensed health care professional. Consult with a qualified physician or health care practitioner to discuss specific individual issues or health needs, and to professionally address personal, emotional, health, physical or medical concerns.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 2** "WE'RE PREGNANT!"
- 3** THE RANGE OF FEELINGS
- 4** SEEING THE SIGNS
- 6** MISSION: DEFINITION
- 9** IN THE BEGINNING
- 12** CHANGE UP!
- 14** ALL THE WORLD'S A STAGE
- 18** FEELINGS
- 21** PROBLEMS IN PREGNANCY
- 24** PRENATAL MYTHBUSTING
- 25** FIVE MISTAKES AND HOW NOT TO MAKE THEM
- 26** DOWN THE HOME STRETCH
- 27** GOING THE DISTANCE
- 28** STAND AND DELIVER
- 32** DAY ONE AND ON
- 35** SAFETY FIRST AND FOREMOST

**“WE’RE  
PREGNANT!”**



When you first heard those words you likely had a wide range of feelings, from “Yikes!” to “Yeah!” and everything in between.

## **BOTH SCARY AND MERRY**

You probably remember when you found out about the pregnancy. This is something that most dads don’t forget. Most likely you had some mixture of joy and fear, maybe even some confusion or anger. Some dads-to-be are happy right away, but then as the day goes on they may think, “Hey, I’m not sure that’s how I would have planned it!” It’s okay if your feelings go back and forth. This news is a life changer and it’ll affect everything you do from here on out. So the mixed bag of feelings is expected when you’re expecting.

## **YOUR FEELINGS MATTER**

How are you feeling about this news? It’s okay to ask yourself that question and see where your head is on the matter.

Mixed feelings are normal and healthy. Finding out about a pregnancy is not always like in the movies or on TV shows or in commercials. There are a lot of things to think through.

# THE RANGE OF FEELINGS

Sad?



Excited?

Worried?



Confused?

Mad?



Nervous?

Upset?



Ecstatic?

Happy?



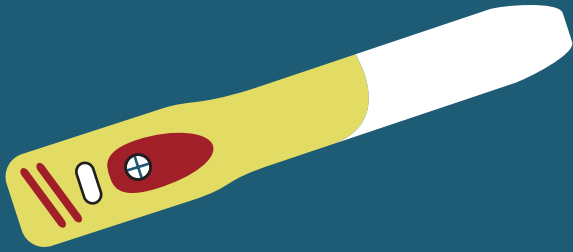
Totally  
Freaked Out?

## YOU CAN DO THIS

If anyone can do it, YOU CAN!

With planning and reading about being a good partner and dad, you can be great at both! Remember that you aren't alone. EVERY new father goes through these feelings. You want to learn to be a good dad. That isn't going to be easy, but armed with some tools and info, you'll be able to handle that and all your new responsibilities.

# SEEING THE SIGNS



What are some of the signs that your wife or girlfriend may be pregnant?

- MISSED PERIOD
- TENDER BREASTS
- NAUSEA/UPSET STOMACH
- TIREDNESS

Pregnancy tests at the store and at the doctor's office are pretty exact. They detect a hormone in the urine that is called HCG, which is only in a woman's body when she is pregnant.

## WHAT? PREGNANT?! I DIDN'T KNOW!

How could she have missed that? Believe it or not, there are times when a woman does not know she's pregnant until she is further along.

**SHE'S ALREADY  
HALFWAY THROUGH  
THE PREGNANCY? I JUST  
FOUND OUT!**

If the mother of the baby found out late or did not tell you until some time had gone by, that's okay. This is usual too.

## REMEMBER THIS

- It can be hard even for a pregnant woman to believe that she is pregnant.
- She may not have known how to tell you.
- Her feelings might be equally mixed and there is likely a whole bunch of fear.
- She needs you to take some time and accept the fact that she's pregnant.

## CHECK IT OUT!

WebMD's 8 Early Signs of Pregnancy:

[webmd.com/baby/features/8-early-signs-of-pregnancy](http://webmd.com/baby/features/8-early-signs-of-pregnancy)

## REMEMBER THIS ESPECIALLY

You both are in this together, so SUPPORT is the key.

- Let her know you're there for her. You have her back!
- Talk about your feelings and your fears.
- Go to doctor appointments with her.
- Talk with her family if you're comfortable with them.
- Share what you have learned about pregnancy with her.
- Share what you have learned about being a new dad with her.
- Tell her what kind of dad you want to be.

**Talk it out...  
work it out!  
Support one  
another and  
start the  
pregnancy  
out on all  
positive notes.**

# MISSION: DEFINITION

Before we get too far into the discussion, it might be a good time to define some key words in the early part of the process of a baby's development.

## Braxton Hicks contractions

Brax-ton-Hix-con-  
TRACK-shuns

Also known as false labor or practice contractions, these contractions in the uterus are usually felt during the second or third trimester of pregnancy, preparing the body for actual contractions.

## Cesarean delivery (C-section)

Sess-AIR-ee-un

A surgical procedure in which incisions are made through a woman's abdomen and uterus to deliver her baby.

## Embryo

EM-bree-oh

The unborn baby in the earliest stages up until the third month of pregnancy, then referred to as a fetus.



## Epidural anesthesia

Ep-ih-DUR-ull an-  
ess-THEE-szuh

An anesthetic injection into the spinal canal to block pain and feeling during delivery.

## Fertile

Fer-tul

Able to conceive and bear offspring.



## Fetus

FEE-tuss

The unborn baby in the womb after the third month of pregnancy.

