

Congratulations !! You're Going to Have A Baby Soon !

That's why we're giving you your first issue of *Happy & Healthy Kids*. You'll get 27 more newsletters as your baby grows. To get your newsletters at no cost to you, simply fill out the postcard and drop it in the mail. The postage is already paid!

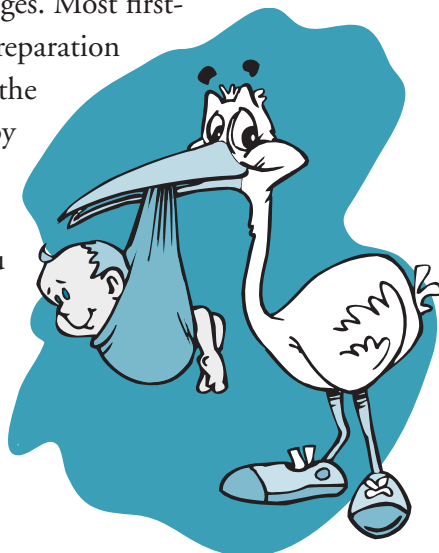
You'll get up-to-date information from other parents and child care experts. Learn tried and true tips! And of course, you'll get wise words from our own Nancy Taylor in her "Miss Nancy Knows" column.

The FREE newsletters will be sent to you from the *Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals*. We hope you enjoy them. And most of all—we wish you and your baby a happy and healthy life together!

In This Issue

Having a baby—especially your first—can bring many changes. Most first-time parents get little preparation for the "big event" and the many ways the new baby can impact their lives.

This issue will show you ways to help you get ready for this exciting life-changing event.



A Word for Moms-to-be:

Wondering what it will be like to have a new baby? Are you excited? Hoping you'll be a good mom? Or, are you concerned how much your life may change? You're not alone! Many moms say that they are unsure about what life with a new baby will look like.

Did You Know?

The more time you take to think about how things will be different before your baby comes, the better you will be able to handle the changes!

Getting Prepared for Your Baby— Here's what two moms-to-be have to say:

"My baby is due in 3 weeks and I finally feel ready. I know life is going to change. For one thing, I will have to get myself ready for work AND get the baby ready for the sitter each morning! So to save time, I found a good sitter right on my way to work."

Lacey M. (from Baton Rouge)

"A few months back, I started writing my feelings down in an old notebook. I wrote about how scared I was to be in charge of a baby—a new life. I was nervous about how I was going to fit in school and my baby. It just helped to think it through a bit. The more I wrote, the more I saw that my hopes for the future outweighed my concerns. That was a big help in getting prepared for my baby's birth."

Kim C. (from New Orleans)

Why not try writing down your thoughts right now? How do you think your life will look after your baby comes? Thinking things through will help you prepare for new changes.

A Word for Dads-to-be:

You may feel thrilled that your new baby will soon be born. Or, you may also feel nervous, be worried about money, or wonder about changes that life with a new baby can bring. Things may have changed already! Even now, as much attention is being given to the mom-to-be, you may be feeling a little left out.

Yet, there are things you can do to work with your partner at this time to stay close.

Try this:

Show support. Your partner may feel blue, nervous, or uncomfortable with her changing body.

- Tell her how much she means to you.
- Let her know she looks beautiful.
- Give her a back rub. Get her a glass of water before she asks. Little things mean a lot!

Talk things out! Take 10 or 15 minutes each day to just talk. Ask your partner how she is feeling. Ask what you can do to make things easier.

Agree to . . . Agree

Try to agree what each of you will be responsible for BEFORE the baby comes. Sharing responsibilities works best! Who will do the housework? The grocery shopping and cooking? Diaper changes and giving the baby a bath?

Why not take turns? *Most Important* – Make a vow to be there for one another. The more you both agree now, the less chance resentment and misunderstanding will build up after your baby arrives.

Talk to your baby!

It's amazing but true--your baby can hear your voice now! Talk to your baby, even read to him. Once your baby is born, he'll recognize YOUR voice! Talking to your baby now helps get your relationship off to a great start!

A Word for Single Moms-to-be:

Being single does not mean you have to do everything on your own. Getting help now and again helps you recharge your batteries.

If you will be going to school or working, you will have added pressures on your time and energy.

Find people who will be a support to you. Talk to your mom and dad, a good friend, or an aunt. You might want to talk to your baby's dad too! Let people close to you know you want them to be part of your baby's life. You'll find being a single parent can be hard work. But it can also be rewarding.

Try this tip before and after your baby is born:

Give yourself a break and stay on budget: Ask a few friends over for a "Gals' Night In". Watch a movie together on TV, pop popcorn, paint your nails, or put photos in albums. Staying connected with people you care about keeps stress in control.



