Don’t panic! Congratulations and welcome to the DadPad
Information about your DadPad

Why the DadPad?

Babies don’t come with a set of instructions, so dads have told us they’d like important information on how to care for their baby and what to expect as a first-time dad.

We listened to what dads, their partners and professionals asked for and combined it all in this new DadPad for first-time fathers.

What if you need to know more?

We have tried to include all the important stuff, but if you need more information we have given you some suggestions throughout the DadPad.

Always remember that if you are unsure about anything to do with your baby’s health contact your Midwife, Health Visitor or GP. Or, if it’s an Emergency, dial 999.

Giving your feedback

The DadPad is a brand new resource for all first-time fathers in Wiltshire.

We would welcome your feedback on the DadPad. You can do this by speaking with your health visitor (at your local Child Health clinic or routine review) or going online and completing a short survey - see below and the link at the end of the DadPad. Your feedback will help us to ensure the DadPad is a useful resource for dads, and inform the advice and support they receive.

Visit the Wiltshire Council website: www.wiltshire.gov.uk/dadpadsurvey

To find the Dadpad online visit www.wiltshire.gov.uk/dadpad.pdf
How to use the DadPad

Your DadPad covers the parenting topics listed below:

1. Breastfeeding
2. Bottlefeeding
3. How babies like to be held
4. Caring for a crying baby
5. Safe sleeping advice
6. Surviving without sleep
7. How to change a nappy
8. Washing your baby
9. Communicating with your baby
10. Bonding with your baby
11. Child development
12. Positive mental health
13. Further information

Once you have read the information on one side of a card, flip the card over and follow the information on the back of the same card.

Flick through your DadPad to get to the heading you want. The information is presented in a step-by-step, manual style so it’s easy to follow and understand.
Why Breastfeed?
Breast milk is the best and most natural food for your baby. It gives your baby the best possible start in life. The benefits of breastfeeding will last your baby's lifetime so it's worth getting it right in the early weeks and months.

Breast milk contains all the right nutrients for your baby, which only mum’s body can make. It also helps to protect your baby against many illnesses and infections.

What does breast milk help to protect against?
Breast milk provides your baby with the best possible protection against many illnesses such as:

- Diarrhoea and vomiting
- Coughs and colds
- Chest infections
- Urine infections
- Ear infections
- Atopic eczema
- Obesity and diabetes
- Breastfeeding also helps protect mum from breast cancer and osteoporosis (weak bones causing hip fractures).

Other benefits of breastfeeding
- As your baby grows and changes, mum’s breast milk changes and adapts to your baby’s needs
- Mum can breastfeed whenever and wherever baby needs a feed – her milk is always the right temperature – no fuss, no preparation or waiting
- Breastmilk is free – on average breastfeeding saves £500+ on formula milk alone
- When your baby needs a change, dirty nappies are not as smelly as those of formula fed babies

For further information, visit the NHS Information Service for Parents: www.nhs.uk/InformationServiceForParents
Dads’ role in breastfeeding

Breastfeeding is time consuming and can be tiring for mothers. It is something mum and baby learn together, and it can take time to get right. It can take a while to get used to and be comfortable with, so everything you can do to make things easier will help, especially in the first few weeks. Find out as much as you can about breastfeeding before baby arrives. Remember that although the relationship between mum and baby is close in the early weeks (when it's important to get breastfeeding established) you have an important role to play and can offer vital practical and emotional support. There are things you can do to help you bond with your baby too.

You can:

• Give ‘skin to skin’ cuddles to help settle your baby after or in between feeds
• Find out how to assemble/sterilize a breast pump for expressing breastmilk before baby arrives
• Support and reassure your partner while she’s breastfeeding
• Bring her a drink (to help keep her hydrated), offer a pillow/cushion if she needs to get comfy
• Prepare dinner and do some of the chores around the house (hoovering, washing, etc.)
• Offer to change nappies, wind and bath baby or calm baby by giving skin-to-skin cuddles
• Offer to take baby for a walk in a sling or pushchair so mum can have a nap
• Get to know and bond with your baby, talking to and stroking him/her – see slide 18 (on baby massage)
• Try and limit the number of visitors and length of time they stay in the early weeks, especially if mum doesn’t feel confident breastfeeding in front of others

For the first 4 – 6 weeks mum’s body is working out how much milk to produce to feed baby, so it’s best not to express or give other milk until breastfeeding is established (unless recommended by a health professional). The more breastmilk baby takes, the more mum will make. After 4 – 6 weeks, you can offer a bottle of expressed breast milk. Health professionals also recommend exclusive breastfeeding for around the first six months of your baby’s life. After that, continuing to breastfeed or giving your baby breast milk alongside other food will help to support their healthy development.

