



New Parent's Handbook

There's so much information around for new parents that sifting through it all and finding out what's right for you may be a challenge. We appreciate your time is limited and precious too, so with this in mind, we have sourced the most practical information to help you navigate your early days of becoming a new parent.

All those years of thinking about how it will be and what sort of parent you'll be can just seem like a distant blur once you're holding your baby in your arms. Because the concept of having "a" baby is very different to "the" baby when they are actually here.

What's the best way to get the information I need?

How you use this eBook is entirely up to you. Don't feel as if you need to start at the beginning and work your way through every page. If only some of the information is applicable, then feel free to go straight to the source which will give you the answers you want in the quickest way possible.

But before we begin, just be mindful that every parent and every baby is special and unique.

The information contained in this eBook is designed as a guide and not a prescription. You know your baby better than anyone else.



A quick guide to becoming a parent for the first time

It's completely normal to feel confused, scared, anxious and even a bit overwhelmed when becoming a parent for the first time. It's also reasonable to feel moody, cry easily and experience a lack of confidence.

Although we think we have a fair idea of how we will respond to parenthood, when the reality of having our babies hits us, all the best laid plans can be quickly forgotten.

This is why it can help to have some sort of guide to navigating the early days.

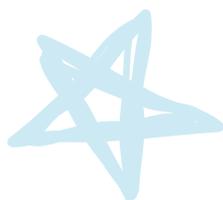
You'll find all sorts of people want to offer you advice. Most of it will be well meaning and delivered in an appropriately caring way. But there are bound to be times when you feel confused about what you should do and how you should do it.

Being able to deflect advice takes energy and confidence, which new parents often struggle with. When tired it's easy to feel worried and confused and the smallest things take on too much importance.



What you can do in the first few weeks

- Prioritise your own needs. Aim to be fit and healthy so the rest of the household and everyone in it can function well.
- Focus on what's important. Decide what has to happen, what needs to happen, what would be nice if it happens and what doesn't matter.
- Adopt the motto "People First". Housework can and will wait.
- Shop online for groceries if getting out of the house is too hard.
- Delegate tasks to others in the household. If you have older children, write up a roster and expect them to share the chores.
- If the state of the house is really getting you down, decide on what's really important. For some women, making the bed each day is vital, for others, having a clean bathroom and kitchen is imperative. Drill down to one or two household tasks which have the most value and focus on achieving these.
- Limit yourself to doing one extra thing each day. An outing in the morning or the afternoon will be far better for your sanity than being out all day.
- Learn to say "no" to people's expectations of you. Sometimes it's very liberating to just have an easy life and not be everyone else's problem solver.
- Be realistic about what you can achieve in one day.
- Aim for nutritious and sustaining, not gourmet meals.
- If something is important to remember, then write it down.
- Look after your own personal needs. Don't forget to make your postnatal check appointment for six weeks after your baby's birth. Lots of mothers miss this because they don't make the time.
- Use really lovely body wash, shampoo and conditioner and hand cream. When you feel that all you are doing is caring for other people, you too deserve some nurturing.



- Ask your partner not to leave the house in the morning for work until you are showered and dressed. This could make a real difference to how you feel for the rest of the day.
- Be specific about how other people can help you. If they offer, then take them up on it.
- Rest and sleep when you can. Even a 30 minute lie down can be restorative.
- Drink plenty of water. Keeping hydrated is vital for breastfeeding and all new mothers, to avoid constipation and to be able to think clearly.
- Stop and pause every now and then. Try not to always be rushing – stop, breathe, close your eyes and take a moment just to “be”.
- Take some time each day to lie down with your baby and enjoy them.
- Go for a walk every day, even if it's just around the block. Put the baby in the pram, bundle up your toddler if you have one and go to the park.
- Have the radio going on a decent station or listen to a podcast. This way you'll feel as if you're not completely isolated from the outside world.
- Don't isolate yourself. Women need each other for true emotional support. Build a network of friends through playgroup and new mother's groups.
- Avoid eating too much sugar. Breastfeeding mothers can crave sugar to the point where they really do eat too much of it. So try not to have (too many) biscuits, cakes and sweets in the house.