## Gestation

Jes-TAY-shun

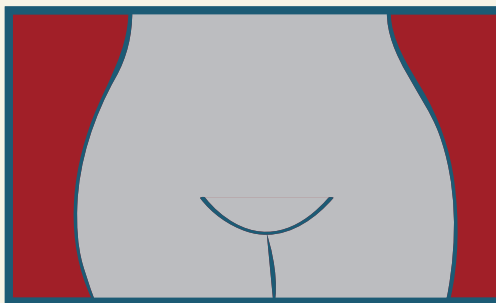
The period of time from conception to birth.



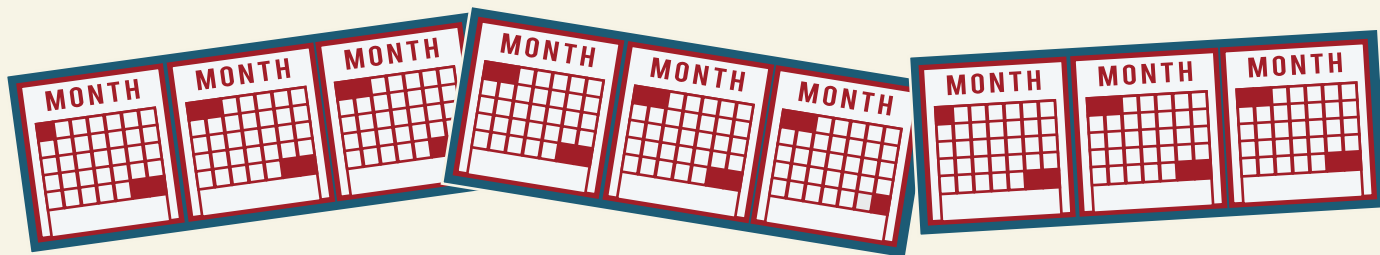
<b>Gynecology</b>	Guy-nuh-COL-uh-gee	The branch of medicine concerned with the health of the female reproductive organs and their diseases.
<b>Induction/Inducing</b>	In-DUC-shun/ in-DOO-sing	Using medication to start labor.
<b>Miscarriage</b>	MISS-care-idge	The loss of an embryo or fetus before the 20th week of pregnancy. Most miscarriages occur during the first 14 weeks.
<b>Obstetrician</b>	Ob-steh-TRISH-an	A physician who delivers babies who practices obstetrics, the science of managing pregnancy, labor and the time immediately after delivery.

**Pelvic** PEL-vick

Relating to the pelvis, the basin-shaped structure of the vertebrate skeleton, that rests on the lower limbs and supports the spinal column.



<b>Postpartum depression</b>	Post-par-tum	Moderate to severe depression in a woman after she has given birth.
<b>Preemie</b>	PREE-mee	A baby born early, between weeks 20 and 37. Short for 'premature.'
<b>Pregnant</b>	PREG-nent	The state of carrying a developing fetus within the body.
<b>Prenatal</b>	Pree-NAY-tul	Occurring before birth; during or relating to pregnancy.
<b>Preterm labor</b>	Pree-term LAY-ber	Labor before the thirty-seventh week of pregnancy.
<b>Trimester</b>	TRI-mes-ter	A period of three months, especially as a division of time during a pregnancy.



## Ultrasound

UL-tra-sound

Sound waves that allow a view of a developing fetus in the womb.

## Uterus

YOO-ter-us

The organ in the lower body of a woman where offspring are conceived and in which they grow before birth; the womb.



CHECK IT OUT! 

American Pregnancy Association: Labor & Birth Terms to Know  
[americanpregnancy.org/labor-and-birth/labor-and-birth-terms-to-know/](http://americanpregnancy.org/labor-and-birth/labor-and-birth-terms-to-know/)

# IN THE BEGINNING

## EVERY WOMAN IS DIFFERENT AND HER JOURNEY IS TOO

At first your girlfriend or wife might feel perfectly fine. And hopefully that will continue. There are many common pregnancy symptoms she'll start to have. These are natural and normal.

## THE LONG AND SHORT OF PREGNANCY SYMPTOMS:

- 1 Feeling queasy, nauseous, sick to her stomach
- 2 Quick to feel tired
- 3 Clothes start to fit differently
- 4 Breasts feel fuller
- 5 Her feelings will run low and high

1



2



3



4



5



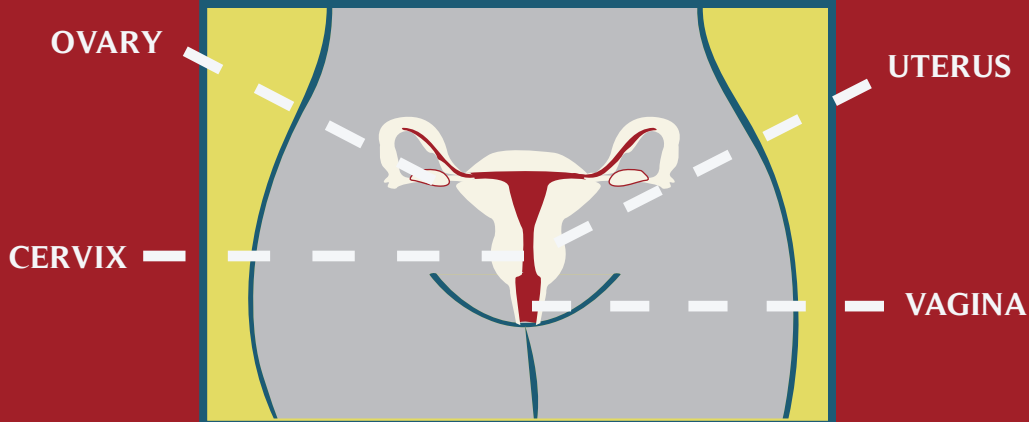
## DOCTOR, M.D., PHYSICIAN, “DOC!”