Remember that the benefits of breastfeeding will last your baby’s lifetime, so it is really worth working at getting it right in the early days and weeks.

For further information, visit the NHS Information Service for Parents: www.nhs.uk/InformationServiceForParents
Overcoming breastfeeding difficulties

Many mums go through some difficulties when breastfeeding, especially in the early weeks. However there are few challenges which should cause mum to stop feeding, and knowing some of the problems, and what you can do to help, will help her to continue breastfeeding. Some common problems are:

**Sore, cracked nipples**
- usually caused by baby being wrongly attached at the breast. Ask your health visitor to check how baby attaches and feeds, or seek help from your nearest Breastfeeding Peer Support Group (details below).

**Lack of milk supply**
- this may be a real or perceived problem. Feeding on demand is the best way to ensure mum is making enough milk.
- A new baby should be feeding at least 8 times in every 24 hours, including at least once at night. Baby should be gaining weight after the first 2 weeks.
- Ask your health visitor to check positioning and attachment. Seek help from your nearest Breastfeeding Peer Support Group.

**Blocked ducts/mastitis**
- symptoms are usually redness of the breast with flu-like feelings.
- This is often caused by incorrect attachment so seek advice from your health visitor or Breastfeeding Peer Support Group. Ibuprofen can help reduce swelling, and paracetamol can reduce high temperature (follow dosage instructions).
- Note: ibuprofen is ok for your partner to take as long as she doesn't have asthma that gets worse if she takes ibuprofen or has an active stomach ulcer. Feed baby as often as possible to reduce milk blockages (if too sore, then express). Cabbage leaves can help relieve pain.
- See your GP if symptoms do not subside within 24 hours.

There are plenty of places to find help and support:

- **Breastfeeding Peer Support Groups (Mum2Mum scheme)**
  Volunteer-led groups run by women, who have experience of breastfeeding their own children and who have attended an accredited training programme to become peer supporters. They volunteer to support other breastfeeding mums on a group or a one-to-one basis. Weekly groups are held at Children's Centres across the county. To find a group near you, go to: [http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/publichealth/pregnancybirthbreastfeeding](http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/publichealth/pregnancybirthbreastfeeding)
  Or to find out more, phone Wiltshire Public Health on **0300 003 4566**.

- Contact your local midwifery or health visiting team
- Phone the National Childbirth Trust's (NCT's) National Breastfeeding Helpline on **0300 100 0212**
- Find helpful videos at [http://www.nhs.uk/start4life/breastfeeding-videos](http://www.nhs.uk/start4life/breastfeeding-videos)
Bottle feeding

A good mum is a happy mum and if she cannot breastfeed or chooses not to for whatever reason, this does not make her any less of a mum than one who chooses to breastfeed. Support your partner if breastfeeding isn’t possible – don’t be critical of her or tough on yourself, if it doesn’t work out.

If you and your partner look into the pros and cons of each and decide breastfeeding isn’t for you then make sure you speak to your midwife, health visitor or GP about which formula milk is best for your baby.

There are some important guidelines to follow when bottle feeding your baby. Following these guidelines at every feed will make it less likely that your baby will become ill.

Preparing Bottles

- Wash all bottle parts in hot soapy water and rinse well
- Then every part of the bottle needs to be sterilised. You can use cold water and sterilising solution or tablets or a microwave or electric steriliser to do this. Make sure that you are familiar with and follow the instructions for your chosen method
- Make each feed as and when the baby needs to be fed, rather than making feeds in advance and storing them in the fridge.

To make a feed using powdered formula milk

- Clean the work surface where the feed will be made and wash and dry your hands carefully
- Boil fresh tap water in a kettle or covered pan
- Leave the water to stand for no more than 30 minutes. The water must be very hot when the powder is mixed into it (70 – 90 degrees)
- Carefully pour the required amount of hot water into the sterilised bottle
- Add the required amount of powder to the water, making sure that you closely follow the instructions on the formula packet or tin
- Fit the teat and lid to the bottle, taking care not to touch the sterile teat.