Do as Much as You Can Before Your Baby Comes:

- **Pick a doctor now.** Talk to your O.B. or friends for the names of doctors specially trained to work with babies. Make an appointment with the doctor before your baby is born. Write the name and number of your baby's doctor here:

Name _____

Phone Number _____

- **Buy or borrow an approved infant car seat.** Make sure the seat is not broken and hasn't been in an accident. Learn the right way to position the seat in the car.
- **Make sure that your baby has a safe and comfortable place to sleep.** Always place baby on his back to nap or sleep. Get the crib or cradle ready now!

Using a crib? Make sure there are no missing or broken slats. Measure the crib slats for safety. Slats must be no more than 2 inches apart. Grab a soda can and test that it doesn't fit through the slats.

- **Raise your baby without smoke.** Did you know cigarette smoke puts your baby at risk for breathing problems? It also gives your baby a greater chance of death from SIDS (Sudden Infant Death Syndrome). If you smoke, make plans to quit! Also—when your baby is born, don't let friends or family smoke around your baby!
- **Make a few meals and freeze ahead of time.** You'll have food at home when you and your baby come home. No freezer space? Have tuna, canned chicken, juices, and soups on hand. The more you can do before baby comes—the easier it will be when your baby is born.

If you are going back to school or work after the baby is born, make plans for who is going to take care of your baby. The insert in this issue gives tips on finding a good daycare.

Make Time For Yourself

Having a baby is hard work. It is very important for you to have some free time. Ask friends and family to help out the first few weeks after baby's birth. This gives you some time to relax – to nap, take a walk – take a long shower – or – read a magazine.

Quick Answers

Q Help! My baby is due in 2 weeks! My mom often tells my sister how to raise her baby. I love my mom, but any ideas how to let her enjoy my new baby WITHOUT getting constant advice?

a First off, know your mom means well. Sometimes it is hard for parents to see their grown kids as parents—especially with a new baby. Some advice may be good information. Be open to suggestions.

Of course, some things may have changed a lot since your mom had a baby. You can always listen and then if it isn't what you plan to do, say nothing. Or say, "Thank you, but I think I'll do it this way," or, "The doctor says to do this." While you love your folks, it's up to you and your partner to decide what is best for your baby.



Miss Nancy Knows:

Over the years I have heard it time and time again, parents with babies on the way saying, “I’m going to be the perfect parent” or “I’m hoping for the perfect baby.” I’m Nancy Taylor, and I am here to tell you to be easy on yourself! I have 4 kids of my own, 8 grandbabies with one little darling on the way. I have been there and am here today to talk about any myths you may have heard.

The Perfect Birth

Plain and simple--there is no “perfect” birth. Each birth is different. The important thing is to bring your baby into the world in the healthiest way possible – for both the baby and you.

The Perfect Baby

No matter what you’ve heard, there is no “perfect” baby. Every baby is different. Your baby will grow at her own pace. Don’t go comparing your baby to your friends’ babies.

The Perfect Parent

There is no “perfect” parent! Nope. We all make mistakes. Me included.

There will be times when you won’t feel too sure about what you are doing. It takes time, practice, and experience to be a parent. Know what I say? “Trust your own judgment.”

Being a new parent is “on-the-job training.” Don’t expect to know how to handle everything overnight. In those first hectic weeks, your life will seem to center around your small, sweet, helpless, but demanding infant. There may be times when you will feel unsure of

yourself, moody, or even overwhelmed. Most new parents feel this way at first. But if you’re worried, ask your doctor, family, or support person for help. You’ll get the hang of it soon!

Nancy Knows



All for now!!

— Nancy Taylor

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Happy & Healthy Kids

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Tips to Finding Good Day Care



Having Trouble Deciding the Best Setting for Your Baby?

Try this: Ask your friends, family, and neighbors for suggestions of providers or centers. Look in the yellow pages under “*Day care Center.*” Find ads for **child care** in the **classified** section of the newspaper or try calling these numbers for centers in your area.

Baton Rouge	Partnerships In Child Care	1-888-926-8005
Shreveport	Northwestern State University Child and Family Network	1-800-796-9080

Once You Decide on the Possible Choices, Visit Each Setting! AND, Take This Checklist With You!!

- 1 What are your hours? What is the weekly fee and when is payment due? _____
- 2 Can parents drop by when they want? _____
- 3 What would a normal day look like for my baby? _____
- 4 How many children do you watch? _____
- 5 May I have the names and numbers of other parents to call for reference? _____

Look to See:

- Is the center or day care home clean and safe? Is it cheerful and bright?
- Are there toys and fun activities as baby grows?
- Is there enough space for baby to play and sleep?
- Do other children seem happy and doing things they enjoy?
- Do the providers seem to like caring for the children?

Make sure you get **ALL YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED** so you can feel comfortable and confident in the care you choose. Select providers who feel the same way you do about caring for *Happy & Healthy Kids*.



GETTING READY #1

Place This on Your Refrigerator

Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals Office of Public Health®