

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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DADS 2 BEE



USEFUL WEB SITES

www.menslineaus.org.au/Links.aspx?Catg=General&HeadId=2
www.dadsindistress.asn.au
www.familyrelationships.gov.au
www.raisingchildren.net.au/
www.nct.org.uk/home
www.pregnancy-info.net/topic_help_new_dad.html
www.marchofdimes.com/pnhec/362_757.asp
www.whattoexpect.com/pregnancy/for-dad/landing-page.aspx
www.paternityangel.com/Preg_info_zone/MenPregnancy.htm
www.pregnancyandbaby.com/pregnancy/For-Dads/
www.pregnancyandbaby.com/pregnancy/Pregnancy--Dads/
www.babycenter.com.au/pregnancy/dads/diary/
www.babycenter.com.au/pregnancy/dads/shareinpregnancy/
www.dadsquad.com/taxonomy/term/3
www.newcastle.edu.au/news/2005/04/preparingdad.html
www.yarraranges.vic.gov.au/heybabe/relationships/fathers.htm
www.quitsa.org.au/asp/smoking_pregnancy.aspx
www.aussiedad.com/default.cfm
www.49.com.au
www.mydr.com.au
www.malehealth.co.uk
www.stjohnofgod.org.au
www.cancervic.org.au
www.beyondblue.org.au
www.diabetesaustralia.com.au
www.andrologyaustralia.org
www.quit.org.au
www.goforyourlife.vic.gov.au
www.heartfoundation.com.au
www.prostate.org.au
www.adf.org.au
www.dad.info

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COMMUNICATION with your wife/partner is important. Discussing the points in this handout and LISTENING to each other will help you understand each other's views. Agreement is less important than understanding each other. This booklet is here to support both of you.

CULTURAL RESPECT AND SENSITIVITY

This booklet may not be appropriate for all cultures, and personal views need to be respected.

Discussion about your personal viewpoint and feelings around childbirth require consideration.

SUPPORTING LABOUR AND BIRTH

- Men are often described as having 'fix-it' type personalities and may be more comfortable with offering practical support during the labour process.
- Women tend to offer more emotional support.
- Pregnant women often request female friends or relatives to offer support through the birthing process. If this is so, you will both need to agree on the support person/s that will be attending with you. If not, you need to discuss this with your wife/partner and be clear about any concerns.
- If you have already agreed or overcome your concerns, you will need to work out a plan of action with the additional support person/s.
- The support person/s is here to support you as well as your partner.
- The extra support person/s must be aware of current practices and options associated with birthing.
- Some cultures only permit females to attend the birth, which will need to be discussed with your partner and family.

PAIN—A NATURAL PART OF BIRTHING

- Pain is a natural part of birthing and should be expected.
- It is difficult for men to observe their partner in pain, which is why so many report a feeling of helplessness during labour.
- Flexibility around pain relief options should be encouraged.
- Adjustments to prior expectations may need to be made.
- A well mum and baby is the important outcome.

USEFUL CONTACT NUMBERS

Hawkesbury District Health Service	(02) 4560-5555 or (02) 4560-5 714
Hawkesbury Private Hospital.....	(02) 4560-5555
Australian Breastfeeding Assn.....	(02) 9639-8686
Access Mental Health.....	1800 650 749
Blacktown Acute Mental Health.....	(02) 9881-8888
Cry Line.....	1800 350312
Dads in Distress DIDS	1300 853 437
Domestic Violence 24 hrs	1800 656 463
Family Relationship Advice Line	1800 050 321
Karitane Parenting Centre	1300 227 464
Kids Helpline	1800 551 800
Mensline	1300 789 978
Nepean Hospital	(02) 4734-2000
Parent Line.....	13 2055
Parent Helpline	1300 364 100
Police – (Hawkesbury LAC).....	(02) 4560- 6999
PND Support Line	1300 588 578
St. John of God Health Care	(02) 4560-6100
Tresillian Parenting Advice.....	(02) 4734-2124 or 1800637357
Quit Line.....	137 848 or 137 QUIT

DVDS TO WATCH

Being A Dad
Being A Dad 2

These can be purchased from Big W and they are fantastic viewing for all fathers. We give it five stars - A Must See!

