



# DADS 2 BE

Before, During & After

# Healthy dads – healthy babies

- At what can be a challenging time for relationships, finances and adjustments, its good to look after yourself.
- Get some support from other dads, hopefully some of you will make good friendships from NCT or phone Nigel at Families First Southampton to get you linked up.
- Give yourself some space, before and after, you may not be able to play football every week for a while but do something just for you and allow your partner to do something for herself.
- At this time you may consider a more healthier lifestyle speak with Southampton Healthy Living or Nigel at Families First Southampton who can refer you. They can help with things like smoking cessation, reduced alcohol intake, weight management or increased activity.
- Be kind to each other.

# Before

- What are your Hopes?
- What are your Fears?
- Share expectations with your partner
- Get to know the midwives you meet, (sounds obvious, but) introduce yourself. Say your name, that you are dad and want to be involved as much as possible. Think that you as dad, mum and the maternity staff will be a team from pre-birth, birth and just after the birth together. This could become stressful and emotionally charged at the time of the birth, so work together.
- Consider using the Baby Buddy Free App <https://www.bestbeginnings.org.uk/baby-buddy>
- *Work – discuss leave arrangements*
- *Stock pile on food / meals (freezer?)*

Consider together how best you want the birth to go and be prepared to be flexible!

Understand some pain control, maybe have a go with a tens machine.

- Understand how you could prepare well for interrupted sleep.
- Maybe have a post-birth plan for your work, who else can support you, see if some mates could drop you some meals when baby comes home.

# During

- **Be birth prepared**
  - *Take some food, drink and some calming music.*
  - *Clothes for baby and mum*
  - *Nappies – baby wipes*
  - *CAR SEAT*
  - *Have your dads bag and mum/babies bags separate*
  - *“Take things to keep yourselves amused and comfortable, “like a travel pillow”*
- **Labour-** Apparently the shortest birth recorded is **two minutes**.
- Average labour time is just over **seventeen** hour, with the average active labour time being **eight** hours.
- **The Birth**
  - *Be clear about what part you want play in the birth with your partner and maternity staff.*

# After

*Chat about who are you going to phone and managing visitors to hospital.*

- **Protect** your partner - **encourage** others to respect her privacy - have **time** to recover and get to **know** your baby.
- Shutting the gate – Middle Eastern ancient texts speaks of when families in their very hospitable culture close the garden gate after child birth. Manage visitors, maybe not let uncle Dave, who you haven't seen for fifteen years and your partner has never met, come round for dinner.
- Imagine you just having a hernia operation coming home the next day to clean the house, make homemade cakes, make loads of tea/coffee and speak to relatives you haven't seen for ages.
- Mum may be –
  - *Tired*
  - *Possibly hormonal – emotional, irritable, fearful? And sometimes depressed?*
  - *Absorbed with the baby and not seem interested in you.*

*Make time for mum and baby, when they need you and rest when you can. This may well feel you're giving to a baby you don't have a connection with, but slowly you will see your babies character develop and your bond grow stronger.*

- Baby
  - *Won't necessarily settle just because you've fed, burped or changed them*
  - *Doesn't come with a management plan and once born you will may have feelings of guilt. Don't beat yourself up because someone else looks like they are coping better!*
- Use support networks, if you feel anxious or a bit depressed, please talk to someone

# Babies are Fantastic!



- Getting involved with your baby
  - *Changing nappies, dressing, baths etc.*
  - *Building the blocks for a healthy baby which are*
    - Respond
    - Cuddle
    - Relax
    - Play
    - Talk

<https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/media-library/documents/schools-and-education/my-babys-brain/mbbparent.pdf>

- Be very flexible to your babies needs!                      But build a good routine!
- Make the most of every stage and enjoy being a dad

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