

Facts for Fathers

You are about to go through the birth of your child. This is a time of great change for both you and your partner. Here are some ideas to help you.

Your Partner's Pregnancy

The pregnancy will have more meaning for the both of you if you keep involved during the entire pregnancy.

- Your partner should get good prenatal care:
 - ▶ She should see a doctor on a regular basis.
 - ▶ Visits to the doctor can help make sure the pregnancy is going well.
 - ▶ Stay informed about her pregnancy. She will love to tell you about it!
- Help her eat right and stay in shape
 - ▶ She will need to follow a balanced food plan.
 - ▶ This may mean changing some of your own eating habits.
 - ▶ Some exercise is good for both mother and baby. Encourage her to exercise.
 - ▶ Try walking with her when you can.
 - ▶ Use this time to relax and talk about the pregnancy.

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Learn more about your health care.

- **It is important that your partner stay away from alcohol, cigarettes and drugs while she is pregnant.**
 - ▶ Now is a good time to teach others that second hand smoke will not be allowed around the baby.

Your Changing Role

- Later in the pregnancy, you will need to help your partner more.
 - ▶ Help her with housework, cooking and cleaning.
 - ▶ Make sure she gets a chance each day to put her feet up and relax.
- Decide now who will do what after the baby comes home.
- You are both in this pregnancy together. Plan to share both the work and the fun.

Your Relationship

- There will be changes between you and your partner.
 - ▶ For instance, you both may have mood swings.
 - ▶ You may feel sad, worried or nervous for no real reason.
- Try to listen and help each other. Take the time to talk things over. Your sex life may also change.
- In a normal pregnancy, it is safe to have intercourse throughout your pregnancy if you do not have complications and you are comfortable. Ask your health care professional to give you advice in this area. Refer to the handout, **Sex During Pregnancy**.

Sources of Help

- If you have questions during the pregnancy or after your baby arrives, try the following:
 - ▶ Talk with family and friends. They can be a good source of information and advice.

- ▶ Ask questions. Remember, being a parent is something you learn.
- ▶ Read about pregnancy and parenting skills. There are many books on pregnancy and being a good parent. Check with your library or bookstore.
- ▶ Ask your health care provider for information.
- Take childbirth classes.
 - ▶ You and your partner can learn together what will happen during the pregnancy.
 - ▶ Many hospitals offer free courses.
 - ▶ Some private teachers give classes in their homes for a small charge.
 - ▶ These classes can help answer any question you might have.
 - ▶ They also can help you feel more confident about the pregnancy and becoming a parent.

Keep a Good Attitude

- Few things will teach you as much about yourself as becoming a father.
 - By keeping informed, being patient, and having a good sense of humor, you will be on your way to being a good father.
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- **Talk to your doctor or others on your health care team if you have questions. You may request more written information from the Library for Health Information at (614) 293-3707 or email: health-info@osu.edu.**