(Continued over).
Next steps

- Gently shake the bottle to mix
- Cool the hot milk by running under the cold tap or standing in a bowl of cold water
- Test the temperature of the milk by dripping a little onto the inside of your wrist – it should feel just tepid
- Feed the milk to your baby and discard any milk not used within two hours.

Feeding Your Baby
Feed your baby on demand when s/he needs feeding. This responsive feeding will ensure your baby is more settled. Follow these top tips to help you bottle feed as safely possible and help ensure you have a close and loving feeding experience:

- Offer feeds when baby shows early signs of being hungry
- If baby is upset, try to sooth her before you offer a feed. Skin-to-skin contact is great for calming babies at any time
- Hold baby close to you, in a slightly upright position with her head supported so she can breathe and swallow comfortably
- Look into baby’s eyes and talk gently to her
- Gently rub the teat above baby’s top lip and encourage her to open her mouth and poke her tongue out
- Place the teat into front of baby’s mouth allowing her to draw it in further
- Allow just enough milk to cover the teat and pace the feed to meet baby’s needs, gently removing it if baby appears to want a break
- If the teat becomes flattened while you are feeding, pull gently on the corner of your baby’s mouth to release the vacuum
- Offer frequent breaks throughout the feed, sitting baby upright and gently patting her back to help bring up her wind (this may be just a small amount as wind is not as big a problem as some people think)
- Never force baby to take a whole feed as she will know when she has had enough
- Never leave baby alone with a bottle as there is a risk they may choke
- Use first formula milk for the first year of your baby’s life, rather than follow-on formula milk

For further information, visit the NHS Information Service for Parents: www.nhs.uk/InformationServiceForParents
Holding and handling a baby

It’s natural to feel nervous about handling a newborn, especially if you’ve never held a baby before.

Some new parents worry they will hurt their baby because they look so fragile, but don’t let this stop you from picking your baby up or holding them.

Just remember...the more you hold your baby, the more you’ll get used to it and the more they’ll get used to you. In no-time it will feel really natural for both of you.

The basics of holding a baby - what you need to know

Young babies have a heavy head and weak neck muscles, which aren’t strong enough to hold their head up or keep it still. This means that whenever you pick your baby up or hold them, you need to support their head and neck at all times.

You will notice a couple of areas on your baby’s head that seem to be lacking bony protection. These are called soft spots and are normal gaps in a newborn’s skull. They allow your baby’s brain to grow rapidly throughout the next year. Many parents are afraid to touch these soft spots, but you can be rest assured that they are well protected from gentle day-to-day baby handling.

Your first time

As you pick your baby up, slide one hand under their head and the other under their bottom. Settle your baby so their head is resting in the crook of your arm, with your free arm supporting the underneath of their body.

“My daughter looked so fragile and, as I was not used to babies, handling her at first was terrifying. Keep their head supported and hold your baby securely – if you feel confident, they will too.”

(Shane – first-time dad)
How babies like to be held

Babies liked to be held cuddled up close to you. Carry your baby so their chest is against yours and their head is resting on your shoulder. This is a very good position for burping and your baby will like it because they can look at things over your shoulder.

- Lying supported on top of your chest
- With your arm around their tummy and their back against the front of your body
- Cradled in your arms, with their head supported – great for smiling and talking to each other
- Holding your baby skin-to-skin will comfort your baby, helping to make their breathing and heart rate more stable so they cry less. It’s a great way to help you develop a special bond with your baby too.
- Laying tummy down across your knees will also often calm a fussy baby. Stroke or gently pat their back
- Sitting on your lap with their back resting against you and your hand holding their chest. Then rock back and forth
- In a sling – being close, but arms free to do other things.

The forearm lift

This will often calm a fussy baby. Bend one arm and place your baby, tummy down, along the length of your forearm, with their head resting in your open hand and their legs straddling your arm. Bring your arm close to your body for security and then stroke or gently pat their back with your other hand.

