



Daddy Survival Guide

What every new dad needs to know

Part I – She’s knocked up, now what?

Chapter 1 – Get prepared for what’s expected

First and foremost, you need to understand that you and your baby mommy are **both** pregnant. It is a simple truth that men don't feel the same way as women do about being pregnant. It is impossible to understand what it is like having something living and growing inside of you, it is also impossible to understand the hormonal changes. While some professionals will tell you to empathize with your significant other, just accept that you cannot understand in theory what it means to be pregnant and just tell her that you are ‘both’ pregnant. Sometimes all they want to hear are the words. To them it means that you are as committed as she is to the pregnancy.

She will likely start picking up books on pregnancy or subscribing to websites that will track her pregnancy. She will also start looking for a doctor to monitor the pregnancy and decide where the delivery will happen. If you want to be a hero... scratch that... a superhero, do it for her. Go out and pick up "What to Expect when you're expecting" and "A Girlfriends guide to pregnancy", also pick up a pregnancy planning guide with pages to fill in important dates (if you are a man of steel you will find the expected delivery date and circle it before giving her the guide). She will use it to record feelings about the pregnancy, gifts, visitors, possible baby names and on and on. Think of it like when you were in Junior High and girls all carried notebooks with Unicorns on the cover and they wrote all kinds of things in them about boys they liked, girls they hated and whatever else the mysteries of pre-teen had to offer.

Survival Tip: Pregnancy & Water

As she continues through her pregnancy, it is critical that she drink a lot of water. Eight 8 oz glasses at least. This will help with the blood needed to support the new life developing in her. It will also keep her own fluids moving and reduce swelling and blood pressure. This does not replace the requirement for milk which will keep her body from losing calcium that the baby is taking from her to develop its bones. The first sign of calcium deficiency is weakened teeth and cavities. She may feel bloated from drinking so much, but by listening to her own body she will know what and when to drink. It's your job to keep on her.

How to Distill Water:

You can create a solar still in the event of emergency. You will need a large plastic sheet or tarp to make a solar still. Dig a conical hole about four-feet wide at the top and coming to a point about two-feet deep. The bottom of the hole should be in the very center (equal distance from all sides). The slope of the sides isn't critical. Put a medium size pot at the very bottom of the hole. Then lay your plastic sheet over the top of the hole and put a medium size rock (about one-pound) in the center of the sheet just above the pot which will be directly underneath the sheet. Put heavy rocks on top of your plastic sheet all around the outside of the hole to keep the sheet from touching the inner sloping sides of the hole. The center of the sheet should be about 18 inches below the surface of the ground but about 6 inches above the pot. Wait 24 hours. Water vapor will form on the underside of your tarp and drain down to its lowest point (beneath your one-pound rock) and then drip into your pot in the bottom of the hole. On hot days and cold nights you can collect about one-pint of water per 24-hour period.

Another action that will make you more in touch with the pregnancy is to contact your insurance company and help identify OB/GYN specialists in the area and make some preliminary calls. **DO NOT** schedule the appointment. Ultimately it is her choice whom she will see and as it is her body, she will want to carefully select the professional she will want to check her out 'down there'. But she will appreciate you helping with the preliminary search. Make sure you understand the difference between an OB, GYN, ARNP, and MidWife

OB is the abbreviation for an Obstetrician who is a physician that has successfully completed specialized education and training in the management of pregnancy, labor, and puerperium (the time-period directly following childbirth).

GYN is a physician who has studies Gynecology which deals with the female reproductive system

You will almost always find that doctors who are working with the pregnancy are identified as both and seen as OB/GYN. When a woman is not pregnant, she may see her family physician unless it has to do with female issues and it is at that time that she would likely see a Gynecologist.

ARNP or Advanced Registered Nurse Practitioner is a very experienced and educated nurse that in some cases functions like a doctor. These nurses are often seen in OB/GYN offices as the primary caregiver for both consultation and delivery. They are normally under the direction of an OB/GYN physician and consulted on cases.

Midwife is an old world description of a woman who aids in the delivery of babies. They were typically wise about conditions and situations that could cause the delivery to be difficult or would require alternative methods to push the baby out. Most midwives in the US are ARNP educated and specialize in the midwifery. That is they are highly educated nurses, to the level of a physician and choose to just deliver babies. It is becoming more common for hospitals to use midwives instead of OB/GYN doctors as they are cheaper and there are simply more available than OB/GYN doctors. The patient benefits by not having an overworked physician do the procedure, and working with someone whose only focus is delivering babies.

Remember to let her choose who will deliver and who she feels comfortable seeing. It is kind of like you trying to decide which doctor is going to do a proctologic or prostate exam... and not just eyeing him up to see if he is gay or has big hands.

