



# PREGNANCY AND PARTNERS

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MOTHER-BABY RESOURCE GUIDE



# PREGNANCY AND PARTNERS



## WHAT PARTNERS CAN EXPECT

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### *The First Trimester*

It's important to be part of your partner's healthy lifestyle during pregnancy. Show your support by encouraging your partner to:

- ★ Attend prenatal doctor appointments.
- ★ Sign up for childbirth classes that you can take together.
- ★ Avoid cigarettes, alcohol, illegal drugs or any medications that are not doctor-approved. If you and your partner use any of these substances, help each other stop. Avoid places where there is cigarette smoke.
- ★ Eat a balanced diet. Show your support by eating balanced meals together whenever possible.
- ★ Exercise regularly. Take walks together or work out together doing doctor-approved exercises.
- ★ Get extra rest. Help your partner get the extra rest she needs during pregnancy by helping with laundry, grocery shopping, cooking and other chores. Spend time with your other children so that mom can rest during that time.
- ★ Share her emotions. Pregnant women often have mood swings, so try to be understanding when her emotions get to you.

### *The Second Trimester*

You can prepare for parenthood by sharing some of the new baby planning responsibilities. Take part in activities such as:

- ★ Selecting a pediatrician or family practice physician for your baby. Ask for referrals from your partner's obstetrician or from friends who are already parents. Another option is to call St. Luke's InfoLink at 1-877-610-6161 (toll free) for a list of doctors who meet your requirements. Set up an appointment to meet each doctor with your partner during the last months of pregnancy to learn about the office environment and the doctor's philosophies and specialties. (See the pediatrician list given to you by your obstetrician's office.)
- ★ Making your home safe for a new baby. Be sure you have a working smoke alarm and carbon monoxide detector. Make sure floor coverings, such as carpeting and tile, are tacked down securely to avoid tripping. Set the temperature of your water heater to less than 120 degrees Fahrenheit.
- ★ Supporting feeding choices, such as breastfeeding or formula feeding. Spend time learning about breastfeeding and formula feeding with your partner.
- ★ Showing affection. In the second trimester her pregnancy becomes apparent and your partner may become self-conscious about how she looks. Be sure to let her know how much you care and support her.

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## *The Last Trimester*

The last months of pregnancy bring excitement and anxiety. Here is how to be prepared for your new baby:

- ★ Have a plan to get to the hospital. Know the best route to the hospital. Have friends and family members on alert to take your partner to the hospital in case you are not close to home.
- ★ Plan your leave from work and limit your time away from home. Try to be around more, especially near your baby's due date and just after your baby is born. Enlist as much support as you can from family, friends and neighbors during the first weeks after the baby is born.
- ★ Assess your health insurance coverage. (Use the Insurance Information Checklist located in the Prenatal Care section of this binder.) Find out how many days are allowed in the hospital for labor and delivery and if home nursing visits, lactation consultants, breast pumps or other maternity-related services are covered.
- ★ Obtain and install an infant car seat, as required by law in every state. Be comfortable with placing the seat in your vehicle and know how to adjust the straps so that you're prepared to bring your baby home from the hospital. A list of places that check car seats along with car seat information will be given to you at your pre-birth visit.
- ★ Learn the signs of true labor. Learn how to time your partner's contractions so that you will know when it's time to go to the hospital. Become familiar with the difference between true and false contractions.
- ★ Recognize the signs of early labor. Sometimes the signs of early or preterm labor are easy to recognize; at other times signs may be mild and harder to identify. Call your doctor immediately if mom-to-be has any of these conditions:
  - A change in vaginal discharge that is watery, contains mucus or blood – or is an increased amount from normal.
  - Pelvic or lower abdominal pressure.
  - Constant, low, dull backache.
  - Mild abdominal cramps.
  - Regular contractions or uterine tightening, often painless.
  - Ruptured membranes (her water breaks).



## **WHAT A PARTNER SHOULD KNOW ABOUT BREASTFEEDING**

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### ***There are Many Advantages to Breastfeeding:***

- ★ It provides the perfect nutrients for your baby.
- ★ Breast-fed babies develop fewer allergies, fewer respiratory illnesses and fewer gastrointestinal illnesses.
- ★ Breast milk transmits many immunities against illnesses from mom to baby.
- ★ Breast milk is free, always available and just the right temperature.
- ★ Breastfeeding has health advantages for mothers depending on the length of time they breastfeed. For example, it helps the uterus return to normal size sooner, can help with weight loss, decreases the risk of breast and ovarian cancer, as well as decreases the risk of osteoporosis.
- ★ Breastfeeding intensifies the bonding between mother and infant.