“At first I felt so clumsy handling my baby son but I soon became more confident and now love picking him up and having cuddle time.”
(Ziggy – first-time dad)

What babies DON’T like

- Being held without their head or back supported
- Being held at arm’s length – this makes them feel insecure
- Being picked up or moved from one position to another very suddenly. Keep movements smooth and gentle
- Any rough play or handling, like being gripped too tightly or having a bottle or dummy pushed into their mouths
- Shaking – never shake a baby. This can cause serious, lasting damage to your baby’s health.

For further information, visit the NHS Information Service for Parents: www.nhs.uk/InformationServiceForParents
Caring for a crying baby

All babies cry. They cry to let you know they need something or are uncomfortable. It’s easy to panic or worry that as a parent you’re doing something wrong. Understanding that periods of crying are a normal part of any healthy baby’s development is key to getting to grips with becoming a parent and keeping your cool!

The good news is it will get easier – excessive crying starts to decline from around 3 months.

Babies have a very small number of needs and each one has its own unique cry. If you listen, you will soon be able to tell the difference between an ‘I hurt’ and an ‘I’m bored’ cry, and learn how to deal with each one.

There are three main reasons why babies cry, so always check for these first:

• I’m hungry - please feed me
• I’m uncomfortable – please change my nappy
• I’m tired – please give a cuddle or put me gently in my cot.

Here are other common reasons why your baby may cry:

• I’m in pain - This is the cry that we really respond to without a second thought
  You won’t ever mix up crying in pain with the whimpering of a tired baby
• I’m ill - Feeling ill is not the same as being in pain - it might just be a tummy ache
• I’m bored - Babies get fed up too. At times they want company, they want to be amused
• I’m scared - Don’t forget that it’s all new to them too. Different sounds can be frightening
  The vacuum cleaner can be startling. Reassurance and a cuddle maybe all that’s needed.
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When the crying will not stop

You have taken care of the obvious things like feeding and changing but your baby will not stop crying.

Here are some things that might help

- Go for a walk or a drive - sometimes a change of scenery or gentle, soothing motion will do it
- Sing - something repetitive like a nursery rhyme
- Talk - quietly. Baby likes your voice and it’s soothing
- Rock-a-bye baby - sometimes, the simplest things can be the most effective
- Cuddle your baby – skin-to-skin is best.

If your baby’s crying seems different in any way (such as very high-pitched or a whimper) or you think they may be unwell, talk to your health visitor or GP. Trust your instincts - you know your baby best!

NEVER EVER

- Shake your baby - this can cause serious, lasting damage – blindness, brain damage and even death
- Get angry - if you feel yourself getting angry, put your baby safely in their cot and go into another room for ten minutes until you calm down
- Shout – you will upset your baby more and make the crying worse.

Finally - if it all gets too much

Don’t be ashamed to ask for help. It’s always better to ask for help than to risk hurting your baby. Ask someone you trust like a friend, family member or your health visitor for help and advice.

If the crying ever feels too much to bear and there is no one there to help you, you could call the CRY-SIS helpline on 0845 1228 669. They provide support for parents and carers with crying and sleepless babies.
KEEP YOUR BABY SAFE

Becoming a parent is a very special time but it can be worrying too. Following these top tips will help to keep your baby safe and healthy, and reduce the risk of sudden infant death (also known as cot death).

Baby bedtime basics

- **The safest place for your baby to sleep is in a cot in a room with you for the first 6 months**

- **Never sleep with your baby on a sofa or armchair. Never share a bed with your baby if you smoke, have drunk alcohol or taken medication or drugs that make you sleepy***

- **Place your baby on their back to sleep, with their feet at the foot of the cot. Don’t let them get too hot (16-20°C is comfortable)**

- **Cut smoking in pregnancy (dads too!) and don’t let anyone smoke around your baby**

- **Help support the mother of your baby to breastfeed for as long as possible.**

* There are many risks to sharing a bed with your baby. Please speak to your Health Visitor, Midwife or Children’s Centre worker for advice.
Surviving without sleep

Sleep deprivation is hard but it is a normal and natural part of being a new parent.

Babies have no sense of time and will sleep for a lot of their early lives. As they get older, they will gradually need less sleep and fewer naps. The first few weeks will seem random, often with no set pattern to day or night, but be responsive to your baby’s needs during this time. Babies are individuals so night-time care can be different for different families. Bedtime rituals, like a warm bath, reading a story, quiet time and cuddles will promote positive, lifelong sleeping habits.

