

## What is the New Dad's Role?

What is dad's role in all of this? Here are a few tips that may be helpful to the soon-to-be father as he plans for baby coming home.

**Think ahead.** Lots of expecting Dads are good with planning, so put that brainpower to work before the delivery. Ask yourself: How can I make the house more suitable for a newborn? What will make life easier for us? What will the baby need? Can I research, buy or borrow those items?

**Cleaning up clutter** around the house and making space for your new addition is a good place to start. Your partner will really appreciate your efforts to streamline your home so that it will be easier to move about with the new baby. Infants come with a lot of "stuff" and there has to be room to accommodate everything you will need.

**Not sure what else to do?** Talking to other Dads is always a good idea. You can also read baby books, do some internet searching on the subject of becoming a new Dad and pick up some local parenting publications. You may find that there are support groups for the new fathers in your community, which would be a great way to connect with other parents.

If you don't have any experience with a baby, try to find a family member or good friend who has an infant and spend some time with them. Hold the baby, feed the baby and, yes, change the baby!

**Ask questions** and observe what the parents are doing and how baby is reacting. The new parents would love it if you and your partner would offer to baby sit for a few hours here and there and perhaps even an overnight. This time spent with an infant will give you confidence, because you are doing "the real thing" rather than just reading and imagining. What a great way to get ready for bringing home your own newborn.

**Making decisions** ahead of time about who will be doing what and when is a great plan of action. For example, the new Mum will be focused on feeding the baby and getting some rest, so Dad could be in charge of organizing meals, doing dishes and some laundry. If none of this comes naturally, enlist some help from family and friends. Start these chores during the pregnancy. Make the effort and there will be big rewards.

**Grocery shopping** will also be a must for the new Dad. Type out a long list of everything you can think of that you purchase on a regular basis, and print out a dozen copies. This way, you can simply pull out a list and circle the items you need that day. Jot down anything that may not be on the list and you are on your way.

**After baby arrives**, just be there as much as possible and be supportive. Your partner has been through a physically and emotionally traumatic experience. Now, she is trying to bond and care for an infant. It will be impossible to know what it is like to walk in her shoes, but if you are supportive and non-judgmental then you are doing your job.

Many first-time Dads find the stress and upheaval of a newborn too difficult and they begin spending time away from the house and their new family. Pulling away is a big mistake because you will be missing out on a lot and your absence may cause friction and long-term resentment on the part of your partner.

**Start planning early and stay involved.** It will be the most challenging but rewarding experience of your life.