

Tips for New Dads

So you are a new dad! Or maybe a new dad for the second or third time. Congratulations! You may have heard it a hundred times, but it's true - your life will change forever. **How you define yourself personally and professionally will change to add the role of "involved, responsible, and committed father."** This role is one of the most important and rewarding jobs you will ever have!



Here are some tips to help you be the best "new dad" you can be!

1. **Know that it is normal to have fears!** You might be asking the question, "Am I ready to be a dad?" Most first-time parents will tell you that they do not feel ready for this new direction in their lives. It is a fear of the unknown. However, just *being* a dad will take away a great deal of worry. When you dive in and do the job, it won't seem so difficult, and you'll discover the joys of this great experience.
2. **Get on-the-job-training!** Start immediately to be responsible for various aspects of caring for your baby - even if you've never done it before. For example, feed your baby with a bottle or you can get up at night and bring your baby to mom to feed. Other tasks you can easily handle are bathing your baby, changing diapers, rocking and soothing, and/or singing to your baby. These activities will not only help our your child's mother, but they will help *you* connect physically and emotionally with your child.
3. **Ask questions and do research!** If you are worried about how to change a diaper or how to hold your child, don't be afraid to ask! Take advantage of help available through your spouse, friends, family, doctors, nurses, other experienced dads, etc. Usually, these people are more than willing to help. You can also find information on the internet or take a trip to the bookstore to check out the parenting section for resources. Chances are, your baby's mom has read a lot in anticipation of the baby's arrival. She will love to see you doing your homework as well!
4. **Be a Team!** Adjusting to life with a new baby in the house is rewarding. Look at it as an opportunity to grow closer with your spouse and to bond together as a family. The more you work as a team (sharing household chores, complimenting one another, sharing the care of your baby, accepting help from trusted friends and family, scheduling date nights, etc. . .), the more you will be able to experience the precious little moments with your child. Not to mention, sharing the load might help with getting some extra sleep!
5. **Enjoy the Moment!** Time flies by when you have a child. Be sure to take every opportunity to cherish time spent with your baby. It is important to spend some time every day focusing only on your baby. Look into her eyes, listen to his coos, gently play with tiny fingers and toes. It is in those moments, no matter what life throws at you, that you instinctively know that being an involved, responsible, and committed dad is living life to the fullest!