Having a new baby in the house can be stressful and changes to your own normal sleeping pattern can make things feel more difficult. There are ways to help you deal with this – try putting your baby down somewhere safe, such as their cot, and take 10 minutes to calm down before going back to your baby. Remember you’re not alone – all new parents are in the same boat!

Safety

The safest place for your baby to sleep is in a cot in the same room as you for the first 6 months. Keep lighting low and place your baby in their cot when they seem sleepy.

Keeping your baby in your room means that you will hear your baby when they wake, so you do not need to lie awake waiting for them to rouse.

If you are alone with your baby and feel harassed and angry, gently put your baby down somewhere safe – such as their cot – and take ten minutes to calm down. Breathe calmly, play some of your favourite music quietly.
Share night time care

You can help look after your baby during the night, comforting them between feeds, changing nappies and cuddling skin-to-skin.

If mum is breastfeeding, you can make sure she is comfortable. Remember, night time breastfeeds make more milk so you will all benefit as your baby will sleep for longer until their next feed. If baby is bottle fed, you can make and give feeds during the night, taking turns to sleep while your baby is awake.

Lay off the alcohol
• You might think that an extra glass of wine will help you sleep, but you’ll think otherwise when you get woken up at two in the morning. You need to be alert and in control when your baby needs you.

Keep fit and healthy
• Being a parent takes lots of energy. Give yourself a head start by eating well and exercising regularly. This doesn’t have to mean hitting the gym – taking your baby for a stroll in their pushchair can count towards this.

Grab a nap where you can
• Master the art of the power nap, grabbing sleep where and whenever you can. If your baby is asleep, you and your partner can have a lie down too. The housework can get done some other time.

Use your support network
• This is where your family and friends can be invaluable - helping with housework and cooking meals, giving you and your partner a chance to rest. Don’t feel too proud to ask for help through difficult times.

Be kind to yourself
• Parenting means facing new challenges and experiences. Don’t be over critical of what you can and can’t do or compare yourself to other parents
• Remember, ‘Superdad’ is just a made-up guy in the movies!
• If your baby is loved and is safe and healthy then you are doing a great job. You will become more confident each day.

For further information, visit the NHS Information Service for Parents: www.nhs.uk/InformationServiceForParents
How to change a nappy

It is important to take your turn in changing your baby’s nappy. It’s not as difficult as you may think.

Where to change a nappy
It’s a good idea to have a regular changing place where you can store all the essentials.

The safest place to change your baby is on the floor. This will help to keep your baby safe from a serious fall.

If you’re out and about and this is not possible, never leave your baby unattended or turn your back whilst changing their nappy. Babies are little wrigglers and you never know when they’ll take you by surprise!

Organise the changing place

You will need:
- A changing mat or towel
- Fresh nappies
- Wet wipes or a bowl for warm water and cotton wool
- Fresh baby clothes
- Nappy rash cream (only use a transparent layer if skin is looking pink and irritated)
- Something to put the used nappy in (e.g. a nappy sack or nappy bucket).

For further information, visit the NHS Information Service for Parents: [www.nhs.uk/InformationServiceForParents](http://www.nhs.uk/InformationServiceForParents)
Here we go!

Are your hands clean? Although you are going to change a messy nappy, it’s still important your hands are clean as babies have delicate skin.

- Undo the bottom half of your baby’s clothing and put to one side
- Undo the dirty nappy. Hold it in place for a moment - babies often have a wee when the cold air strikes their bits!
- Gently holding your baby’s ankles, lift their bottom and use the old nappy to wipe away the worst of any poo and wee
- Put the old nappy to one side
- Wipe the whole area covered by the nappy, using either warm water and cotton wool or wet wipes
- For girls - always wipe from front to back to help prevent infection
- For boys - never pull back his foreskin. It takes months for it to separate from the rest of his penis
- Gently lift your baby’s bottom off the mat to check underneath
- Pat dry (don’t rub) with cotton wool. If baby is sore, gently put cream on the areas covered by the nappy
- If you can leave the nappy off for a little while, this will give your baby time to kick-about and let their skin breathe
- Gently lift your baby’s bottom off the mat again by their ankles and slide a clean nappy underneath
- Fasten the nappy, but not too tightly. If you are using a cloth nappy (reusable), you will also need to put waterproof pants on top
- Dress your baby and give them a big kiss and hug
- Place the dirty nappy in a nappy sack (remember nappy sacks are plastic bags, so never leave them in the reach of your baby), tie it up and put it straight in the bin
- If you’re using cloth nappies, flush the poo down the loo and place the dirty nappy in a bucket of nappy detergent to soak
- Wash your hands and you’re both good to go!
Washing your baby

