

Dear New Mom

Here are my and other mom's personal recommendations for when you are having a baby:

1. Read the Baby Whisperer by Tammy Hoag. It is very helpful for planning how to do nighttime parenting and especially to avoid bad habits that you can fall into. I also found Crying Baby and the Pregnancy: the best evidence quite interesting.
2. Casseroles- make lots of handy frozen dinners. There will be many days where you won't want to think about making anything, and these will come in very handy. Don't make anything with gas forming foods...beans, broccoli, cabbage...your child will let you know the next day, how miserable this food made them. Dashing dishes is a great service to do some meal prep before the baby is born.
3. Fiber- after having a baby, it is very important to avoid being constipated at all costs. Make sure with each meal you are drinking a lot of water, eating fiber (vegetables, bran muffins, prunes).
4. Wear one of the newborn diapers for the 1st 24 hours after having a baby, as the blood flow is extremely heavy.
5. Frozen pads- take a spray bottle with water, add some calendula tincture (to help with healing), lightly spray some ultra maxi pads. Place these pads on a cookie sheet and put in the freezer. Once they are frozen, put in a zip lock bag and use as needed. These mini-ice packs will feel heavenly. Make sure you warn your significant other about these. Men don't take kindly to finding pads in the freezer.
6. Have some old baggy underwear to use for the 1st week. Men's boxers can be quite comfortable.
7. Peribottle- this is a squeeze bottle that you fill with water and some calendula. Spray onto your perineum when urinating to help with any burning sensations.
8. Before you have the baby, try to have a spicy meal (if you like that), a long soak in the tub, go to a movie or out on a date with your partner. You won't be able to do that again for a very long time. Everything changes after you have the baby, and free time goes completely out the window.
9. Nursing bras- get at least 3. You have to do laundry every few days anyways (it is truly amazing how a baby so small can generate so much laundry). Get the cotton nursing pads; the disposable ones just get soggy. Unfortunately all the stories are true, so be prepared for leakage; it does get better later on.
10. After having the baby, you probably won't have your pre-pregnancy body back for a long, long time. Be prepared to drag out the clothes you were wearing at 5 months of pregnancy.
11. Coconut oil- before the very 1st diaper (and each one after that) goes on your baby, make sure someone smears Coconut oil all over the baby's buttocks. The meconium (1st bowel movement) is dark brown, and is the consistency and stickiness of tar. The Coconut oil will make the cleanup easier. Keep using it until the stool turns more runny and yellow.
12. Mastitis- inflammation of milk ducts. This is very painful. To avoid this massage out any lumps in your breasts everyday. This is best done in the shower or bath.

- Nursing your baby in different positions: football hold (easiest), baby across your chest or lying down, so that different quadrants of your breasts are drained with each feeding.
13. Yellow stool- after the meconium has passed, baby stools should be mustard yellow if nursing. If the stool appears greenish, your baby may not be getting enough of the hind milk (the last little bit of milk). Make sure that you nurse from 1 side at a feeding, so your baby completely drains one side.
 14. Gas- gently rubbing baby's belly or having baby sleep on a small belly wedge can be helpful
 15. Slings- this is a fantastic way to carry your baby and have free hands. Wait until your baby is at least 2 weeks old. If your baby doesn't like it you are probably putting the baby in wrong. Bring your sling and baby, and I will show you how to use it. Never bend over with the baby in the sling, otherwise the baby will fall out. Always bend with the knees.
 16. Jolly jumpers, exersaucers, baby Bjorn or any upright baby holders- these tend to put your child into an upright or sitting position before their muscles are developed and they can support themselves. This places undue pressure on their spines and can cause spinal problems down the line. This also includes swings and car seats. Limit the time that your child is in a car seat.
 17. Hand washing- in the first month your baby's immune system is very weak. Before anyone picks up your baby, have him or her wash their hands in that first month.
 18. Pumps- if you are planning on going back to work early or doing a lot of pumping, buy an electric one, it is more effective, and you can pump on one side, while baby is nursing on the other.
 19. Baby food- it is not recommended to feed a baby before 6 months of age. But don't be surprised if mom/friend/relative tries to encourage you otherwise. Babies who receive formula or cereals have higher rates of allergies and asthma. Commercial baby food often contains sugar, preservative, colours or other fillers. Making your own baby food is very, very easy. Steam food (pears, apples, carrots, yams, peas, etc) for about 10 minutes and then blend it in a food processor. You can freeze the baby food in ice cube trays and take what you need. You can also steam and blend sulfite-free (preservative), organic prunes. This will help with constipation, which often occurs after their first foods. You can get these prunes at a health food store (community foods, planet organic).
 20. Car seat poncho are very handy to keep baby warm in the car seat in the winter.
 21. Belly time- most babies seem to hate it, but it is essential that babies spend at least part of their day on their bellies. This is an important part of developing neural pathways in their growing brains.
 22. Miscellaneous stuff you need:
 - a) Baby nail clippers and comb- you will need both within the 1st week
 - b) Floor mobile/gym – you won't need one until that baby is about 2+ months old. At first the baby will only look at it, and later the baby will actually move, touch and play with it.
 - c) Diaper bags- it is handy to have a super large one for extended outings and a smaller one for quick outings. You will initially only need a changing

pad, wipes, diapers, wash cloth, plastic bag (for dirty diapers/clothing), at least one full change of clothing, receiving blanket (especially if you go to the doctor or public health nurse) and any bottle supplies you may be using. A simple backpack is a good option, as it is less expensive, has a lot of room, and dad won't mind carrying it too.

- d) Olive oil- this is a great and safe for moisturizing and massaging your baby. Their hands will get quite dry, and you don't have to worry when they put their hands in their mouths.

Congratulations! I hope this helps. Remember it does get easier, and if you have any other advice that you feel should be added to this list for other new moms, please let me know.

Dr. Susanne Morris