Ten top lifestyle changes to expect when becoming a parent

1. You are going to be more tired than you ever thought possible. When you come down from the initial high after having your baby, sleep deprivation will hit you. Even if you have the most settled baby in the world, expect to be very, very tired.
2. You will not have the same daily routine as before. If you are expecting your baby just to fit in with your lifestyle then think again. This cannot happen. Babies do not have predictable routines - they demand care 24 hours a day x 7 days a week.
3. Your relationship with your partner will be different. Because of tiredness you may be snappy and irritable with each other. You are likely to argue and feel frustrated because you don't have the same amount of energy you once had to invest into your relationship.
4. If you are used to having an ordered house, then it will change. This is not a sign that you have lost control, just that you have new baby whose needs have to come before household tasks.
5. You will spend more money than you plan to. Babies, and all that they need, can be very expensive. Put some money aside for emergencies. Just knowing you have this will be very reassuring.
6. You will not look the same as you used to. Many women take up to a year to lose their pregnancy weight. Your skin, hair, nails and general appearance will all be different after you have your baby. Hormonal influence accounts for most of this, but tiredness and general stress also contribute.
7. You will learn the intensity of maternal love. You may even feel a different relationship building and deeper understanding of your own mother. You are likely to "get" what her experience has been with you.
8. You could feel guilty and anxious about not having time to invest into the rest of your family and friendships. Even your loved pets will need to take a backseat as your whole family adjusts.
9. You may start thinking about your own mortality, health, household security and wellness. This is in response to the enormous responsibility of caring for your baby.
10. Time will take on a different meaning for you. Hours may pass in a blur or drag indefinitely.

Breaking the news

This has to be one of the most exciting parts of becoming a new parent. Some mothers choose to keep the news secret for a while and really savour the knowledge that they alone know. Others are busting to tell their partner as soon as they find out.

Breaking the news of your pregnancy can be as matter of fact or fun and light-hearted as you like.

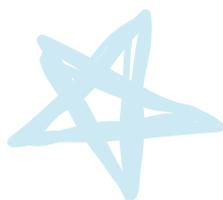
When it comes to your families you may choose to do this together as a couple or individually. But it's nice for extended family to hear the news first-hand, especially grandparents-to-be.

If you can, sit down with them and share your news, or alternately, make a phone call or write a personal letter. You can be as cryptic as you like if you're writing to them.

If your family knows you've been trying to conceive then your news may not come as a big surprise.

Sharing the news with your partner

- Get one pink and one blue balloon filled with helium and tied with matching ribbon. Hand them to your partner or secure them to a chair.
- Send your partner a card, signed from you and the baby.
- Take a photo of the positive reaction on your pregnancy test. Email it or text it to your partner.
- Make a heart-shaped cake and decorate it with pink and blue icing. Get some baby decorations from a cake icing shop and go all out.
- If you have a pet dog, tie pink and blue ribbons around their neck. Let your partner work out what you're trying to tell them.
- Put a tiny pair of booties under your partner's pillow, or in the pocket of their PJ's.
- Buy a baby hair brush and leave it casually on the dressing table.
- Put a tiny baby singlet in their underwear drawer and don't say a word. Wait for their reaction.
- Put some tiny baby shoes inside your partner's shoes.
- Buy a baby car seat and install it in your car – wait until they notice.
- If you have an older toddler you could ask them to tell your partner the news. Or get a t-shirt printed saying "I'm going to be a big brother/sister" on it.



Sharing the news with your friends and family

- Address a letter to “Grandma” or “Grandpa”.
- Gather your friends and family together for a party and arrange them for a group photo. Instead of asking them to say “cheese” instead, get them to say “we’re pregnant” and then catch their responses.
- Take them out to dinner, get there early and place a teddy or a doll on each of their chairs. Wait until the penny drops.
- Take a photo of your belly with your hands forming a heart shape and print off lots of copies. Send them to family and friends.
- Send a Pregnancy announcement card.

Social Media announcements

Some people are into social media more than others. And sharing the happy news this way with your friends may seem to be the best thing to do, especially if you have a large network of friends who live in various far-flung locations.

Being able to break your pregnancy news face-to-face may just be impossible, so writing a personal message and posting an announcement can be a timely way of sharing your news.

Just be aware of the best stage of your pregnancy to do this. After the first trimester is over is considered the ideal time to share the news of a positive pregnancy. The highest risk of miscarriage is in the first 12 weeks of gestation, so you are probably best to wait, if you can, until after then.

But if all has gone well with your pregnancy so far and perhaps you’ve even had a scan and seen the baby’s heartbeat, this is sufficient reassurance that your pregnancy is reasonably stable. But if you find it difficult to keep a secret and you’re just busting to share your good news, waiting 12 weeks may seem like a lifetime.