Make appointments to suit both your schedules

Doctor appointments will come slow in the beginning and as the delivery date gets closer they will go from monthly visits to bi-weekly to weekly. You must remember that this is scary for her and she needs the support no matter how much she may try to convince you otherwise. It may not be possible to make all appointments if you have a normal work schedule as doctors' offices typically have normal work schedules as well. In your selection process for a doctor/midwife, you may want to find out about evening hours and satellite locations that could be closer to your home or work.



There are a handful of key appointments you do not want miss (not would she forgive you if you did), those include the first appointment where it is "officially" confirmed that she is knocked up. She will want you to be **excited** with her, and even though she may have taken a dozen at home pregnancy tests, it is **not the same** as a medical professional stating, "ma'am, our tests indicate a positive meaning you are pregnant". A special note here, whether you take a home pregnancy test or go to the doctor where she will pee in a cup, the test is always attempting to indicate a hormone called b-hCG (Beta Human Chorionic Gondothropin Hormone). If you want to impress her and her friends, you can whip out the hormone hCG as the indicator, but you need to understand also what it does. It's like the invisibility cloak of a famous little boy wizard, where the body is fooled to believing that there isn't an invading growth that should be destroyed. Understand also that this particular hormone that is masking the baby from the body triggers other hormones they may also have adverse affects on the mother, such as mood swings. (More than normal if that's possible).

Other critical appointments may include genetic screening where a number of questions are asked about families, medical histories and the like and it is a good time to ask questions.

RULE #1 - There are no Stupid questions. This statement may be cliché but true, and as a father you are expected to be ignorant about women's issues and pregnancy. So if you want to know if you can have sex while she is in her first, second and third trimester... ask! If you want to sound intelligent, ask questions about gestational diabetes also known as preeclampsia which could impact her during the pregnancy. This is the body's inability to process sugar much like a diabetic; however it only occurs during the pregnancy. It can be identified by measuring proteins in urine which is why she needs to pee in a cup at every visit. There are other tests that may measure more accurately if this dangerous condition exists. It is very important to learn more about this subject and be prepared if it occurs to her.

The ultrasound appointment is a big and important time for her as it is the first time you and she will see baby and very likely the first time the heartbeat will be heard clearly. For most women, seeing it makes it more real. For most men, seeing the skeletal image on the screen swimming in amniotic fluid cause your own mind to start swimming, things like, 'How am I going to afford this'... 'What if I don't know what to do when the baby comes'... 'How to I ensure it's a boy and that he grows up to be a professional football player'... you know the normal stuff. Just remember to make this appointment one of your top priorities, you will find it an experience worth noting.

Make sure you schedule time off near the date of pregnancy; inform your employer that you need some flexibility as the baby will not come according

Survival Tip: Hormones

Levels of progesterone and oestrogens rise continually throughout pregnancy, suppressing the hypothalamic axis and subsequently the menstrual cycle. The mother and the placenta also produces many hormones.

Prolactin levels increase due to maternal Pituitary gland enlargement by 50%. This mediates a change in the structure of the Mammary gland from ductal to lobular-alveolar. Parathyroid hormone is increased due to increases of calcium uptake in the gut and reabsorption by the kidney. Adrenal hormones such as cortisol and aldosterone also increase.

Placental lactogen is produced by the placenta and stimulates lipolysis and fatty acid metabolism by the mother, conserving blood glucose for use by the fetus. It also decreases maternal tissue sensitivity to insulin, resulting in gestational diabetes.

Thinking above the Pain:

Hormones can cause pregnant women to act erratically and their first target is the ones closest to them, typically it's a man. In the third trimester women will learn a technique called Lamaze method for delivery, developed by a Doctor in the early 1950s and of course a Man. The purpose of the method is to help a woman focus on something other than the pain of childbirth. She would look at an object and focus on it while regulating her breathing through contractions. Short spurt breaths through the teeth and focusing on the object will help when she is told not to push through the contractions. Men can do the same thing, just imagine a cold beer and the Hawaiian Tropic bikini contest...and all pain will go away.

to schedule. Make sure that family members who are planning on helping during that time do the same. When she does go into labor, one of the first phone calls you need to make is to your employer to confirm that she is in labor. Do not call until the doctor sees her and identifies that it is actually labor. Women will have false labor near the end of the pregnancy called Braxton-Hicks contractions and you may make several practice runs to the hospital.



TIP: It's a good idea to go out and buy her a gift when you find out she's pregnant! You may also want to consider buying something for the baby too. Some ideas include:

- A cool maternity top (make sure you know her size, but typically S, M, L, XL will do)
- A spa treatment or day at a salon (It will make her feel better about her body changing and help relax some of those hormonal swings)
- A silver plated rattle (this can be inscribed later after the baby is born)
- A sleeper, blanket or bear
- A charm bracelet with a new charm for each month that she is pregnant (this is a great way to pass the months and keeping track of progress)