

The ideal father is present, accessible and available, an active participant during the pregnancy.

Fathers have an equal responsibility in preparing for the baby and there are many ways in which you can prepare yourself for fatherhood. Prepare emotionally: It is just as important for dads as it is for moms to be emotionally ready when having a baby. Emotional security and nurturing are crucial to a mother during pregnancy, and a loving relationship with an involved father is an endless stream of emotional support to her. Fathers are able to waylay many of the fears she may experience during pregnancy.

We know that babies in the womb are aware – they are aware of being loved and wanted. They know they are acknowledged when people talk lovingly to them and respond to their every movement with care and attention. They are aware of the people in their world out there and start to form ideas of whether their world is a safe or threatening place even before they are born. If the father lovingly talked to the unborn baby, the baby forms an emotional connection with the father.

Dad's voice could have a soothing and calming effect for baby because the familiar sound lets baby know he is safe. This is also great for early bonding as a family unit. Babies who feel safe and secure early on in their life, are likely to become more secure and confident children and adults.

Babies in utero are not able to distinguish between their mother's feelings and their own, and therefore her feelings can directly affect the health and wellbeing of developing baby. Research has shown that babies born into unhappy marriages are five times more likely to be more fearful and jumpy than babies born into happy relationships. How fathers treat the mothers and their unborn babies can have a direct effect on the personality formation and character. A father who abuses or neglects his pregnant wife is creating one of the most dangerous emotional and physical experiences for his unborn child.

Tips & advice to support your pregnant partner emotionally and help her stay safe and healthy.

- Accompany your wife to all medical appointments. This allows you to see how your baby is growing. It provides emotional strength to the woman as well.
- Join prenatal preparation classes with your wife to learn how to be a good parent. These classes help you learn the basics of looking after a baby.
- Participate in household chores. Understand that your wife is going through a transformation process; she needs rest, support and lots of understanding.
- Communicate with her. This is vital in identifying any anxieties that she (or you both may have). Find ways to support each other and be a source of reassurance to one another.
- Stay healthy together: You can support the health of your pregnant partner and your baby- to-be by cooking and eating healthy meals together and exercising together.

- Be proactive: You will be proactive in offering help around your home and/or any help related to the pregnancy or with preparing for the baby. Don't wait to be asked, and look for places you can make a difference.
- Go shopping for baby items. You will need tons of things after the baby is born. Best to start early.
- Prepare a list of baby names and discuss it with your wife what names you'd both prefer, be it a girl or a boy.
- Be present Sometimes your physical and emotional presence is all that is needed to help share the pregnancy. Be there for labor and delivery.

Enjoy your new role as the expectant father