Pros of using social media to share your pregnancy news

- You can reach a large number of people, all at the same time. This means sharing the news is less stressful and saves time.
- If you're used to communicating through social media, then doing this is just an extension of normal communication and news sharing for you.
- As long as your profile is private, then you can limit the news to your select, chosen friends.
- You can include regular photo updates.
- It is a great way to keep in contact and share your pregnancy with overseas friends and relatives.



Cons of using social media to share your pregnancy news

- It can be a slightly impersonal way to find out.
- If you haven't included everyone on your friends list then some people may not know at the same time as others, or they may find out second-hand.
- Not everyone is on social media. If you use it as your primary means of sharing your pregnancy news, there's bound to be some people who miss out.
- There's the potential for people to be judgemental and post negative comments you have no control over.

Naming your child

Oh, the hours which have been invested into baby naming. Everyone has an opinion; and personal tastes, family tradition and preferences are all at play.

We've all been to school or worked with people whose names will forever bring up memories – both good and bad. It's true to say that some names are “tainted” forever more because of the recollections they conjure up.

Explaining why a name can simply not be used can be a challenge!



We're not telling until after the baby is born

Many couples choose not to tell other people what names they have chosen until after their baby is born. The risk when sharing your name choices when still pregnant is that people often feel free to give their opinion as to whether they like the names you've chosen. And their responses can be a little unpredictable and tactless!

We all have a need to feel accepted and valued by the people around us. So when others openly criticise or don't agree with the names we have planned, it can go right to the very heart of our feelings.

Unless you have extraordinary skills in not caring about what others think, then it can be best to keep your baby name choices a secret until after your baby is born. Or make up joke names, just to keep the crowds satisfied.

Huggies has literally thousands of [baby name suggestions](#) for you to look through. Choosing the perfect name is such a big responsibility and it can really help to have some expert guidance to navigate your way through all the choices

Some of the Huggies Name Categories Include

- Most popular baby names.
- Meanings of names.
- Religious name suggestions including Christian, Pagan or Muslim.
- Unique and/or unusual baby names.
- A [baby name finder](#).
- Sporting stars, musician and comedian names.
- Prime Ministers public figures' names.
- Baby names which mean love.
- Unisex baby names.
- The origins of baby names – where they came from and how they evolved.
- Ancient, old fashioned and futuristic baby names.

What to buy

Just where do you start? Some parents see a need to shop almost from the moment they find out they are expecting. The temptation of buying and storing lots of delicious little baby items can be too hard to resist for many.

But it pays to be sensible and think clearly about what you really need to buy and what you can borrow. Buying second-hand and even hiring baby gear makes sense to some couples.

We have already done a lot of the groundwork and research around what you will need to buy for your baby.

Check out our range of [eBooks](#) which have been written specifically for parents who are keen to know what to buy. When you're ready you can print off these eBooks for your own personal use.



Tips for what to buy

- Remember this - there is no point to spending money in order to save money. If in doubt, walk away and reconsider before buying, especially when it comes to [planning your Baby Nursery](#).
- Each time you do your grocery shopping, buy one or two things for the baby. Stockpiling detergents, toiletries, nappies and wipes helps to reduce big outlays of money all at once.
- Don't underestimate what you'll be given at your baby shower. People tend to be very generous and love shopping for a baby. Write up a [Baby Nursery Checklist](#) and share it with your family and friends so they can get you gifts that you really need.
- If your family and friends ask you what you'd like, be specific. Contributing money towards practical "big" gifts such as a cot, pram or car seat works for many families. Read up on what you need to [buy for baby](#) and pick out some big ticket items.
- Avoid shopping when you're tired and hungry. You won't be in the best frame of mind to make good decisions.
- Shop with another, experienced parent. They'll know what worked for them and have inside information for what's practical.
- Take your mum or another family member with you. This is a lovely time to bond and get excited about the new baby coming into the family. Chances are they will love helping you pick out some baby equipment.

Baby Proofing Your Life – Your Home and Friendships

Baby Proofing Your Home

As much as you'd probably like to leave your home just the way it is, your baby's arrival will mean that some changes are necessary. More "stuff" in the house will be the most noticeable change initially, closely followed by more mess with baby-related paraphernalia lying about and not time or energy to sort through it all. During the early months of life when your baby is relatively immobile, you won't need to worry so much about safety issues. But baby proofing your home will be essential as they get older. Not just for their safety, but your sanity as well.

General safety tips

- Get a licensed electrician to install an electrical safety switch on your main power board.
- Enrol yourself and your partner in a basic safety/first aid course.
- Install smoke alarms throughout your house.
- Have a fire evacuation plan, fire blanket, and fire extinguishers available.
- Speak with your partner about an emergency exit plan out of your house.
- Limit your baby's access to staircases and place baby gates at stair entry points.

