

The Challenges of Becoming a New Parent

STRAIGHT TALK ON HOW PARTNERS CAN SUPPORT THE TRANSITION TO PARENTHOOD



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Becoming a new mom is a hard transition, but there are also a lot of new and unanticipated challenges that partners may experience. You are trying to be as supportive as possible but it can feel helpless sometimes as you can't breastfeed the baby for her and you don't really know what she is feeling either physically or emotionally.

The number one way you can take care of your new baby is to support and care for the mother of your child. We like to suggest that new moms greatly benefit from what we call a "mother bubble". This is a space where she feels mentally and physically safe and is relieved of all things outside the immediate care of the new baby.

What it really comes down to is to keep things simple. It can be very overwhelming to have a baby attached to you all day AND night. Something as simple as being encouraged to take a 30 min break, to have a shower by herself, or take a nap alone can feel like winning the lottery in the early days. Women often feel guilty when trying to take care of these basic needs but being gently reminded by their partners in a loving and supportive way can be very comforting.

Lastly, try to remember to not take things personally at the beginning. You are both under a lot of stress and as her partner you are her main support. Sometimes that means just being there physically and emotionally as she navigates this transition to motherhood. Hang in there - you will both adjust to life as new parents and before long you will be looking back at how hectic the early days were for both of you.

Below is a list of helpful things that you can do to make the mother of your baby feel amazing and help you create your own "mother bubble".

- Run a nice warm bubble bath as soon as she starts a feeding. Once she finishes you can tell her that you will take the baby while she soaks and relaxes - and that she deserves it.
- Bring her flowers and remind her how well she is doing; that you are very proud of all the hard work she is doing for your family.
- Take the baby after a feeding and tell your partner she deserves a break to go sit quietly and read a magazine, catch up on Facebook or whatever will make her feel best.
- Rub her shoulders and neck as often as you can as nursing can really make for a lot of kinks in this area. Not only that but it's a great way to relieve stress and be close to your partner.
- Offer to take the baby after a feeding so she can take a nap by herself or leave the house to grab coffee, or wander through a bookstore.
- Cook her dinner - even if it's ordering a pizza! Light a candle and set the table. It's nice to feel that there was thought put into it.
- Offer to clean her bedding so she can have a great night in a nice clean bed. It's a simple gesture and who doesn't like clean sheets?