



BECOMING A DAD



March of Dimes is committed to making sure that fathers are prepared to support their partners before, during and after pregnancy.



- 1. BEFORE PREGNANCY**
- 2. DURING PREGNANCY**
- 3. LABOR AND BIRTH**
- 4. BABY'S HOME**



Being a dad begins even before your baby is born. The things you do to keep you and your partner healthy before and during pregnancy can help your baby be born healthy and strong.



2. DURING PREGNANCY

- 2.1: GO TO HER PRENATAL CARE CHECKUPS WITH HER**
- 2.2: REMIND HER TO TAKE A PRENATAL VITAMIN**
- 2.3: HELP HER REST AND LOWER HER STRESS**
- 2.4: BE AWARE OF THE CHANGES IN YOUR PARTNER**
- 2.5: LEARN THE SIGNS OF PRETERM LABOR**
- 2.6: GET YOUR HOME READY**
- 2.7: FIGURE OUT YOUR FINANCES**
- 2.8: LEARN ABOUT PREGNANCY, CHILDBIRTH AND BEING A PARENT**
- 2.9: TALK ABOUT WHAT YOU WANT TO HAPPEN AT YOUR BABY'S BIRTH**
- 2.10: DECIDE ABOUT BREASTFEEDING**
- 2.11: DECIDE ABOUT CHILD CARE**



Lots of things happen to your partner during pregnancy. Her body changes to make room for a growing baby. She may be moody and tired. She may be worried about becoming a mom. She needs to know you're there for her and that you're in this pregnancy together.



2.1: GO TO HER PRENATAL CARE CHECKUPS

Prenatal care is medical care to check the health of your partner and the baby during pregnancy. When you go to her checkups, you can meet her provider and ask any questions about pregnancy.

- Make sure your partner goes to all her prenatal care checkups, even if she's feeling fine.

2.2: REMIND HER TO TAKE A PRENATAL VITAMIN

Before pregnancy, she needed 400 micrograms of folic acid. Now that she's pregnant, she needs more. Her provider can prescribe a prenatal vitamin for her.





To view the video, click on the image or visit: <https://youtu.be/5hR7M-ubUno>





2.3: HELP HER REST AND LOWER HER STRESS

You can help by keeping the house clean, shopping for groceries and making meals.

2.4: BE AWARE OF CHANGES IN YOUR PARTNER

She may be happy one minute and sad the next. She may be tired a lot. She gets tired because it's hard work to carry a growing baby inside her body.

You and your partner may feel differently about having sex during pregnancy. As her belly gets bigger, try different positions. Find one that is good for both of you. It's ok for you and your partner to have sex during pregnancy, as long as her provider says it's OK.





2.5: LEARN THE SIGNS OF PRETERM LABOR

Preterm labor is labor that starts too early, before 37 weeks of pregnancy. Babies born early may have more health problems or need to stay in the hospital longer than babies born on time. Learn the signs of preterm labor and what to do if your partner has even one sign.

Signs of preterm labor:

- Contractions that make your partner's belly tighten up like a fist every 10 minutes or more often
- Change in the color of her vaginal discharge, or bleeding from her vagina.
- The feeling that the baby is pushing down. This is called pelvic pressure.
- Low, dull backache.
- Cramps that feel like her period.
- Belly cramps with or without diarrhea.

Call her provider even if your partner has only one sign of preterm labor and follow their instructions.





2.6: GET YOUR HOME READY

Decide where the baby will sleep. Start collecting baby things, like clothes, toys and diapers.

2.7: FIGURE OUT YOUR FINANCES TOGETHER

If you're worried about spending money, here are some tips to help:

- Borrow baby things from friends or family. Many people are happy to lend you a crib, toys and baby clothes
- Check out second hand stores and thrift shops. They often have baby things at low prices.
- Start saving money to help pay for the baby. Even \$10 a week can add up.





2.8: LEARN ABOUT PREGNANCY, CHILDBIRTH AND BEING A PARENT

Watch videos, visit websites, read books and talk to your friends and family.

2.9: TALK ABOUT WHAT YOU WANT TO HAPPEN AT YOUR BABY'S BIRTH

Where do you want the baby to be born? Do you want to have friends and family with you? Do you want to cut the baby's umbilical cord? Fill out a birth plan with our partner. This is a set of instructions you make about your baby's birth.

For a template visit:

<https://www.marchofdimes.org/pregnancy/your-birth-plan.aspx>





To view the video, click on the image or visit: <https://youtu.be/VWcwADg8cRg>





2.10: DECIDE ABOUT BREASTFEEDING

Breast milk is the best food for your baby. It has everything your baby needs to grow and be healthy.

A dad's attitude about breastfeeding is one of the most important reasons why a mom does or doesn't breastfeed.

- Learn about breastfeeding together
- Read books or go to breastfeeding classes
- Ask your health care provider for information

The best thing you can do for your partner is to respect her feelings about breastfeeding. When you decide about breastfeeding, put it on your birth plan.

2.11: DECIDE ABOUT CHILD CARE

Who will take care of your baby if you and your partner work full time?





To view the video, click on the image or visit: <https://youtu.be/GCfjqSWI2kc>

