

Transition to Parenthood



Objectives

- Strategies for adjusting to new parenting roles
- Coping with emotional and lifestyle changes
- Increase your self-confidence as a new parent



Adjusting to Life with a Newborn

- “I’m overwhelmed with excitement for this baby but I’m also full of trepidation at the same time. How is my life going to change?”
- “What is childbirth going to be like?”
- “Everyone has so much advice to share...even when I don’t ask for it.”
- “I’ve never been so tired.”
- “It takes an hour to just to get out the door!”
- “I didn’t think I’d feel so isolated.”
- “I feel like every time we get into a ‘routine’, it all changes again.”
- “It feels like my world is so completely altered and my spouse’s world is largely unchanged.”
- “I miss my freedom. I feel like I’ll never be able to play golf on a Saturday again without feeling guilty about it.”

Getting Ready for Baby

One of the biggest source of stress: dealing with the unknown

- Busy, busy, busy
- Decisions, decisions
- Get organized
- Be practical
- Reduce other commitments
- Juggling the expectations of others
- Talk about your feelings and ask for the support you need



Emotional Impact

- Expect a roller coaster of conflicting and confusing emotions :

Happiness Wonder Sense of loss Guilt Sadness
Joy Loneliness Disappointment Frustration Anger

- If this is so “natural” why does it feel so “unnatural”?
- Parenting is “on the job” training

Set Realistic Expectations

- Prepare for constant change
- Go with the flow
- Relax your standards
- Let go of the pressure to do it “right”
- Filter conflicting advice from family, friends, experts, etc.
- Every child is unique - trust your intuition

Nurture Your Relationship

- Common marital challenges:
 - Stress
 - Finances
 - Division of labor
- Be positive and open to each other's needs and ideas
- Support and appreciate each other
- Share your feelings
- Stay connected
- Stay intimate



Ways to Cope: Best Practices

- Nurture yourself
- Get as much rest as you can
- Continue healthy eating
- Establish visiting hours
- Be realistic as to what you can accomplish
- Work towards establishing a satisfying routine
- Get out of the house
- Make sure you have personal/adult time
- Become a parent who learns... read books, talk to people, join groups
- Think outside the box
- Ask for help when you need it
- Be realistic
- Keep your perspective
- Remember to have fun with it all
- Strive to appreciate the joy of each stage of development

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