

# LIVE YOUR BEST LIFE

Life-affirming resources for parents, grandparents, and guardians

## NEW DADS



United as one. Affirming life for all.

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# INTRODUCTION

So much of parenting resource materials out there is targeted towards new moms, and rightfully so! Mothers have a biological bond with their babies that can't be replaced, not even by their father. But that doesn't mean a relationship between baby and father isn't necessary. The opposite is true! When a father takes his role seriously, the whole family benefits.

You might be tempted to scour the internet and/or library to learn all you can on how to be the best dad. While this can be helpful, remember that what your family needs most right now is your presence. Learn to be attentive and open to your spouse's and baby's needs. You'll also find resources on how to cope with your own needs during this challenging time. We hope this little booklet acts as a launching pad for learning more about yourself and your growing family.

For life,

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# LEARN THE BASICS

Welcome to the wonderful world of sleepless nights and endless diaper changes! Soon enough, you'll get the hang of it all and be the amazing, pro-active dad you were meant to be. For now, things might seem overwhelming, especially if you don't have experience being around babies.

Something important to remember is that paternity leave isn't necessarily the time to take on personal passion projects. You'll be better off devoting this precious time to bonding with your child, and helping around the house. In the next few pages, you'll find some instructional tips every dad should know. Embrace the learning curve!



## THE MORE YOU KNOW

The learning doesn't have to start when the baby is born! If possible, take some time in the months and weeks before the birth to learn some new skills.

For example, type "First Aid for Parents" on [eventbrite.ca](https://www.eventbrite.ca) and look for workshops in your local area. In case of an emergency, you'll be grateful you took the time to prepare yourself!

# HOW TO HOLD A BABY



## **Cradle**

1. Lay baby in the crook of your arm
2. Support the bum with your hand
3. Lean back to avoid straining shoulders



## **Belly**

1. Drape baby over your arm (facing downward)



## **Back**

1. Lay baby on lap while sitting
2. Support head and neck with hand



## **Snuggle**

1. Lay baby on chest or lower shoulder
2. Support neck with one hand and bum with other hand
3. Keep baby's head turned to one side so they can breathe



## **Football**

1. Baby curls around your body (legs extended behind you)
2. Support head and neck with hand

*Babies can be fussy! Try switching positions to help with soothing.*

# HOW TO CHANGE A DIAPER



1 Find a clean surface (away from where food is prepared) and lay baby down. Have a clean diaper, wipes, and a distraction toy nearby. Unclasp the dirty diaper and lift baby's legs to remove from underneath. (At this stage, it's best to replace with a clean diaper right away, in case baby soils again right away).



2 Wipe baby's bottom. Don't scrub, but gently pat and remove any mess in between fat folds and cracks. Always wipe from front to back to avoid infections. Apply diaper rash cream, if needed.



3 If you haven't already, place a clean diaper under baby's bottom and pull up to clasp together (pull tabs are always located at the back of the diaper).



4 Securely fasten the diaper tabs - not too loose and not too tight!



5 Dress baby and dispose of dirty diaper.

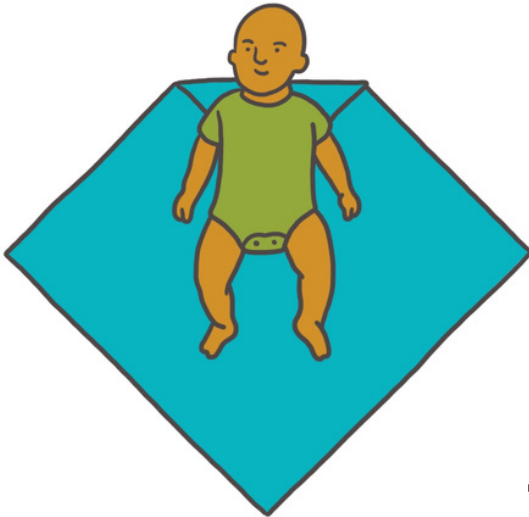
## Diaper bag essentials

- Diapers
- Wipes
- Burp rag
- Change of baby clothes
- Pacifier
- Changing pad
- Hand sanitizer
- Toys or books
- Clean shirt for mom or dad

*If you're using cloth diapers be sure to include a plastic bag for soiled diapers. And if you're formula-feeding, pack a few bottles, formula (and drinking water just in case).*

# HOW TO SWADDLE A BABY

1



2



3



4



5



1. Place baby on a thin, square blanket
2. Fold right-hand corner over baby
3. Fold bottom corner up and tuck behind baby's shoulder
4. Fold left-hand corner over baby
5. Tuck corner in and voila!

