

For more information,

call or visit the Windsor-Essex

County Health Unit at

519-258-2146, ext. 1350

www.wehealthunit.org

Just for New Dads

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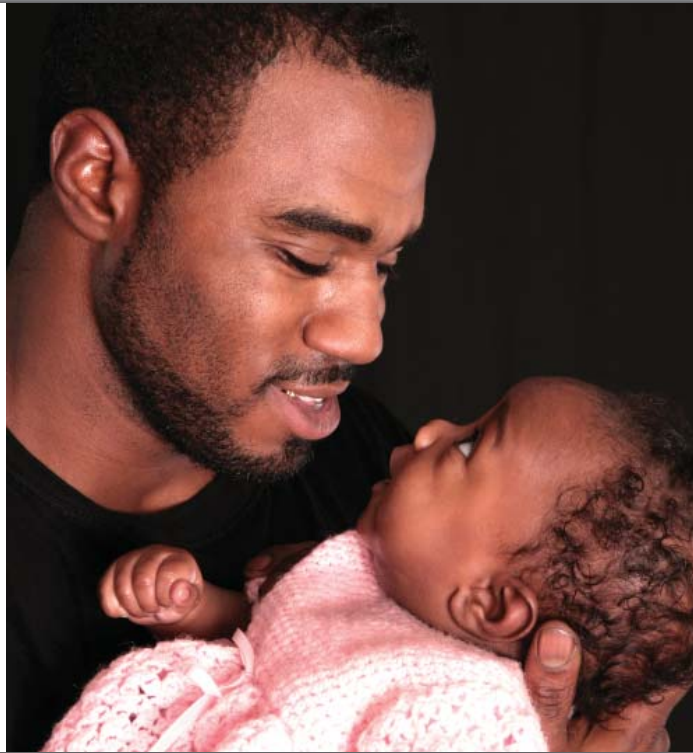
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Helpful Websites

www.postpartumdads.org

www.postpartummen.com



Role of the New Dad

Becoming a new dad is an exciting and

 challenging time. You may feel this way

 whether this is your first child or your third.

 There are a lot of changes that happen within

 the family. Mom and dad will be learning how

 to take care of the baby and how to take care

 of each other's needs. Dad's workload will

 increase as well as mom's. Don't worry, with

 time, things will get easier.

Your role as "dad" is important. Dads need

 to allow themselves time to learn how to be

 a parent. You'll come up with your own way

 of taking care of the baby. Parenting means

 mothering **and** fathering.

Common Challenges for Dad

As a new dad, expect some common

challenges. For example, it's normal to

worry about money. Here are some tips

to help:

- Try to have a budget in place.
- Take advantage of coupons and sales.
- Take advantage of free services (e.g. parenting workshops, and family drop-in centres).

After the baby, expect changes in your sex life.

 Here are some tips to help:

- Think of how mom may be feeling:
 - She may be sore and tired.
 - She may not be feeling sexy.
 - She may be afraid of getting pregnant again.
 - Sex may be the last thing on her mind.
- Talk to your partner, without putting pressure on her.
- Cuddle, hold hands, or relax together.
- Remember, with time, things will get better.



Open Communication

Open communication can help to avoid

frustration and confusion.

It's important to:

- Listen to your partner.
- Talk about your concerns, feelings, and worries.
- Take time out to calm down if you're feeling frustrated.
- Realize that you think differently than mom and that's okay.
- Make sure you understand what mom is saying.
- Be open and honest.
- Talk with mom about what she needs and when she needs it.
- Allow yourself to say "being a parent is difficult."



How Dad Can Help Mom

Help Mom Sleep

- Limit visitors.
- Turn off the phone.
- Encourage her to nap during the day.

Help With Household Chores

- Clean the house.
- Do laundry.
- Cook healthy meals.
- Get groceries or run other errands.
- Buy quick and nutritious snacks.

Help With the Kids

- Keep older children busy or out with friends or family members.
- Watch the baby while mom takes some time for herself.

Provide Mom With Encouragement and Support

- Tell her she is doing a great job.
- Say “I love you” often.
- Tell her “we will get through this together.”
- Ask mom about her needs often.



How Dad Can Help With Breastfeeding

Dad can play an important role in getting breastfeeding off to a good start.

While mom is still pregnant, you can learn about breastfeeding. Attend a workshop to learn about:

- Breastfeeding basics
- Positioning and latch

During breastfeeding, you can:

- Bring the baby to mom for feedings.
- Help mom get comfortable. Make sure she has enough pillows, a footstool, and something to drink.
- Check the baby's position and latch.
- Encourage mom to relax.
- Help keep baby awake by rubbing his feet.

You can help care for baby in many ways, such as:

- Change the baby's diaper.
- Give the baby a bath.
- Give the baby a massage.
- Spend time with baby on your bare chest: this will help keep her warm and it's great for bonding.
- Cuddle and walk with the baby.
- Talk and sing to the baby.
- Hold the baby while mom is taking a break.
- Play with the baby.
- Read to the baby.



How Dad Can Help Himself



It's normal to have an increased sense of responsibility and self-doubt. Dad, before you can help others, you have to take care of yourself.

It's important to:

- Do things for yourself outside of work.
- Talk to other fathers and friends.
- Accept help from family members and friends: meals, laundry, yard-work, babysitting, etc.
- Try to plan ahead and organize, but be flexible.
- Trust your instincts.
- Learn about infant care (eg., bathing, burping, feeding, and changing diapers).
- Ask for help when you feel overwhelmed.

Talk and listen. Be open and honest with each other about your changing roles.

When Things Don't Seem Right

Some women experience a postpartum mood disorder (PPMD) after the birth of a child. Often, it's dad who is the first one to notice that something is wrong.

The Baby Blues

- Affect up to 70% of new moms.
- Occur within the first three to five days after birth.
- Usually go away within one to two weeks.
- Include symptoms like crying, feeling sad, feeling tired, feeling irritable, and difficulty sleeping.

Postpartum Depression

- Affects 10-15% of new moms.
- May start suddenly or slowly.
- Occurs within three weeks to one year after childbirth.
- Includes symptoms like the baby blues (but more intense), as well as changes in appetite and sleep, anxiety, lack of feelings for the baby, and fear of hurting oneself or the baby.



For more information on PPMD, refer to the *New Mothers' Emotions* pamphlet, which can be found at www.wechealthunit.org

Dads can also become depressed after the birth of a baby. If either you or mom are experiencing any of the above symptoms, see your health care provider.