

# The Daily Parent

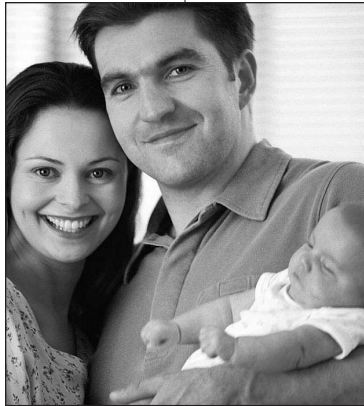
A NEWSLETTER FOR WORKING PARENTS

## BRINGING HOME YOUR NEW BABY: Making the Transition a Smooth One

**T**he arrival of a new baby can be exciting and full of wonder. It can also be stressful and somewhat scary – **IF** you aren't prepared or don't know what to expect. Before you bring your new baby home, it is best to think about all your needs and to know the resources that are available.

### Things to Consider Ahead of Time

Being prepared is the best way to make the baby's arrival as smooth and stress free as possible. Here are some things to take care of before your baby is born.



### Toys, Clothes and Equipment You Will Need

Babies don't need a lot of "things" to be comfortable, healthy, and happy. What they need most is lots of attention, time, patience and love. However, there are some basic items to have when your baby arrives home. If this is not your first baby, you probably already know about or even have some of the basics. However, even if this is not your first child, equipment safety standards and recommendations are constantly changing, so it is best keep up-to-date on current standards. Here are some of the essentials:

- **Car seat:** You can't leave the hospital without one. Choose one that easily fits into your car. Get help installing it (contact your local AAA or fire department). If a car seat has been in an accident or does not meet current safety standards, do not use it at all.
- **A place to sleep:** Use a crib or other sleeping arrangement. Make sure the crib slats are no more than  $2\frac{3}{8}$  inches apart and that no lead paint was used on it. The mattress for the crib needs to fit snugly into the crib so that the baby cannot slip in between the mattress and the crib side. Babies should not sleep with pillows or other heavy bedding.
- **Diapers and wipes:** Make sure you have some newborn sizes and a few of the next size up –

### In This Issue

Nursing or Bottle Feeding? .....	2
Finding a Doctor .....	2
Creating a Support System for You .....	3
Know Your Costs and Financial Options .....	3
For More Information/Resources for New Moms --	4



### WAIT – FIND OUT BEFORE YOU BUY!

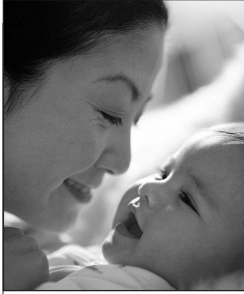
The Consumer Product Safety Commission is a federal agency that reports and sends alerts on the safety standards and any recent recalls on a variety of products, including baby products. Check their website or call them before buying ANYTHING.

Their toll free number is:  
**1-800-638-2772**  
(TTY 800-638-8270)

Or visit:

[www.cpsc.gov](http://www.cpsc.gov)

# The Daily Parent – BRINGING HOME YOUR NEW BABY



infants grow quickly the first few weeks. Don't forget the diaper wipes! A changing table is also recommended. Changing pads are needed as well.

- **Stroller:** For newborns and small babies, it is best to either use the sturdier traditional or "single" stroller. Always use the belt strap. Umbrella strollers are okay for toddlers, but not for babies that can't sit up on their own.
- **Sling carrier:** An infant sling is a way for you and your baby to bond. Babies need a lot of holding and touching to nurture their emotional and physical growth. A baby sling can help you to keep your baby close and be able to talk with your baby while moving about.
- **First aid/emergency supplies:** Ask your pediatrician about any supplies and medications (thermometer, baby acetaminophen) you should keep at home.
- **Sanitation/Germs:** It is important to make sure you or other people in contact with the baby wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water before and after handling the baby, preparing food, and of course, diapering.
- **Taking Baby Out:** Although newborns can certainly go out, it is advised not to expose your baby to crowds, such as in shopping malls or grocery stores, because they are still very vulnerable. Babies' immune systems are not fully developed and they need time, while going through required immunizations, for their bodies to grow and adjust. Try to wait until they are at least four or five months old before exposing them to world of germs and viruses.
- **Safety items:** Having safe, current and properly working equipment, such as car seats and strollers, is a priority. Some other things you can have to make sure your baby is safe, especially when they start to move around around, include:
  - Cover plugs for electrical outlets
  - Cabinet locks



- Toilet seat locks
- Safety gates for stairways or rooms off limits
- Cord shorteners for blinds or any other cords that could be pulled
- Corner covers to place over sharp edges or corners on furniture
- **Clothes:** Onesies, sleepers, outerwear appropriate for the season, a couple of crib blankets, crib sheets, and receiving blankets are basic clothing items for newborns.
- **Play items:** Babies learn through touch and taste. To help them develop, having the following items can help stimulate and amuse them:
  - a mobile
  - musical toys or toys that make noise (rattle)
  - music
  - soft animals
  - soft baby books

## Nursing or Bottle Feeding?

Whether you choose to breastfeed your baby or use a bottle, there are some things to consider for each.