*Babies feel secure and comforted when swaddled. It also prevents them from scratching their faces when their nails get long (this happens more often than you'd think!)*

# THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND

1

## ***Don't panic!***

Just like moms, dads have an instinct when it comes to parenting too. It might look different between mom and dad, but trust your gut. You can do this!

2

## ***Be prepared not to sleep***

Every child is different, but one thing is for sure: babies have a crazy eating and sleeping schedule. Be prepared to help out with nightly diaper changes and feedings.

3

## ***Your finances will change...***

But it doesn't mean you'll go broke! All it requires is a mental shift of your priorities to include your family's needs.

4

## ***Get used to chaos***

Having a routine with your child is important for their development (and your sanity!), but being mentally prepared to veer off-course will spare you lots of resentment in the long run!

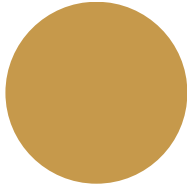
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## ***Returning to work might be tough***

If you're privileged to have paternity leave, that's wonderful! But be warned: your sleep patterns will have changed, which might make the first few weeks back to work a little rough.

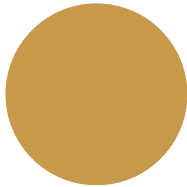


# STAYING SANE



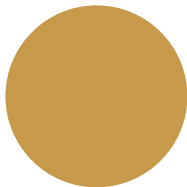
## ***Stay sharp***

Perinatal (meaning, the weeks before and after childbirth) mood and anxiety disorders like postpartum depression (PPD) or postpartum anxiety (PPA) are extremely common. According to Postpartum Support International (PSI), 1 in 7 moms and 1 in 10 dads experience PPD. Treatment is different for everyone and may involve increased self care, support groups, talk therapy or medication.



## ***Stay social***

In times of fatigue, it's easy to gravitate towards mindless activities like watching TV or scrolling through social media. Beat this temptation by finding a local dad group that (ideally) meets in person. Having a support group that you can share with and listen to others' experiences can help bring back that *joie-de-vivre* you may be lacking during this exhausting period.



## ***Stay fit***

Even if it's only a few minutes a day, find time to do a bit of exercise (even if it's as simple as jogging around the block, yoga, or lifting light weights). With time, you can incorporate your baby into your exercise routines and enjoy the benefit of feeling good while bonding with your child.

# BOOKS ON FATHERHOOD

BE PREPARED: A PRACTICAL HANDBOOK FOR NEW DADS

*by Gary Greenberg, Jeannie Hayden*

THE EXPECTANT FATHER: THE ULTIMATE GUIDE FOR DADS-TO-BE (NEW FATHER SERIES, 5TH EDITION)

*by Armin A. Brott*

THE NEW DAD'S SURVIVAL GUIDE: MAN-TO-MAN ADVICE FOR FIRST-TIME FATHERS

*by Scott Mactavish*

CRIBSHEET: A DATA-DRIVEN GUIDE TO BETTER, MORE RELAXED PARENTING, FROM BIRTH TO PRESCHOOL

*by Emily Oster*

DIAPER DUDE: THE ULTIMATE DAD'S GUIDE TO SURVIVING THE FIRST TWO YEARS

*by Chris Pegula, Frank Meyer*



**[booksdadslove.com](http://booksdadslove.com) is a website dedicated to encouraging dads to (re)discover bonding with their kids through books and thoughtful blog posts.**

## FURTHER READING AND RESOURCES

**Postpartum Support:** <https://www.postpartum.net/get-help/help-for-dads/>

**Dad Central:** <https://dadcentral.ca/free-resources/>

**Dad jokes:** <https://www.fatherhood.gov/for-dads/dad-jokes>

**Manhood Journey - a guide for Christian dads:** <https://manhoodjourney.org/>

**BC Council for Families:** <https://www.bccf.ca/>

**The Art of Manliness:** <https://www.artofmanliness.com/>

*Train up a child in the way he should go; even  
when he is old he will not depart from it.*

*Proverbs 22:6*



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