

Ways Fathers-to-Be Can Help



Fathers-to-Be

Having a baby is a special and emotional time for both the mother and the father. Many fathers-to-be like helping their partners 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.

First-time fathers may not know what to expect and what role they can play during the birth. Apart from being present for major appointments, such as ultrasound scans, fathers-to-be can also help by being more accommodating to the needs of their partners.

It is important to talk with your partner and tell her how you feel during the pregnancy—and ask her how she feels, too. This will help develop a bond that will continue to build during labor and after birth.

10 Ways Fathers-to-Be Can Help



1 Sign your baby's paternity affidavit.

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

2 Encourage the mother-to-be to breastfeed your child.

Expectant fathers can be powerful advocates for breastfeeding. Three quarters of women whose partners attend breastfeeding promotion classes initiate breastfeeding. Breast milk costs less than formula and is healthier for the baby.

3 Create a smoke-free environment.

Pregnant women who smoke and/or 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 use during pregnancy can cause premature births and birth defects. Create a substance-free environment.

5 Create a safe and peaceful environment.

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

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

Going with the mother-to-be 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 offer support.

Talking with your partner will help you identify any concerns that you both may have. You may find that you can reassure one another about those concerns.

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

This first photo will be a priceless moment that you can 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 healthy eating plan is a great gift for your soon-to-be-born baby. It will help the mother-to-be feel good during her pregnancy and will contribute to the baby's health, as well.

10 Attend a fatherhood program.

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