

BABY BITS

9 Secrets All New Mamas Should Know

BY CASSI DENARI

Ready or not, your baby is coming! As a new mom there will be a lot of uncertainty — and possibly tons of unanticipated guilt! Am I doing this right? Is my baby eating too often, not often enough? Is he sleeping enough, pooping enough? Is his poop supposed to be that color? At times, you may think you are doing it all wrong. You're not. Here are tips:

GOT MILK?

Don't hesitate to call a lactation consultant if you have any questions about nursing. Breastfeeding doesn't come naturally to every woman. Like most things in life, you do much better with a little instruction, so don't be afraid to ask.

"When I was in the hospital, I asked every nurse that came in my room for advice. Was I doing it right? Is the baby latched on correctly? Did she have any suggestions? I left the hospital with a little more confidence about nursing," says Lisa Banks, mother of two.

DOCTOR DOCTOR

If you have health concerns about your baby, don't feel uncomfortable calling the pediatrician or advice nurse. Trust your instincts and call.

Always call the doctor if the baby develops a rash or a very high fever.

HEAVY LIFTING

Don't lift anything heavier than your baby for the first month. Also, as soon as the doctor gives the OK, start doing those Kegel exercises.

Sherrie Palm, founder and CEO of the Association for Pelvic Organ Prolapse Support (APOPS) says, "Women do not realize they should be contracting their PC muscles before they pick up their children and that any heavy lifting can create pelvic floor muscle problems, particularly if done too soon after childbirth."

AAAHH, THE SHOWER

Shower every day. You'll feel better and have more energy. Before you have a baby, you might think it's absurd that you would need to be reminded. But after, take care of you!

HELP ME, HELP YOU

If someone offers their help (bringing dinner over, doing your laundry, holding the baby while you shower or sleep), let them! Put the "I can do it all myself attitude" on hold for this short time and get used to letting people help you.

IT'S NOT PERSONAL

After you have a baby everyone you meet will offer advice. Don't take their suggestions



New dads need lots of encouragement and permission to do things their own way. Praise and honor the new dad and he'll come through big time!

personally. You're not doing anything wrong; other moms just love to dispense helpful information. After all, they've been there before!

HUSH, LITTLE MAMA

"Sleep when the baby sleeps" is actually excellent advice. Who cares about the cleaning and the laundry, you need sleep!

OH, THE DRAMA

Your hormones are now working overtime adjusting to your postpartum body. You may cry for no reason at all; you will laugh, and you may be blue all within a 10-minute time span. Don't be alarmed — these are your hormones talking. Be kind to yourself. This will pass. If the baby blues persist, consult your doctor.

ASK AND RECEIVE

This is not the time to hint or hope that your husband understands your wants and needs. Having a baby has not changed his oblivion to the dirty dishes in the sink or the mounds of laundry scattered throughout the house. If you need him to do something, you must ask.

"If you tell him specifically what you want, you are much more likely to get it," says Greg Bishop author of *Hit the Ground Crawling* (Dads Adventure; 2006).

Also, make sure to involve your new daddy with the baby and encourage him! Let him change diapers, get the baby to sleep, give a bottle, entertain, etc. Let him do his own thing with the baby; this is their time to bond.

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