



10 Ways Expecting Fathers can Improve Birth Outcomes

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Having a baby is a special and emotional time for both the mother and the father. Many expectant fathers like to actively participate in helping their partner through pregnancy from beginning to end. Although the mother carries the child for nine months, the father has an equal responsibility in preparing for the baby. There are many ways a man can prepare himself for fatherhood.

Expectant fathers who are having their first child may feel alienated, as they do not know what to expect and what role they can play. Apart from being there for the major appointments, such as ultrasound scans, expectant fathers can also help by being more accommodating to the needs of their partners.

It is important to communicate with your partner and tell her how you feel during the pregnancy as this will further strengthen the bond you will build and continue during labor and after birth.

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1 Sign your baby's birth certificate

Research shows that infants without a father's name on their birth certificate are twice as likely to die in the first year of life as infants with a father's name on their birth certificate.

2 Encourage the expectant mother to breastfeed your child

Expectant fathers can be powerful advocates for breastfeeding. Three quarters of women whose partners attended a breastfeeding promotion class initiated breastfeeding. Breast milk costs less than formula. Breast milk is healthier.

3 Create a smoke-free environment

Pregnant women who are exposed to secondhand smoke are at greater risk of giving birth to underweight babies, and their babies are at greater risk for a variety of health problems.

4 No drug or alcohol use

Drug abuse during pregnancy can cause premature births and birth defects. Cultivate a substance-free environment.

5 Cultivate a safe and peaceful environment.

Physical and emotional abuse can cause damage to the mother-to-be, as well as your baby. According to research, expecting mothers who are in unhealthy, abusive environments are at a much greater risk for delivering prematurely and for having babies with birth defects. Be the source of peace.

6 Accompany mother-to-be to all medical appointments.

Accompanying the mother to her medical appointments will allow you to see how your baby is growing. You may also be able to hear your baby's heartbeat.

7 Be positive and encouraging.

Communicating with your partner will be vital in identifying any anxieties that you both may have. You may find that you are able to reassure one another about your concerns.

8 Attend ultrasound and obtain an ultrasound picture of your baby!

You'll get a first glimpse of what your baby looks like and can even get a picture to take home to show family and friends.

9 Encourage the mother-to-be to have three nutritious meals per day and healthy snacks too!

A well-balanced eating plan is a great gift for your soon-to-be-born baby. Eating nutritious foods can keep the mother feeling healthy during her pregnancy. It also can help the growth and overall health for your child.

10 Attend a fatherhood program.

Attending a fatherhood program will increase your knowledge of parenting and allow you to build positive relationships with other fathers.

Sources

- Medic8 2010
- Pregnancy, Baby Care 2010
- American Pregnancy Association 2010
- Dr. Jay D. Iams M.D., Vice Chair, Department of Obstetrics & Gynecology, The Ohio State University Medical Center