You do not need to bathe your baby every day but you should wash their face, neck, hands and bottom carefully every day.

Choose a time when your baby is awake, content and relaxed. Make sure the room is warm. Prepare everything ready beforehand.

You will need:
- Bowl of warm water
- A towel
- Cotton wool
- A fresh nappy
- Clean clothes.

Hold your baby on your knee or lay them on a changing mat. Take off all their clothes, apart from their vest and nappy, and wrap them in a towel. Dip the cotton wool in the water (make sure it doesn’t get too wet) and wipe gently around your baby’s eyes from the nose outward, using a fresh piece of cotton wool for each eye. This is so that you don’t transfer any stickiness or infection from one eye to another.

Use a fresh piece of cotton wool to clean around your baby’s ears, but not inside them. Never use cotton buds to clean inside your baby’s ears. Wash the rest of your baby’s face, neck and hands in the same way and dry them gently with the towel.

Take off the nappy and wash your baby’s bottom and genital area with fresh cotton wool and warm water. Dry carefully, including between the skin folds. Avoid using talcum powder as this can cause health issues for your baby. Put on a clean nappy. It will help your baby to relax if you keep talking while you wash them. The more they hear your voice, the more they’ll get used to listening to you and start to understand what you’re saying.

For further information, visit the NHS Information Service for Parents: www.nhs.uk/InformationServiceForParents
Bathing

Babies only need a bath two or three times a week but if your baby really enjoys a bath, you can bathe them every day. Make sure you do it in a warm room.

Do not bathe your baby straight after a feed or when they're hungry or tired.

**Prepare everything you need beforehand:**
- A baby bath or washing-up bowl filled with warm water
- Two towels
- Cotton wool
- A clean nappy
- Clean clothes.

Baby bath liquid is not necessary in the first month. Babies have thin, delicate skin and washing with just plain water is best.

**Put the cold water in the bath first and top up with hot.** The water should be warm, not hot. Always check it with your wrist or elbow first, and mix it well so there are no hot patches.

Hold your baby on your knee and clean their face, following the instructions given under ‘Washing’ using the cotton wool.

Next, wash their hair using just water or a liquid soap or shampoo that’s designed for babies. Rinse carefully, supporting them over the bowl.

Once you’ve dried their hair gently, you can take off their nappy wiping away any mess.

Lower your baby gently into the bowl or bath using one hand to hold their upper arm and support their head and shoulders.

Keep your baby's head clear of the water. Use the other hand to gently swish the water over your baby without splashing.

**Never leave your baby alone in the bath, not even for a second.** Babies can drown silently in as little as 5cm of water. Remember, baby bath seats are not safety devices. Babies can wriggle free and topple over in bath seats - they should only ever be used with constant adult supervision.

For further information, visit the NHS Information Service for Parents: [www.nhs.uk/InformationServiceForParents](http://www.nhs.uk/InformationServiceForParents)
Talking with your newborn
Talking to your baby from day one will help the two of you get to know each other. It gives your baby a great start in life. Soon after your baby is born they will recognise and turn to the sound of your voice.

You don’t need to have anything important to say to your baby. Just talk about the things you’re doing together, like changing their nappy or bath time. Whilst out and about, talk about the things you see when you’re on the bus, in the car or walking to the shops.

Babies are born with a wide range of emotions
Your baby’s facial muscles will soon develop, enabling a full blown smile. Take time to try to recognise the different feelings they are showing you. Everything your baby does is telling you something.

When your newborn is in the mood to chat, they might move their mouth a lot, as if they are talking. Answer your baby by saying something like “That’s a good story you’re telling me.”
Bonding With Your Baby

Spending quality, one-to-one time with your baby will help you to bond. Very young babies who are alert will seek out faces and study them carefully.