### ***What Can a Partner do to Intensify His Relationship With a Child Who is Breastfeeding?***

- ★ Offer a bottle-feeding when your partner is ready to express milk and provide assistance with feedings (usually when a baby is 3 weeks old).
- ★ Spend time with your child between feedings developing your own relationship.
- ★ Hold your baby skin to skin as you rock, cuddle, sing or talk to him or her.
- ★ Change diapers, bathe and read to your baby.
- ★ Take your baby for a walk in the stroller or in a front pack.

### ***A Partner Also Can be Useful to His Partner When She is Breastfeeding by:***

- ★ Bringing the baby to her for feedings.
- ★ Changing the baby's diaper as needed during the feeding.
- ★ Helping to settle the baby after a feeding.
- ★ Doing household chores.
- ★ Understanding she may be less interested in sex, especially in the beginning weeks when babies are breastfeeding every one to three hours for 20 minutes or longer.
- ★ Using a water-based lubricant when mom is interested in sex. Breastfeeding can decrease the hormones that are responsible for making vaginal lubrication.

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## SAFETY TIPS FOR PARTNERS

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### *Car Seat Safety (See additional information provided to you at your pre-birth visit)*

- ★ Secure infant car seat backwards until infant is at least 1-year-old and weighs at least 20 pounds.
- ★ After your infant weighs 20 pounds, you may turn the car seat around, but it is recommended that the seat stay rear facing for as long as possible.
- ★ Children should sit in the back seat whenever possible.
- ★ Do not place a rear-facing infant seat in the front seat if the car has a passenger side air bag.
- ★ Toddler car seats are designed for children weighing greater than 20 pounds and are designed to face forward.
- ★ A car seat should not move when fastened with a seat belt.

### *Baby Furniture Safety*

- ★ Baby furniture should meet standards set by the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Council.
- ★ Federal regulations say crib slats should not be more than 2 <sup>3</sup>/<sub>8</sub> inches apart.
- ★ Keep the crib away from draperies and blinds so your baby can't get caught or tangled in a cord.
- ★ Avoid pillows and low-hanging mobiles.
- ★ The crib mattress must fit snugly with no more than two fingers fitting between the mattress and rail.
- ★ Do not use crib bumpers once your baby is able to roll.
- ★ Regularly check recall lists at [www.recalls.gov](http://www.recalls.gov) on your computer.

### *Burn Prevention*

- ★ Turn pot handles away from your baby so handles can't burn him/her and he/she can't pull hot pots down.
- ★ Do not heat formula or breast milk in the microwave. This can cause burns to your baby or the bottle could explode.
- ★ Test bath water prior to putting the baby in the water.

### *Fire Safety*

- ★ Have a fire escape plan and practice it.
- ★ Install smoke detectors on each floor at the head of the stairs and in the hallway outside the sleeping area.
- ★ Test smoke detectors monthly and change batteries twice a year when clocks are changed.

# PREGNANCY AND PARTNERS

## ***Accidental Poisoning***

- ★ If you think your baby has swallowed a poisonous substance, call the Poison Control Center immediately at 1-800-222-1222.
- ★ Medicines and vitamins must be stored out of your child's reach. Buy medicines and vitamins with child resistant caps.
- ★ Store household poisons in original containers.
- ★ Use safety locks on cabinets that are within a child's reach.

## ***Water Safety***

- ★ Never leave a baby unattended in the bath or pool.
- ★ A baby can drown in an inch of water in a few minutes.
- ★ Use caution when around buckets of water, the toilet or a wading pool.

## ***Food Safety***

- ★ Avoid foods that are common causes of choking, such as grapes, hot dogs, nuts and raw carrots.
- ★ Introduce foods gradually so food allergies can be noted.

## ***Sun Safety***

- ★ Sunscreens may contain chemicals that may not be safe for children under 6 months of age. Protect your baby with a hat, clothing, umbrella, etc. Avoid direct sunshine. Check with your pediatrician for recommendations.

## **HELPFUL WEBSITES AND PHONE NUMBERS**

### **Tuition Savings Program in Your State:**

Call 1-877-277-6496 or visit [www.collegesavings.org](http://www.collegesavings.org)

### **Stay-at-Home Dads (SAHDs):**

Visit [www.daddyshome.com](http://www.daddyshome.com)

### **For Primary Care Giving Fathers:**

Visit [www.slowlane.com](http://www.slowlane.com)