A lot of visits to the doctor are needed, but think of him or her as your baby's health coach. These visits are a great time for you to learn about the pregnancy, and it lets you be a part of the experience. It's always better to have someone go with you to the doctor for any reason, and especially during a pregnancy. Before the visit, you can talk to your partner about questions you both have. After the visit, you can talk about what the doctor told you and any plans of action for you as a family and the baby.

## SO WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

On the first prenatal visit, the doctor will...

- Take the full health history of the mother-to-be.
- Ask about the medical history of both of your families.
- Ask about any health problems the mother may have.
- Perform a medical exam.
- Perform a pelvic exam.
- Let you hear the baby's heartbeat, if developed enough.
- Do an ultrasound, if needed.



At different times in the pregnancy, the mother's doctor will need to run special types of tests. These might be to test her health or the baby's health.

## MUST DO'S

- See the doctor as early as possible to get the tests the mother needs.
- Keep her regular appointments.
- Call the doctor if she thinks something is wrong or if she doesn't feel well.

## TIP-OFF

### GET IT ON YOUR SCHEDULE

- In the early stages of the pregnancy, the doctor's visits should be **once a month**.
- Visits should be **every two weeks** for a while (third trimester).
- Visits should be **every week** for the last month.

If any problems spring up or if she has any diseases like diabetes or high blood pressure, her doctor will want to see her more often.

## CHECK IT OUT!

### Early Signs of Pregnancy:

[americanpregnancy.org/gettingpregnant/earlypregnancysymptoms.html](http://americanpregnancy.org/gettingpregnant/earlypregnancysymptoms.html)

### Pregnancy Symptoms:

[webmd.com/baby/guide/pregnancy-am-i-pregnant](http://webmd.com/baby/guide/pregnancy-am-i-pregnant)

### First Trimester Tips:

[pregnancy.about.com/od/trimesterguide/a/1sttrimester.htm](http://pregnancy.about.com/od/trimesterguide/a/1sttrimester.htm)

**REMEMBER:  
WHEN IN DOUBT,  
GIVE THE DOCTOR  
A SHOUT OUT**



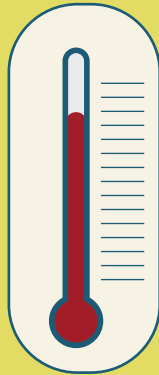
# CHANGE UP!

## THE CHANGES TO THE BODY OF A MOTHER-TO-BE

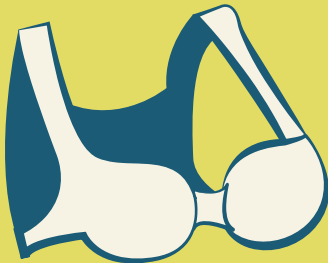
### CHANGE IS GOOD

Understand that a woman's body goes through a lot of changes during pregnancy. She's supplying a home for a growing human until it's ready to come out and be a part of the world. So it's only natural that a pregnant woman's body will be different and go through some changes. Here are a few of those changes:

Her body temperature rises by about a half degree



She gains weight and her body takes on a different shape, as her uterus adapts to the growing baby

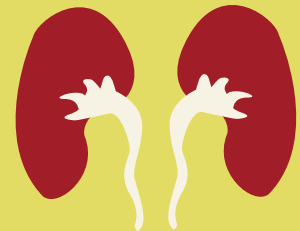


The breasts become larger as tissues grow, and hormones fire up the growth of milk ducts

Her blood volume increases, her heart beats stronger and faster and her lungs breathe harder



She will tend to urinate more often as her kidneys filter extra waste from her baby through her system



## CHANGES AND DISCOMFORTS

These changes to a pregnant woman's body can bring about pain and discomfort. Be on the lookout and help whenever possible.

**BODY ACHES**

**STRETCH MARKS & SKIN CHANGES**

**SWELLING**

**LEG CRAMPS**

**BREAST CHANGES**

**FREQUENT URINATING, LEAKING**

**VARICOSE VEINS**

**HEARTBURN & INDIGESTION**

**DIZZINESS**

**HEMORRHOIDS**

**CONSTIPATION**

**ITCHING**

**FATIGUE, SLEEP PROBLEMS**

**NUMB OR TINGLING HANDS**

**MORNING SICKNESS**

**NASAL PROBLEMS**

**CHECK IT OUT!** 

**Healthline: How “Baby” Changes the Body: See the Power of Pregnancy - See more at:**  
[healthline.com/health/pregnancy/body-changes-infographic](https://www.healthline.com/health/pregnancy/body-changes-infographic)

**LiveScience: Blossoming Body: 8 Odd Changes That Happen During Pregnancy:**  
[livescience.com/16937-body-pregnancy.html](https://www.livescience.com/16937-body-pregnancy.html)

# ALL THE WORLD'S A STAGE

## THE STAGES OF PREGNANCY

### FORTY WEEKS OF WONDER

It helps to think of pregnancy as having different stages. Pregnancies last nine months, but doctors need to talk about pregnancies differently. To make sure they know how far pregnant the mom-to-be is they count pregnancies in weeks. This is why you might hear that a pregnancy lasts 40 weeks.

This also helps split the pregnancy into three stages called **trimesters**.

### FIRST TRIMESTER

first 13 weeks or 3 months

### SECOND TRIMESTER

start of the 13th week to the end of the 27th week

### THIRD TRIMESTER

start of the 28th week to the due date

Each trimester will be very different for her. Here's a closer look at each trimester.