Kitchen safety

- Keep all electrical items high and out of baby's reach.
- Lock away detergents and chemicals.
- Put gates up in the kitchen doorway.
- Use non-slip mats to stand on.
- When your baby is small, get into the habit of turning saucepan handles inwards.

Bedroom safety

- Keep medications, cosmetics and jewellery high and safe.
- Close your bedroom door when your baby becomes more mobile.
- Discourage your pets from sleeping on your bed.
- Don't leave your baby unattended on your bed.
- Avoid sleeping with your baby in the same bed.



Bathroom safety

- Keep medications and cleaning products locked up.
- Never leave your baby/child unattended in the bath.
- Don't rely on older children to supervise younger siblings in the bath.
- Cover the taps and spouts with soft silicone protectors.
- Disconnect electrical items (such as hair dryers) from electrical sockets when not in use.
- When the toilet isn't being used, close the lid.
- Keep razors, scissors, nail files and sharp objects out of reach.
- Consider installing a hot water tempering device.
- Use non-slip rubber bath mats.
- Close the bathroom door when not in use.

Living room safety

- Keep heaters, fans and electrical devices out of reach.
- Make sure your television set, DVD and CD players are high, out of reach, stable, and secure.
- Protect the sharp corners of coffee tables.
- Use non-slip mat protectors.
- Get into the habit of picking up toys which could be tripped over.
- Use child-proof gates to cordon off unsafe areas.
- Use approved, purpose designed covers on electric sockets.
- Secure any blind cords, dangling tassels and loops of cord which could pose a strangulation risk.
- Become used to scanning the floor for small items which could cause choking.
- Place sticker decals on glass doors and louvers to minimise the risk of accidents.
- Lock windows and close doors which could increase falling risks.

Car safety

- Always place your baby/child in a car restraint. Check the manufacturer's recommendations for the restraint which suits your child's age, weight and size.
- Be mindful when driving, particularly reversing. Small children may not be visible in car mirrors and are at particular risk of driveway accidents.

Check the [Kidsafe website](#) for further advice on safety.

Baby proofing your relationship – with your partner

- When your baby is a little older, organise a “date night” once a month.
- Mark some time on the calendar just to do something fun together.
- Be clear about how you would like your partner to support you.
- Avoid being too critical. This can and does lead to resentment.
- Be honest about when you are comfortable enough to want to resume intercourse.



Baby proofing your relationship – with your friends

- Have a chat with your nearest and dearest when you are pregnant and tell them gently that [things will be changing](#) for a little while at least.
- Keep up your social media posts where possible; just a brief “The baby and I are fine and hope you are too” can be enough.
- Ask your friends not to take your times of reduced contact personally. It’s just that the baby will need and deserve your attention for the first few months at least.
- Suggest best ways of keeping in contact such as texting or emailing.
- Ask your partner to drop a line to your friends if you’re really unable to make contact with them.
- Write your best friends a card and let them know you still love them.



Milestones

The issue with milestones is that they do not apply specifically to exact age groups. There is a wide variation of "normal". So rather than expecting your baby to be demonstrating specific developmental tasks at precise ages, try to be a little relaxed about this.

Look for your baby to be increasing their skill set, and building on what they can do.

Check in your baby's Personal Health Record Book for developmental milestones. If you have any concerns, speak with your GP and your Child Health Nurse. If problems or delays are present, then early intervention can offer the best outcome.

The four major areas of childhood development are:

- Social/Emotional
- Communication
- Fine motor and cognition
- Gross motor

Have your baby checked if, by six months of age, they are not:

- Smiling or squealing in response to people.
- Starting to babble e.g. adah; oogoo.
- Reaching for and holding (grasping) toys.
- Rolling. Holding their head and shoulders up when they are on their tummy.

Reference: The "Red Flag" Early Intervention Referral Guide for children 0-5 years. QLD Government.

Huggies has a huge range of information and guidance on milestones and development. Check the following links for more comprehensive information.

- [Baby milestones](#)
- [Newborn development](#)
- [Baby growth chart](#)
- [Baby weeks](#)
- [Baby months](#)
- [Make your baby's own personal growth chart](#)



We really hope you have enjoyed our Huggies® New Parent's Handbook. You can visit our eBook library at www.huggies.com.au at anytime for many more free pregnancy, baby and parenting eBooks.

The Huggies Team



HUGGIES