- Make eye contact with your baby, and try slowly opening your mouth and sticking your tongue out – baby may copy you!
- Games are a great way to ‘talk’ and learn together – play ‘peepo’ and gentle tickling games
- Turn off the TV, which can be a distraction, cradle your baby and sing to them
- Recognise when baby is tired or hungry, uncomfortable or not feeling sociable, and may need time out
- Remember baby can sense emotions – if you or your partner are angry, upset or distressed, they will pick up on this

Baby Massage

Try gentle baby massage – it can ease colic and teething, it’s great for premature babies or those with disabilities because it can improve muscle tone, circulation and stimulate growth hormones. It may relax you too. Check out your local children’s centre or ask your health visitor about local baby massage classes

For further information, visit the NHS Information Service for Parents: www.nhs.uk/InformationServiceForParents
Child development

Children generally develop in stages. These stages are called milestones. On the back of this card are some of the milestones your baby is likely to go through during their first year.

Dads’ role in child development

Dads play an important role in their child’s development. Children develop quickly in the early years and a child’s experiences between birth and age five have a major impact on their future life chances.

You can support your baby's healthy development by providing a safe and loving home, and spending time playing, singing, reading and talking with your baby.

Comforting – to feel secure

Babies need love, comfort and protection. This also means responding to your baby’s needs. To do this effectively you need to try to get to know your baby and see things from their point of view.

Playing – is essential to your baby’s development

It's their way of exploring and learning about the world. Play allows children to solve problems and practise skills over and over again in their own time and to develop ideas at their own pace.

Teaching – providing routines, setting boundaries and teaching rules will help your child to understand the world around them and care about others. As well as keeping them safe, it teaches your child what is acceptable behaviour, and helps them to develop ways of controlling their feelings.
Child development

All children are unique and will develop at their own pace. The milestones below can be used as a helpful guide as to when your baby may gain certain skills and learn new things.

Some children just need a little extra time to reach certain milestones, but if you have any concerns about your child’s development speak to your Health Visitor or GP for advice. It might help to write down your observations – for example, if something is bothering you about the way your baby is interacting with you, or how they are sitting or crawling – to help you explain your concerns clearly to a healthcare professional.

**Baby milestones**

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<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Milestone Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 – 4 weeks</td>
<td>Your baby will love looking at faces and start to recognise yours. They may be startled when they hear a loud noise.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4 – 6 weeks</td>
<td>Your baby will start to smile and respond to sounds around them. Encourage your baby by making faces and noises and talking about what is going on around them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 – 12 weeks</td>
<td>Your baby will try to lift their head while lying on their front. Give plenty of opportunities for tummy time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 – 5 months</td>
<td>Your baby will start to reach out for objects as their muscles develop. To support your baby, give them your attention and play with them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 – 6 months</td>
<td>Your baby will enjoy making new and different sounds – help this development by singing nursery rhymes and songs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 months</td>
<td>Your baby can hold objects and is learning to pass the object from hand to hand. Give your baby toys they can pick up and move around as this will help with co-ordination.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 – 8 months</td>
<td>Your baby is getting stronger and will start to sit without assistance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 – 9 months</td>
<td>Your baby may start to pull themselves up and stand while holding onto furniture.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 – 11 months</td>
<td>Your baby can now let go of things or hand an object to someone.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 – 18 months</td>
<td>Although a little unsteady, your baby will start trying to walk on their own.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 – 18 months</td>
<td>Your baby may start to say words like mama and dada.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For further information, visit the NHS Information Service for Parents: [www.nhs.uk/InformationServiceForParents](http://www.nhs.uk/InformationServiceForParents)
Positive mental health

A new baby can put a strain on any relationship
Every parent wants the very best for their child and, as parents, we put a lot of stress on ourselves. For both you and mum, there is the stress of doing lots of things for the first time, the lack of sleep, and mum’s recovery from the physical efforts of labour to handle. There is also a third person in your relationship now, and that can be hard to get used to.

For parents to provide a baby with the kind of love and care they need, parents also need to be looked after. Mums in particular need a lot of support and reassurance in the weeks after the birth especially from partners, family and friends.