## The First Trimester

In the first days and weeks, the baby needs to find the right place to grow. It will start as a microscopic group of cells and turn into a baby the size of your thumb by the end of this stage.

Half-way through this stage, the new mother will really feel pregnant, even though she may not look it yet.



### YOUR MOVE

This is a good time to learn to have patience. There may be many days when she feels lousy, but things do get easier! If you can help her through these days she'll remember your good help.



Because her body is changing and getting ready for the whole nine months, know about these changes and conditions she'll feel during this trimester-

- TIREDNESS
- LACK OF ENERGY
- MORE FREQUENT URINATION
- BACKACHES
- HEARTBURN
- MORNING SICKNESS
- HARDER TO HAVE A BOWEL MOVEMENT
- HER BREASTS WILL FEEL FULLER

### A WORD ON MORNING SICKNESS

Don't let the name fool you. Morning sickness can come at any time, not just morning. The nausea and queasiness mean she's feeling miserable. Think about how you feel when you have a stomach virus and feel like you're about to throw up. Now imagine how it would be to feel like that all day long for many days in a row.

The nausea will sometimes lead to vomiting. Hopefully most foods will stay down. Try to help her decide what drinks and foods make the situation better or worse.

#### Some helpful hints for you and her:

- Eat smaller and more frequent meals
- Drink fluids throughout the day to keep from being dehydrated
- Make sure she gets plenty of rest during the day
- Remind her it's not a good idea to lie down right after eating
- Remind her to not skip meals
- Remind her that tobacco, alcohol and spicy foods will make it worse
- Ginger, lemonade, watermelon and even potato chips might give some relief

Have her talk to her doctor or nurses about safe medicines that will treat the nausea.

# The Second Trimester

Things are looking good during this stage. The baby's heart is beating strong. The morning sickness phase and chance for miscarriage have passed. There's a better chance that the baby will develop fine and be healthy.



## Here are some changes she may notice:

- She has more energy
- She may feel winded or short of breath, since her lungs are getting more crowded by her growing womb
- She'll gain weight more quickly, about four pounds each month. This weight gain is normal and good for your growing baby
- Her belly is getting bigger, and her hips are getting wider
- She will start to feel the baby moving at around 16 to 20 weeks
- Her breasts are growing larger as the milk glands grow
- Her skin is changing color due to more blood flow
- She may feel your baby having hiccups

If this is her first pregnancy, she may go through part of this trimester without showing too much. Once she gets halfway through (20 weeks), it should be pretty obvious to everyone that she's pregnant. Just before this point she'll probably have an ultrasound that carefully looks at the baby's development. The ultrasound can't guarantee that everything's perfect, but it's very helpful.

# The Third Trimester

The final trimester is all about growing. Just when she thinks there's no more room, she'll grow more. The doctor will carefully track that both she and the baby are growing the right amount.

## Here are some things she may notice:

- She'll have more trouble sleeping and getting comfortable
- She'll be tired more often
- The baby might painfully push down into her pelvis and onto her bladder
- She'll have more lower back pain
- She may have some Braxton-Hicks contractions that help her body get ready for real labor
- The baby takes up a lot of room, making it harder for mom to breathe
- She may have heartburn more often because her stomach has less room
- She will have gained weight, especially in front of her
- She will have aches and pains

These stages, the three trimesters, are a time of change. The mother-to-be will need your help, patience and understanding during all three stages. Be there for her.



## CHECK IT OUT!

**MedicineNet: Pregnancy Stages Pictures:**

**1st, 2nd and 3rd Trimesters:**

[medicinenet.com/stages\\_of\\_pregnancy\\_pictures\\_slideshow/article.htm](http://medicinenet.com/stages_of_pregnancy_pictures_slideshow/article.htm)

**Parents: Pregnancy Stages:**

[parents.com/pregnancy/stages](http://parents.com/pregnancy/stages)



# FEELINGS



## FEELINGS FOR THE BABY'S MOTHER

Whether she's your wife, your girlfriend or even someone you don't know all that well, you now have a relationship with this woman who is to be the mother of your child. It's natural for men to become even more attracted to their wives/girlfriends when they're pregnant. That special person is carrying your special child. You'll be surprised how proud you can be for her. After all, she's doing something very special for you.

## YOUR BABY, YOUR CONCERN

This is your baby. Make sure you get a chance to help make plans and decisions during the pregnancy. You're the dad. Think of boys and girls names you like. Think of names that sound good now and will sound good in the future, and first names that will go well with your last name.

**DON'T BE AFRAID  
TO SHARE YOUR  
EXCITEMENT OR FEARS  
WITH YOUR FRIENDS  
AND FAMILY.**

## YOUR MOVE

Here are some things you can do to help and become more involved as you wait for the big day:

- Buy a special gift for the new baby
- Buy a special gift for the big brother or sister of the new baby to let them know they aren't forgotten and that their help will be appreciated
- Think of a gift to give the new mother that will be special for her
- Check with your employer about taking time off for the delivery and the few days after
- Talk to your employer about paternity leave so you can have time off to help with the new baby

## GO FIGURE!

Remember that her body is changing. You know how women attach a lot of importance to their figure when they aren't pregnant. Now her figure is changing. She'll enjoy being pregnant, but not all the time. Let her know that you still find her attractive and that you love her even more. She'll need to hear that a lot — probably more than you expect.

## PREGNANCY AND INTIMACY: CAN THEY GO TOGETHER?

Sexual activity is safe during pregnancy. It can be just as exciting and fulfilling. Just like when she's not pregnant, though, there will be times when it seems like a great idea and times when it's not. You might be surprised that many women enjoy sexual activity more when they're pregnant.