USEFUL WEB SEARCHES

Try typing into your Google browser the following word searches:

Will I be a good father?
Can I financially support the family?
Can I handle her emotional changes?
Am I the real father?
What if I die too young?
Will my wife and baby survive?
Will she love the baby more than me?
How can I help during the pregnancy if I don't understand women's problems?
Will I do a good job at the birth?
But I don't even like children, so how can I cope with this?

- Grief and loss is not just about crying or being sad, but strong emotions that may last for days, weeks or months. Grief and loss can be felt and expressed differently by people and at varying times, thus making it difficult for some people to share their feelings and experiences with others. Some people say they feel a sense of isolation. It is important for you to share your thoughts, experiences and feelings with people who you trust and feel safe with.
- Counselling and support services are available for you to access through your Hospital, Community Health Centre or Bereavement Support Services such as “SIDS and Kids”, a 24hr support and information line Ph: 1800 651 186.

MOODS AND FEELINGS/POSTNATAL DEPRESSION (PND)

- Baby Blues – occur in 60-90% of women in the first week of giving birth, and is different to Post Natal Depression. Shifting hormones and fatigue contributes to mood swings and tears. These feelings may fade as quickly as they appear. If they don't fade, seek professional help.
- Being 'supportive' is important, for example, taking responsibility for tasks around the house and being involved with your baby. Aim to maintain involvement and work as a team.
- Use your initiative to help around the house and ask your partner if you are on the right track or if there are things that you have forgotten or missed.
- Post Natal Depression occurs in 15-20% of women with varying degrees of severity. Professional help is available and may be required.
- Even dads get depression – don't be surprised if this happens to you as there is a lack of sleep and lots of new changes, as well as all the hard work that can be involved. You may also need to get professional help.
- There is more literature available on this topic if you are concerned or interested, (try the internet for specific help to men's needs).
- One contributing factor for good health for men is the support or backing from your partner, however, when your partner is not travelling well, men can be vulnerable and sometimes this can lead to depression.

CIRCUMCISION FACTS AND FICTION

- This surgical procedure requires careful consideration and an informed decision needs to be made by both parents.
- You need to access reliable sources of information.
- Dad being circumcised should not be the primary reason for having your son circumcised. These days a greater percentage of males are not circumcised.

DAD'S LOCATION AT TIME OF BIRTH

- You will need to discuss with your wife or partner where you might be located at the time of birth.
- You will need to consider whether observing your wife or partner's changing anatomy during the delivery will add to or detract from your overall experience. It is common for men to stay at the mother's shoulders at the time of birth.

COMMUNICATION WITH HEALTH PROFESSIONALS AND PARTNER

- Ask the midwives or medical staff any questions that are of interest or concern to you.
- It may be that you will be the best person to discuss any important information with your wife or partner.
- Prior to labour, discuss any change in plans that may need to be considered when your partner is in labour. This will help the day run more smoothly.

FLEXIBLE EXPECTATIONS OF BIRTH OUTCOME

- Outcomes may vary from what you and your partner hoped or expected, which could cause difficulties after birth, for example, a birth by Caesarean Section when a natural birth was wanted. Therefore, it is useful to be flexible about the birthing process to reduce the potential for disappointment.
- It is important to openly discuss any feelings after the birth, including unexpected gender, the birth going differently to first planned, medical intervention during birth and who was and wasn't at the birth.

TIPS FOR LABOUR

- Adopt a 'Boy Scout' approach prior to labour commencing, for example, make sure bags are packed (for both of you), you have a full tank of petrol, and you know where you are heading to and where to park the car (coins may be needed for parking).
- Encourage your wife or partner to have short fingernails (long nails dig into arms!)
- The 'transition' period, (10cm dilatation of your partner's cervix is nearing) is often a time that women verbalise that they have 'had enough'. Disregard any negative comments/outbursts that may be directed your way during this period.
- Eat and drink well (no alcohol), avoid lots of caffeine, take short walks in the fresh air.
- Have a list of phone numbers for family and friends.
- Make sure your mobile phone is charged.
- Bring a camera to take the first baby photos.