### Breastfeeding

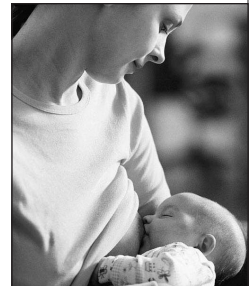
Breastfeeding is considered the best nourishment for newborns and infants. If you are going to breastfeed, make sure you are prepared to spend time when feeding your baby. Newborns tend to feed every two hours.

You may want to consider getting a breast pump (hand or electric) for more flexibility. Lactation counselors are available at hospitals to help guide you through the process.

### Formula feeding

There are several kinds of formula available for babies. Ask your pediatrician for the ones she recommends. You may have to try several different formulas to find one your baby likes and can tolerate. Some babies are allergic to formula and will need other options that your pediatrician can discuss with you.

Make sure you have several

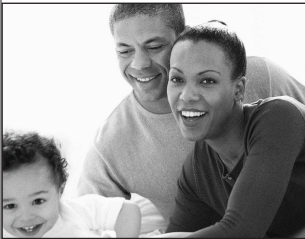


# The Daily Parent – BRINGING HOME YOUR NEW BABY

bottles to use. It is easiest to prepare several bottles ahead of time and refrigerate them for when the baby needs them.

## Finding a Doctor

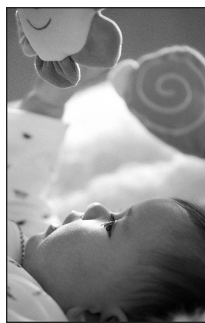
Within days of bringing your baby home, you will need to take him to the pediatrician for a check up and to start getting the series of shots that babies need. Once born, your child's care is a continuation of the care you have been getting while pregnant. Start a few weeks (or months) before delivery



to look for a doctor for your newborn, if you don't already have one. Speak with your doctor and ask for her recommendations and referrals. Another good source of information are your friends. Choose several doctors and arrange for appointments to go and speak with them. That way, you can get to know the pediatrician's style, approach to medicine, and ask questions that you may have.

## Creating a Support System for You

Taking care of a baby is a hard job. Although the rewards are priceless, as a parent, you need a good support system to make sure you stay healthy and are able to take care of yourself as well. If you have family, friends, neighbors that can help you out with tasks, try to take advantage. Just having someone to run errands for you, watch the baby for an hour can make a big difference in your stress level. Make sure you take time out for yourself!



There are many mother support groups available, both in person and online. Many hospitals have support groups for new mothers and fathers, as well.

## Know Your Costs and Financial Options

It is extremely helpful to look at and plan your finances ahead of time before your baby is born.

## STEPS TO TAKE WHEN LOOKING FOR CHILD CARE

If you'll need child care at some point, you'll want to make sure you start your search early. Speak with other mothers and fathers in the area to see what kind of child care other parents use and what is available in your area.

- 1. Start early:** It's not too early to begin looking for child care. The process can take a long time.
- 2. Call your local experts:** Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (CCR&Rs) are located across the country to help you with finding child care and getting information on licensing requirements and financial assistance programs. **To find your local CCR&R and for more information on caring for your baby, call Child Care Aware at 1-800-424-2246.**
- 3. Visit and ask questions:** Once you identify providers you are interested in, ask questions about the adult to child ratio, how many children are in care, the providers' training and education, how long the providers have been providing care, and if the center or home is accredited by a national organization.
- 4. Make a choice:** After visiting and getting your questions answered, make a choice that is best for you. You can always change your mind or consider other options.
- 5. Stay involved:** Keep communications open and often with providers. Make sure you know what your child is doing when in care and observe and note how your child seems to be doing. Trust your instincts.

Make sure you take into account all your expenses and your income to best plan how to make your time home with the baby work for you. If you have a two-family income, you may find that being home with your baby actually saves you money in the long run (eating out, parking fees, and so on). There are also several tax credits available to families with children

## The Daily Parent – BRINGING HOME YOUR NEW BABY

such as the Child Tax Credit and the Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit that you want to make sure to take advantage of during tax season.

### For More Information/ Resources For New Moms

- **Babycenter.com:** A popular Internet website for new and expectant parents, together with its companion site ParentCenter.com. This site is for parents of children ages 2 to 8, and is dedicated to helping you find the information and support you need during pregnancy and in caring for a baby, toddler, or child.
- **For child care in your area:** Call Child Care Aware, a national toll-free hotline to help you locate your local child care resource and referral agency. In turn, they can provide you with information about child care and registered providers in your area. 1-800-424-2246.



- **For parenting classes/new mom groups:** Contact your local hospitals, community clinics, or local recreation centers for classes and groups on how to take care of babies, and to join new mom or parents groups.

- **Support groups/internet groups for new moms:** MSN, AOL, and most internet service providers have specific chat rooms or groups for new mothers.

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