

Bonding with Your Baby

One of the best ways to begin bonding is to spend special time with your baby in the hospital or as soon after birth as possible. In fact, bonding only happens between people who spend a lot of time — even most of their time — together.

Stay at your partner's bedside after your baby is born, when she and the baby have their first skin-to-skin contact. Smile at your baby, look into his eyes and talk to him. Babies like skin-to-skin contact with dads too, after they've had their first feeding. The sooner you start holding, feeding, talking to — being a dad to — your baby, the more deeply you'll bond.

Soon, you will start to pick up your baby's cues and you will know what he needs from you. Does he move his arms when he wants to be picked up? Does he make a certain sound when he wants to play? Does he coo when he wants you to rock him to sleep? As time goes by, your baby will learn that he can count on you. He'll feel safe and you'll feel good that you understand how to take care of him.

Bonding doesn't happen all at once. There's nothing wrong with you if you aren't comfortable with your baby right away — or if he's fussy or doesn't pay much attention to you.

What's important is that you show your baby he is wanted and loved and that he can count on you to meet his needs.



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What Can I Do to Create a Strong Bond with My Child?

There are lots of things that help dads bond with their babies.

- Cuddle him in your arms.
- Burp him after feedings.
- Change his diapers.
- Give him a bath.
- Spend time “skin-to-skin” with him on your chest.
- Gently rock him to sleep.
- Get up in the night with him, pick him up and soothe him.
- Talk to him — all the time — about anything.
- Walk with him when he cries or is fussy.
- Make silly faces that make him laugh.
- Read and sing to him.



Another way to help you bond with your baby is to help your partner give him the best start in life by breastfeeding. You can:

- Tell your partner you are proud of her for breastfeeding your baby.
- Do chores and other things allowing her time to breastfeed your baby.



Supporting and Understanding Your Partner

Being a dad is the most important job you'll ever have. Part of that job is being a good partner by offering support to your partner. When she comes home from the hospital she will have to rest. Giving birth is different for every woman, but anyone who just had a baby has been through a lot. She may feel wiped out and more tired than ever before. You can help get things back to normal.

Your partner will feel better faster if you:

- Give her time to rest.
- Make sure she keeps her follow-up appointments with her doctor.
- Show her that you care how she feels.
- Encourage her to spend time with her friends and family.
- Support her effort to breastfeed.
- Play with the baby, together with your partner and on your own.
- Help with the day-to-day baby and household needs.



Pay Attention to Your Partner — Do Things Just for Her

- Make her favorite meal or snack.
- Sit next to her and enjoy watching a movie she picked.
- Give her a massage.
- Ask how her day went.
- Do something small to be nice to her every day.
- When she's ready, find a sitter and take your partner out to dinner or to a movie.

Resource

Healthy Texas Women is a program dedicated to offering women's health and family planning at no cost to eligible women in Texas. These services help women plan their families, whether it is to achieve, postpone or prevent pregnancy. [HealthyTexasWomen.org](https://www.healthytexaswomen.org)