LIFESTYLE CHANGES

- Social activities—the extent of change to social activities will depend on your age and whether your friends have children etc.
- Individual needs—a balance between thinking of others and thinking of you should be the aim.
- Sleep patterns—lack of sleep can negatively affect how couples communicate.
- Financial position—you can save money with some forethought, for example, expensive clothing for baby is usually unnecessary.
- Smoking—the best thing a smoker can do for their health and the health of their baby is to quit. This will also provide you with extra money for your family. For help to quit smoking, see your GP, pharmacist or ring the Quitline on 137848 or 13QUIT.
- If you choose not to quit smoking, smoke outside the home and car to help protect your baby from the health risks of passive smoking, such as Sudden Infant Death Syndrome, (SIDS or cot death), ear infections, allergies, asthma, bronchitis and other lung problems. Smoking in cars with a child on board is now against the law and can incur financial penalties.
- Having a healthy diet and keeping active will increase your energy levels and help you cope with the changes in your lifestyle. That way you can be a positive influence as a role model for your baby. The foundations for healthy eating habits start at a very young age.
- Remember the first 3 months are often the hardest to cope with.
- Most men take time to bond with their babies. Spending long blocks of time caring for the baby and discovering new things about them often helps with bonding and helps to develop your personal style of parenting.

RESUMING SEXUAL ACTIVITY

- Six weeks is talked about by health professionals to allow for healing but it is quite normal for sexual activity to resume before or after this time. It all depends on how you are both feeling.
- Expect changes in the look and feel of your wife/partner's anatomy.
- Pelvic floor exercises (PFE) for women are beneficial following the birth. Men can also perform PFE to reduce the risk of an enlarged prostate gland in later life.
- Breasts take on a practical function when women breastfeed and may be temporarily 'off-limits' as a means of fore-play. Lactating breasts may be extremely sensitive or leak during intimate encounters.
- Some changes because of breastfeeding include alterations in desire for intercourse, (other forms of intimacy can be discussed) and reduced vaginal lubrication (a water-based lubricant can be used).
- Contraception needs to be considered at this time.
- Support by the husband/partner contributes to successful, long-term breastfeeding.

BEING A POSITIVE ROLE MODEL

- Being a role model to your child has a major influence on their life. Children may mirror everything you do and say so you need to be conscious of this. Start by being aware of your influence on your baby from the time of conception onwards. Babies are like sponges and absorb all of our habits, both positive and negative.
- Behaviours such as what you eat and drink are quickly copied by most children. Be a positive role model from the outset, showing your baby how to behave early in their lives.
- Get involved with your baby: change nappies, enjoy positive time together via smiles, sounds and sight. Baths are for more than just getting clean. It is a good time to build your relationship. You will be teaching life skills, such as hand eye coordination to your child and strengthen a positive attachment between you.
- Have a “yes, I'll give it a go” attitude; practice healthy relationships and positive communication with your partner. Your baby will most likely grow up doing likewise.

GETTING TO KNOW YOUR BABY

- Spending time getting to know each other is the beginning of a healthy bond between children and adults and it is the basis of all future relationships.
- Skin to skin contact offers opportunities for parents and babies to develop strong healthy relationships with one another. Skin to skin time can happen in hospital and at home, giving your baby a chance to become familiar with your warmth, scent and touch.
- Face to face time is another way for parents to get to know their babies. Babies look for smiles, tongue movements and other facial expressions to copy as a way of communicating with you. Babies need to disengage eye contact at times; this does not mean they are not interested in you, just that they need a rest from this activity.
- Like the role of grandparents, the role of the mother and the father is very different and cannot be compared.
- It can take time to learn about your baby and partner's needs.
- Patience and time is required to get to know your baby. Build your relationship and adapt with change... .. watch, listen, and talk about changes as they occur.

GRIEF AND LOSS

- Occasionally, a pregnancy will not be the happy event that is anticipated or planned. For unknown reasons, a pregnancy may result in miscarriage, uterine or neonatal death. The loss of your baby will have an affect on you, your partner and your family and friends. A person's reaction to grief and loss may be shock, denial, disbelief, anger, guilt, fear, blame, a sense of numbness, despair, and feelings of “this is not happening to us” or “this situation cannot be real”.