You'll both find that the types of sexual activity you can enjoy will vary depending on how far along she is in the pregnancy. Some positions are just not possible at the end of pregnancy. That doesn't mean you can't have sexual activity up to the end. It just means you need to find what works best for the two of you.

There are some times, though, that sexual activity is not allowed in pregnancy. Make sure you're talking with her, so that you understand what limits she might have. Remember, communication is the key!

## SHE'S MISERABLE. HOW CAN I HELP HER?

Think of all the reasons you might be upset or miserable if you were pregnant. If there were times you couldn't move, leave the house or do the things you like to do most, you'd be miserable too.

Try your best to be caring. Go with her to doctor's appointments. Listen to what the nurses and doctors say. Remind her she's doing a great job.

Don't be afraid to ask family or friends for help--especially if the doctor has told her to back off on the activity. Friends and family should be happy to help.

## WHAT ABOUT ME? I HAVE FEELINGS TOO!

You can feel lousy too. It's okay. Don't feel guilty. But you probably need to understand that there won't be much sympathy for you. That's just the way it is. She's the center of attention. When you're tired and feel overworked and under appreciated, don't get too down. You're more appreciated than you realize.

It's important for men to feel respected and needed. If you're getting the wrong messages, speak up. Don't keep your feelings in and build up resentment. The best way to get the feedback you want is to reassure your girlfriend or wife that you love her. Comfort her even when you might not feel like it.

### CHECK IT OUT!

#### **Advice for Expectant Fathers:**

[webmd.com/men/features/advice-for-expectant-fathers](http://webmd.com/men/features/advice-for-expectant-fathers)

#### **National Center for Fathering:**

[fathers.com](http://fathers.com)

#### **Parenting: Dadvice: The Ultimate Collection of Advice for Fathers:**

[parenting.com/blogs/pop-culture/shawn-parenting/dadvice-ultimate-collection-advice-fathers](http://parenting.com/blogs/pop-culture/shawn-parenting/dadvice-ultimate-collection-advice-fathers)

She can help you by keeping you involved in her life. She should tell you what she's thinking and feeling. She should tell you about her conversations with her doctor that involve the baby.

# PROBLEMS IN PREGNANCY

## IT CAN HAPPEN

With proper care, being thoughtful to the mother's health and fitness, and knowing the rights and wrongs of pregnancy, problems can be very rare. But that's not to say they won't happen. Here are a few of the more common problems that can come up. Know about these conditions and teach yourself.

## PRETERM DELIVERY

A baby born between weeks 20 and 37 is called a "preemie." Most pregnancies are full term and last between 37 and 42 weeks. Preemie babies may need to spend weeks or months in the hospital. As they grow, they may be more at risk of developing learning problems and diseases such as diabetes.

**Some babies are born premature because the mother's water broke early or she had preterm labor. This is when she has strong cramps or contractions too early.**

### SYMPTOMS OF PRETERM LABOR ARE:

- Cramping (like during her period)
- Contractions (when her whole belly gets tight and painful)
- Vaginal bleeding
- Low, dull back pain
- Pelvic pressure



### Preterm labor can happen in any pregnancy, but there are times when it's more likely:

- If she smokes, drinks alcohol or uses drugs
- If she's under a lot of stress
- If she's underweight before and during her pregnancy
- If there's physical, sexual or emotional abuse
- If she has untreated infections
- If she gets a sexually transmitted disease

## PIH (or preeclampsia)

PIH is short for pregnancy-induced hypertension. This health problem is a type of high blood pressure that can happen during pregnancy. If it becomes worse, you might hear the term severe preeclampsia or toxemia.

If she has PIH, her blood pressure will rise and her body will hold onto more water, causing her hands, feet, and ankles to swell. If she has PIH she needs to be watched closely. This can be done at home, but it's usually in the hospital. High blood pressure can cause serious health problems for her and the baby.

### Watch out for these signs that she may be getting PIH:

- Swollen, puffy hands, feet and face
- Rapid weight gain
- Change in vision; She may see bright lights or dark spots
- Pain on the upper right side of her belly
- Headaches that don't go away with acetaminophen (Tylenol®)
- Sick to her stomach feeling

**If she has any of these warning signs, call her doctor right away. To treat PIH, her doctor may suggest rest in bed, a stay in the hospital and even having the baby early.**

## DIABETES IN PREGNANCY

Diabetes is a disease of high blood sugar. Some women develop diabetes during pregnancy because of the changes in the body. This is called gestational diabetes. Obstetricians check every patient for this about half-way through the pregnancy.

Some women may have diabetes already before they become pregnant. In both cases it's important to get as much advice from doctors and nutritionists as possible. Every pregnancy with diabetes is different.



Diabetes in pregnancy can lead to:

- Babies that gain too much weight
- A greater chance of a C-section
- A higher chance of the baby needing to stay longer in the hospital after delivery
- A higher chance of the baby having diabetes later in life

## REMEMBER THIS

If these problems are ignored, there's a greater chance of the baby dying before being born.

## THE GOOD NEWS

The blood sugar of a pregnant woman with diabetes can be kept at the right level. There won't be harm to her or the baby if that happens.

