

Becoming a Dad



Becoming a dad is one of the most fulfilling experiences. As you prepare for the arrival of your child, multiple thoughts may cross your mind regarding your preparedness and your role over the change that is going to take place. This article will help you navigate the first few months of becoming a dad, on what you can do to support your newborn and your partner.

Emotional reactions

Finding out that you will be a dad is exciting, but at the same time it can also be intimidating. Confusion and anxiety regarding how you will provide for your family & balance work, family and social life, along with concerns about sexual life during pregnancy and post-delivery may arise. You may experience mixed emotions at the news of pregnancy, which is normal. As time passes, with adequate support, you will start getting more comfortable with better awareness about pregnancy and parenthood. Although difficult, seeking advice, help, and support during this time is essential for you to understand better what is expected of you from your partner such that pregnancy, labour, and delivery can be smooth. Remember that you are a team and honest & open communication is essential.

Your role during pregnancy and labour

- Pregnancy can be a daunting time for your partner. It is important for you to be involved during this process by discussing birth options, accompanying her to prenatal appointments and classes, and providing her your complete support to make her feel that she is not alone in this journey.
- Planning your work and home schedule to fit the baby post-delivery & applying for paternal leave can help you prepare better.
- Be attentive at antenatal classes to know your role during the labour process-encouraging your partner to breathe, massaging techniques and what you can do to relieve her pain. Your role is important because you are the primary communicator between your partner, family, and healthcare personnel during the labour process.



Your role after the baby is born

- Seeing your baby for the first time can be overwhelming. Although it may seem difficult to hold and soothe the baby at first, remember that with practice, it becomes easier.
- Spending time with your baby by talking, singing, & playing with them is an excellent bonding method and will give a chance for your partner to get some much-deserved rest.
- Do not worry if your way of parenting or doing things for your baby differs from that of your partner's. These different parenting styles enable the development of social skills in your baby.
- Keep trying different aspects related to your baby such as bathing, dressing, soothing, and nappy changing. The more you practice, the better you will become. Moreover, this will enable you to get more hands-on experience and help build your skills and confidence levels. Responding to your baby and showing affection to them releases a natural hormone called oxytocin in your baby's brain, which helps in your baby's well-being and brain development.
- Build a rapport with your baby by playing and spending more time with your baby. This can be done by providing tummy time (which helps in muscle and brain growth), singing nursery rhymes, or by just playing peek-a-boo. These simple activities help lay your baby's thinking and motor skills, language, emotional and social foundation, and overall development.

Your role in supporting your partner

- Though the baby is the centre of your universe, you must not neglect your partner.
- Communicate with your partner about how you can help her reduce her stress regarding balancing the baby, house, and work.
- Be alert to changes in your partner such as postnatal depression and seek help if you identify it.
- Understand that your sexual relationship may have changed because of less time, exhaustion, physical changes post-delivery, and changes in how your partner may feel sexually. Be patient, find alternative ways to express intimacy such as cuddling, holding hands, and massaging her. Remember that these small actions can strengthen your bond with your partner too.
- Be a team player, be supportive to each other and stay positive.

Though having a baby can be overwhelming at first, it is vital to remember that this is a wonderful experience. Set aside time to make some memories, but set aside time for yourself too.



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