



READY FOR PARENTING



Mate matters and more

Many parents will tell you that no matter what you do to get ready for a baby, you will still never be fully prepared for the wonder that enters your life. Most of the surprises are ones that you would not change for the world. But they'll also remind you that you have just accepted the most important change in your life.

Much of the work, care and juggling that goes with parenting needs to be sorted through. Mothers and fathers work together more now to balance jobs with child raising. And even though fathers are taking on a greater role than dads of the past, women still carry most of the family load. Couples still pondering family life are weighing the ups and downs of what could lie ahead.

From the time you learn about a pregnancy until your baby is 18 months old, you can expect to face some tough times in your relationship. Planning and thinking through the idea of parenting *before* pregnancy may be the healthiest way to make sure you are as ready as you can be.

Yours, mine & hours

Newborns feed about 8 to 12 times in a 24-hour period. Do you know how your days and minutes will be filled with schedules that are so demanding? Have you talked to your partner about how you will share the work?

YOU		TASKS	PARTNER	
Time before baby	Time after baby		Time before baby	Time after baby
		Eating		
		Sleeping		
		Hobbies & Fun		
		House cleaning		
		Cooking		
		Grocery shopping		
		Laundry		
		Cutting grass		
		Work		
		Other		
		Feeding baby		
		Diaper baby		
		Washing baby		
		Comforting baby		
		Playing with baby		
		Other		



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Keep in mind that, for the first 6 weeks after delivery, the mother is often very busy with important roles such as:

- ❖ Recovering from pregnancy, labour and delivery
- ❖ Attaching and bonding with the baby
- ❖ Establishing breastfeeding

Beyond time...what babies really mean to you

Now put aside your mental picture of the demands a new family member can place on your household and think about the big picture.

On a scale of 1 to 10 rate how a baby might affect your happiness

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
 Frustration & anxiety Total happiness

On a scale of 1 to 10, rate the amount of conflict you have in your relationship now.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
 Lots of conflict No conflict

Compare your rating with your partner's. Talk about reasons for the rating to see how that guides your decision about having children. If you find your feelings are quite different, now is the time to think about it and work it through.

FOR HELP CLOSE TO HOME CONTACT:

Family and friends

Local public health unit

Local Ontario Early Years Centre: 1-866-821-7770

Surviving the early stages

- ❖ Who will do the house cleaning in the first few weeks? Or does it really need to be done?
- ❖ Who will do the laundry in the first week?
- ❖ When will mom have time for her own baths and other care?
- ❖ Who will make the meals?
- ❖ Who will handle the baby's medical check-ups?
- ❖ Whose help will you actively solicit in the first week?
- ❖ How will you spend time together as a couple in the first few weeks?

Easing into parenthood...

- ❖ Ask a public health nurse about services for health before, during and after pregnancy.
- ❖ Chat with parents of young children about what they have been through.
- ❖ Find out about community services for families of young children.
- ❖ Talk to your partner about how you will share the work.
- ❖ Talk to your family about how they can help.