## TIP-OFF

Here are some tips if she's diagnosed with gestational diabetes:

- Make sure she keeps all of her doctor's appointments
- Make sure her doctor has her see a diabetes specialist
- Make sure her doctor arranges for her to see a nutritionist
- Help her learn how to check her blood sugars
- If she needs medicine like insulin, encourage her to stick with it

## CHECK IT OUT!

**WebMD's Pregnancy Related Problems Check Your Symptoms:**

[webmd.com/baby/tc/pregnancy-related-problems-check-your-symptoms](http://webmd.com/baby/tc/pregnancy-related-problems-check-your-symptoms)

**March of Dimes: Preterm Labor:**

[marchofdimes.org/complications/preterm-labor-and-premature-baby.aspx](http://marchofdimes.org/complications/preterm-labor-and-premature-baby.aspx)

**Gestational Hypertension (PIH):**

[healthpages.org/pregnancy/pregnancy-induced-hypertension-pih/](http://healthpages.org/pregnancy/pregnancy-induced-hypertension-pih/)

**American Diabetes Association®: Diabetes:**

[diabetes.org/living-with-diabetes/complications/pregnancy](http://diabetes.org/living-with-diabetes/complications/pregnancy)

# PRENATAL MYTHBUSTING

## FIVE MYTHS OF PREGNANCY

There are many myths surrounding the mysteries of pregnancy. Here are five that we tear down and tell you why they just aren't true.

### MYTH

### BUSTED!

**Your girlfriend or wife will be miserable during the whole pregnancy.**

This is not true at all. There will be plenty of times (mostly at the start and end) when she is miserable. There will be many more times, though, when she's happy and feeling well.

**Life, as you know it, is over.**

Again, not true. Make the baby part of your life. If you like to go out to dinner or visit friends, you can still do that. You will still be able to live your life and be who you are.

**Whatever happens happens.**

Many people think that the baby's health is out of their hands. Not true. The difference between a small, preterm baby and a strong, healthy baby often comes down to the choices you make as parents. Take care of yourselves and your baby will be healthier.

**Preterm babies are not a big deal.**

You want to do all you can to have a strong, healthy baby. The closer your baby is delivered to the due date, the stronger she'll be. Preterm babies can have many problems in the hospital. It might be a long time before they can come home. Even if they make it home safe there can still be a chance they'll have other problems as they grow up.

**I won't be able to afford this baby.**

You'll be able to make ends meet. Don't panic about money. Take time to talk with your partner about the items you need for the baby and the cost. Make plans ahead of time. You can do it.

# FIVE MISTAKES AND HOW NOT TO MAKE THEM

## IT WAS ALL A BIG MISTAKE

These are common mistakes a lot of first-time dads make. But they're easily fixable. You just have to want to.

## MISTAKE HOW NOT TO MAKE IT

### Not taking time for yourselves

Make sure you spend time doing some of your favorite things (especially if this is your first baby), while also letting her enjoy the things she likes. Pay attention to her likes and needs but don't neglect yours along the way.

### Not getting involved

You're the dad so play an active part in the pregnancy! Help your baby get a good start in life. Don't look back and wish you had been there.

### Forgetting your importance

Mom may be getting all the attention, but remember that there wouldn't be any baby without you. Set an example by being there during the pregnancy and delivery. You'll have a big role in the future as the father of this baby — let everyone know you're up for it during the pregnancy.

### Not looking for ways to improve your health

Are you a smoker? This is the best time to change that habit. Do you eat too much fast food? Find healthier foods to eat. If you start good habits, she will too. Your health is important and it'll help you keep good choices in mind when it comes to your child.

### Not helping her with her health

She might need you to be the one to remind her to take her prenatal vitamins. If she has bad eating or sleeping habits, this is the time to fix those. She is your baby's home. If she's a smoker, put your foot down and let her know the dangers that can cause for your baby.

# DOWN THE HOME STRETCH

## FINAL PREPARATIONS

### WHAT ELSE DO I NEED TO DO TO GET READY FOR THIS BABY?

Think about taking childbirth classes. They teach you more about what to expect during the delivery. You'll get a tour of the hospital and you can bond with other parents-to-be. Parenting classes are also available in some areas and offer helpful lessons.

Talk to your family and friends to see if they have items you might need in your baby's first year. Maybe they can loan them to you if they no longer need them.

### TIP-OFF

#### Do It Together, While There's Still Time

You'll always remember the days you spend together before the big day comes. Try to find meaningful things to do together.

- 1.If you like going to the movies, make sure you do that now.
- 2.If there's a day trip that you have always wanted to take, do that now.
- 3.Go for a walk or a hike together.
- 4.If there's a holiday coming, go find decorations together.
- 5.Visit your best friends and family.

# GOING THE DISTANCE

# GEARING UP FOR BABY

Here is a checklist for some things to get together for your new family member.

STROLLER



BABY RATTLES



BABY BOTTLES



CRIB



PAJAMAS



LIQUID BABY SOAP



CAR SEAT



THERMOMETER



BABY WIPES



CRIB MATTRESS



BABY LOTION



BABY BATHTUB



CHANGING PAD &amp; TABLE



BASSINETTE OR CRADLE



TRAVEL BAG OR BACKPACK



MATTRESS SHEETS



BOTTLE BRUSHES



EXTRA WASTE BASKET



BIBS



DIAPER RASH OINTMENT



BABY SHAMPOO



DRESSER FOR BABY CLOTHES



DIAPERS



BURP CLOTHS



BOOTIES &amp; SOCKS



BABY WASHCLOTHS



SMALL BLANKETS



HOODED BATH TOWELS



OUTFIT FOR BABY TO WEAR HOME



DIRTY CLOTHES BASKET



CHECK IT OUT!



Newborn Baby Checklist:  
baby-checklist.com

# STAND AND DELIVER

## Planning for Delivery

Even mothers who have had babies before can be a little anxious when the time comes again. Being ready for childbirth helps lessen the fear factor.

You may have a general idea of when your baby will be born. It'll most often be within a couple weeks of the due date. Be ready. Make sure your work knows you won't be available. Remember, this is your big day too. You won't have another chance to see your child's birth. Your child will want to hear your voice.