Good communication
“\textit{In the early days I felt left out sometimes}”
(Daniel – first-time dad to a boy)

It is vital that you keep talking to each other, because you will both be finding the new responsibilities of looking after a baby scary. You need to support each other. It’s easy to get frustrated and end up arguing over silly things, like whose turn it is to do the dishes.

Try to tell each other how you feel, so that you can support each other better.

Remember - the close emotional relationship that babies, infants and children have with their parents or carers will influence them for the whole of their lives.

Having a baby is a really big change to your life!
“Fatherhood has completely been a positive experience although not without its hectic moments. I can’t imagine my life without our son now. My wife had a bit of the baby blues, but it changes everyday. After you get through the first six weeks, it gets easier.”
(John – first-time dad to a girl)
Feeling sad, worried or depressed is common

Whilst having a baby is really exciting, some women can’t help feeling down and anxious when they are pregnant or after the baby is born. Being emotional and tearful is normal for women after giving birth. It can be difficult to tell people if you’re feeling anxious or upset.

It’s okay to feel tearful or sad sometimes but if mum is feeling like this most days, and these feelings don’t seem to be getting better or going away, help is available. It’s important that either of you tell the midwife, Health Visitor or GP as soon as possible.

Some things to ask yourselves are:
- Does mum feel she is having difficulty bonding with your baby?
- Is she feeling sad or depressed?
- Was she separated from baby at/after birth?
- Is she constantly feeling exhausted?
- Did she have a difficult birth?
- Does she say she feels unsupported or afraid?

Remember dads can also suffer from depression, brought on by anxiety about their new circumstances. Don’t bottle it up. Speak to your partner and your family and friends. Find out if there are dads groups locally that you could meet with.

Say yes to help

You do not have to do everything yourself. Remember to be kind to yourselves – no-one is perfect and it’s okay if your house is messy. It will help you both if you accept any offers of support in the first few weeks, even if it’s just the offer of a cup of tea. Get help with cleaning, cooking, shopping and the rest of the jobs around the house while you take on the much more important job of looking after your loved ones.

No-one will think you are a bad parent just because you ask for help from your family, friends or from health workers.

For further information, visit the NHS Information Service for Parents: www.nhs.uk/InformationServiceForParents
Advice, Support and Information for Parents

- Contact or visit your local Children’s Centre – find details at www.wiltshire.gov.uk
- For information on childcare, parent and toddler groups, leisure activities with children, or health, education, financial or legal issues, go to Wiltshire Family Information Service at:
  Web:  www.wiltshire.fis.org.uk
  Phone:  0300 003 4573
  Email:  customerservices@wiltshire.gov.uk
  Facebook:  www.facebook.com/wiltshirecouncil

NHS Information Service for Parents (web address as below)
The NHS Information Service for Parents is a new digital (website, email and text) service for parents. You can watch the latest pregnancy and baby videos, and sign-up to receive free, trusted advice via email or text on a wide range of topics:

- Getting pregnant
- Pregnancy
- Labour and birth
- Your newborn
- Babies and toddlers.
- Also visit www.wiltshire.gov.uk and enter births, death and marriages for up to date information for parents
- Contact Citizens Advice Bureau on 08444 111 444 from a landline or 0300 330 0650 from a mobile, or find your local Citizens Advice Bureau via their website www.citizensadvice.org.uk
- Go to www.gingerbread.org.uk – for help & support for single parents
- Don’t forget it’s always worth talking your Health Visitor
- Try an internet search but remember to look for facts not opinions!

For further information, visit the NHS Information Service for Parents: www.nhs.uk/InformationServiceForParents
More About the DadPad

The DadPad was created in partnership between Public Health at Wiltshire Council, NHS Wiltshire and the NSMC (National Social Marketing Centre). If you need any help with reading or understanding the topics covered in your DadPad, please speak to your Health Visitor or GP for advice.

To download a copy of the Dadpad, go to www.wiltshire.gov.uk/dadpad.pdf
Or phone Public Health on 0300 003 4566.

We would welcome your feedback on the DadPad. You can do this by speaking with your Health Visitor or by going online and completing a short survey. Your feedback will ensure the DadPad is a useful resource for dads, and inform the advice and support they receive. Visit www.wiltshire.gov.uk/dadpadsurvey