## YOUR MOVE **Here's your last-minute prep checklist:**

- Make sure the mom gets rest. It may be hard to do, but ask others to pitch in and help.
- Make sure she eats regular, small, healthy meals. Keep up her strength.
- Stay close to home. Try not to be more than an hour away.
- Make sure you can be found and contacted at any time.
- Remember that you'll be needed on this day, so don't underestimate your importance.
- Help her decide who'll be in the room for the different stages of labor.
- Help her put together a list of people you'll both want to call during labor and after the baby is born.
- Make sure you have a camera ready.
- Help her think about things she'll want while in the hospital.
  - Hairbrush, toothbrush, loose clothing to wear home, slippers
  - She might also want some pictures of her other children
  - Relaxing music

## If You Have Other Children

Plan who will care for them while mom is giving birth and recovering. Talk with them about what to expect when the new baby comes.



## SIGNS OF TRUE LABOR

Though signs of labor may be different from woman to woman, here are some common ones to understand.

### BLOODY SHOW

She may notice a slightly brownish, pink or red stain on her underwear or toilet tissue. This shows that she may have lost the mucus plug from her cervix as it thins and opens.

### RUPTURE OF MEMBRANES

This means that the bag of water around her baby has broken. She may feel fluid coming from her vagina. Some women feel a big gush. Others feel a little leaking. If you think her water has broken, call her doctor.

### TRUE CONTRACTIONS

Unlike the practice contractions she had earlier in her pregnancy, true contractions get stronger and more frequent. She can feel her whole womb squeezing. Some women say they feel like a belt is getting tighter and tighter around them.

Are the contractions coming less than 10 minutes apart? Do they take her breath away? This may mean that true labor has begun.

### PAIN IN HER LOWER BACK

She may feel a pain that gets worse in her lower back. This back pain spreads to her lower belly and maybe even to her legs.

If she has any of these signs more than **three weeks before her due date**, call her doctor. She may be in preterm labor.



# The Big Day

What should you expect when you get to the hospital for your baby's birth? Keep in mind there will be doctors and nurses who have done this many times. Even if things seem hectic, they're always monitoring the mother and baby.

The staff may need to take some time to make sure mom's in labor. If she's scheduled for a delivery they'll still need to get some paperwork in order.

## YOUR MOVE

**Ask someone to help you keep hospital visits short. Having too many people around can be too much stress on both of you. Let people know you appreciate their concern and that they can visit when you get home.**

Early on in labor there are some medicines that are safe and can take the edge off a little for mom, if needed. Sometimes they help, and sometimes the contractions are too strong for them to help.

When she's in good strong labor, she may decide to have an epidural. She'll talk to nurses and doctors about this ahead of time. They'll help her decide if she needs one.

Most babies are born through their mother's birth canal, or vagina. But about one in every three babies in the United States is born by C-section, or Cesarean section.





## WHAT'S AN INDUCTION?

There are times when the doctor will decide it's best to deliver the baby right away instead of waiting. This means the doctor is planning for an induction, or to induce. The doctor will use medicines that safely bring her into labor. Generally, there should only be an induction if there is a concern for the mother's or the baby's health.

## READY OR NOT, HERE I COME!

Whether it's by natural childbirth, with an epidural or by C-section, the baby is going to come. You are mom's biggest cheerleader, her supporter and her sideline coach. Stay out of the way of the doctors and nurses working hard to deliver the baby, but be there and make sure mom knows how proud you are of her and how great a job she's doing. Then greet your new son or daughter. Congratulations, Dad!

## CHECK IT OUT!

**BabyCenter: A childbirth cheat sheet for dads-to-be:**  
[babycenter.com/0\\_a-childbirth-cheat-sheet-for-dads-to-be\\_8244.bc](http://babycenter.com/0_a-childbirth-cheat-sheet-for-dads-to-be_8244.bc)

**A Dad's Role in Delivery:**  
[babycenter.com/0\\_a-dads-role-in-delivery\\_183.bc](http://babycenter.com/0_a-dads-role-in-delivery_183.bc)

# DAY ONE AND ON...

## The Big Day Has Come and Gone. Now What?

Nervous? Excited? Overwhelmed?

These are normal feelings when you bring your baby home from the hospital.

You may feel a little left out if everyone is placing all their attention on the baby. This is also true for any other children. You may have family and friends knocking at your door, eager to see your baby. Let other children in the house know that they are still very important. The baby may need some extra attention, but that doesn't mean big brothers and sisters shouldn't get the attention they need.

## The Crying Game

It's normal for new babies to cry for one to five hours a day. Sometimes it's hard to calm a baby down. Ask others to rock, hold and comfort the baby to give you a little break.

### THE GOOD NEWS

Crying usually lessens after the first few weeks of birth. You'll soon learn what your baby needs and be able to respond.

**REMEMBER**

## IT'S NEVER OKAY TO SHAKE A BABY!

If you feel frustrated and that you're losing your temper, calmly put your baby down. Call family or friends and say you need a little break. Go for a walk, read a magazine or watch TV. But never shake your baby. Even one shake can cause brain damage or worse for life.

## Period of Adjustment

The days and weeks after your baby is born will be a period of adjustment for all of you. The work gets harder now. But the payoff is well worth it.

Now that the baby is born, mom's body will start to return to the way it was before she was pregnant. Know and remember that for the first six weeks, the body is still more like a pregnant body than not.

## The Baby Blues

While her body is recovering, she will also go through the normal, healthy feelings of having a new baby. It's best to expect that every new mother will be somewhat emotional as they go through this time. They call this the baby blues.

Many moms feel low or let down when they leave the hospital. There's not any special reason for this sadness. It tends to come and go quickly. Don't let her worry too much about why it happens, and don't let her feel guilty.

If she has had depression before or during pregnancy there is a strong chance she will again at this time. She may have **postpartum depression**.

## SIGNS OF POSTPARTUM DEPRESSION

- Feeling sad, "down," or depressed
- Trouble sleeping
- Not interested in things she used to enjoy
- Feeling guilty
- Loss of energy
- Having trouble keeping focus
- A change in eating habits
- Not taking care of herself or the baby
- Thoughts of harming herself or others



**There is help for postpartum depression. If she has any of these signs, have her call her doctor. Don't let these feelings go on for a long time.**

## The Breast is Best

One of the important choices the new mom will need to make is whether to give your baby breast milk or formula. It's good for her to get the facts so she can decide. The choice is very personal and should be one that works best for her and the baby.

There are several good reasons to breastfeed. Breast milk is the perfect food for babies. It's packed with the right mix of nutrients and proteins that can keep your baby from getting sick. It also helps the mom bond with her baby.

A great benefit is that it's free. You don't have to pay for baby formula when the baby is feeding on just breast milk.

And a secret, nice thing about breastfeeding for dads is that they don't have to do it. You might be stuck doing other chores, but feeding the baby is clearly one you get a pass on for a while.

**DO I NEED TO  
KNOW ABOUT  
BREASTFEEDING?**

## Baby's Doctor Visits

It's important to plan regular visits to the pediatrician to make sure your baby is growing well. There are also shots (immunizations) that protect your baby from disease. These are all planned ahead of time. The pediatrician will give you a schedule and you'll need to help keep it.

The mom will need to see her doctor for a follow-up visit about four to six weeks after she gives birth. Write this date on your calendar to remind yourself. This visit is as important as any of the other doctor's visits.

**CHECK IT OUT!**



**Advice for New Dads:**  
[babycenter.com/advice-for-new-dads](http://babycenter.com/advice-for-new-dads)

**BabyCenter: Postpartum depression and anxiety:**  
[babycenter.com/0\\_postpartum-depression-and-anxiety\\_227.bc](http://babycenter.com/0_postpartum-depression-and-anxiety_227.bc)

**WebMD: Postpartum Depression:**  
[webmd.com/depression/guide/postpartum-depression](http://webmd.com/depression/guide/postpartum-depression)

# SAFETY FIRST AND FOREMOST

**KEEP YOUR BABY SAFE** Your baby needs you to protect him or her. Here's how to keep your baby safe.

## REMEMBER

Never place your baby in a high place unless a grown-up is right there. Even newborns can move suddenly and fall off beds and changing tables. They can fall out of baby seats when not strapped in.

Choose pets known to be safe around babies. If you have a pet already, always keep a close eye out when the baby and pet are together.

If you have a dog, let it sniff the baby's blanket before you first bring your baby into your home.

## YOUR MOVE

Give your baby a safe place to sleep by setting up his room even before birth.

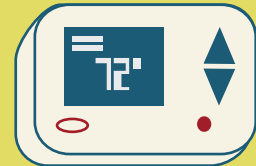
### DO THIS:

- Buy or borrow a firm mattress and a crib, cradle or bassinette that follows safety rules.
- Make sure the sheets fit tightly.
- Never place your baby on sofas, waterbeds, sheepskins or other soft areas. They can cause your baby to stop breathing.
- Don't use soft bedding, pillows or stuffed toys in your baby's sleep space.
- Use a light blanket and tuck it in the sides of the crib.



## Keep Your Baby Safe

Set the room temperature so your baby isn't too hot or too cold.



Make sure your home has smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors. Place them on each level of the house and near bedrooms.



## PLACE YOUR BABY IN A SAFE SLEEP POSITION

Your baby will be safer if you follow these rules:

- Put your baby on his or her back to sleep for naps and at night, unless your doctor tells you not to.
- Place your baby in the “foot to feet” position in the crib, with her feet at the foot of the crib.
- If you use a light blanket, tuck it in around the crib mattress. The blanket shouldn’t be any higher than your baby’s chest.
- Baby can be placed on his or her tummy when awake. This is often called “tummy time.”

## KEEP YOUR BABY AWAY FROM CIGARETTE AND CIGAR SMOKE

- Smoke is very unsafe for babies.
- Don’t smoke around your baby or their sleep space.
- Don’t let others smoke around your baby or their sleep area.
- If you do smoke, do it outside, away from the baby, and make sure you wash your hands and change your clothes before handling the baby.



## USING A BABY CAR SEAT

You can’t leave the hospital without a car seat. You can buy or rent one. Or call your local health department to see if you can get a seat at a low cost or for free. Once you get the seat, put it in the car the right way.



CHECK IT OUT! ✓

Safe Kids Worldwide™:  
safekids.org/infantsafety

# CREDITS AND RESOURCES

## ONLINE RESOURCES FOR NEW DADS AND DADS-TO-BE

**Dads Adventure**  
dadsadventure.com

**Great Dad**  
greatdad.com

**National Fatherhood Initiative**  
fatherhood.org

**Fatherville**  
fatherville.com

**Baby Center**  
babycenter.com

**New Dad Guide**  
newdadssurvivalguide.com

**Special thanks to Dr. Brad Lucas for his research and contributions to this book.**

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# DAD

## LITTLE WORD, BIG DEAL

Your Guide to the Father Situation

Are you sitting down? You're going to be a father! This book details all things fatherhood and gives you useful tips and strategies for making the process go smoothly.

**Your baby is counting on you, Dad.**

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