



How can dads get involved?

The period from conception to the age of 2 is an important time for child development, and experiences during this time can influence the rest of a child's life. Relationships between dads and their children matter from pregnancy onwards.

The importance of dads in the lives of their children

- Dads who are affectionate, supportive and involved make a huge impact on their child's brain, speech and social development, and can positively influence their child's social, academic and economic wellbeing.
- Dads play a crucial role in supporting the health and wellbeing of mums. Close bonds between dads and their children are linked to positive outcomes for dads themselves, who are happier, healthier, have fewer mental health problems, and are more productive at work.
- Dads who are supportive of breastfeeding help mothers to feel more confident and likely to succeed at breastfeeding.

This Parent Tips resource seeks to raise awareness of the importance of fathers in the lives of their children and families.

More information on Page 2

For additional Parent Tips see www.ihv.org.uk

The information in this resource was updated on 25/05/2022.

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Mental health of fathers

Preparing for a baby's arrival and becoming a dad can be a very happy time for any family. However, it is also a time of great change. It is not unusual for dads to feel anxious, or experience episodes of worry and stress, which can be made worse by a lack of sleep and balancing your own and other people's expectations.

For some parents, these feelings do not go away. Research suggests that dads can experience postnatal depression and anxiety. We know that, if dads are unwell, this can have a negative impact on the whole family.

It is important that dads feel able to talk about how they are feeling and know where to go for support.

Top Tips for dads to support their transition to parenthood

F ind	Find out about groups for dads in your neighbourhood and nationally - See further information and further reading section.
A ppointments	Expect to attend appointments with your partner and ask for them to be made when you can attend.
T ransition	Remember it is a transition to becoming a dad - give yourself time to get to know your baby and adjust to your new role as a dad.
H ow	Babies and children change rapidly as they grow and develop. You can help your child by checking out the facts on child development and how you can best support your child at every stage.
E xplore	Explore expectations with your partner about parenting, sharing the role and your relationship.
R espond	Respond to your baby, take care of your baby, help your baby to grow.
S pecial	Dads matter a lot - they are special.

[More information on Page 3](#)

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Top tips for dads to get involved

- Talk and communicate with your baby throughout pregnancy and beyond.
- Have plenty of skin to skin contact with your new baby.
- Get involved in all the care your baby needs.
- Spend time playing with your baby, responding to your baby and letting your baby respond to you.

Further information and support

Becoming a parent can bring lots of different emotions. It may bring additional worries about money, about your relationship, and about how you will cope. It might help you to know that having thoughts and worries about whether you will ever be a “good enough” parent is actually very normal.

Remember you are not alone in how you are feeling and it helps if you can talk to your partner about these feelings.

Your health visitor is able to offer additional support if any of these thoughts are worrying you, or making you feel emotionally unwell. There are often lots of local services to support fathers with parenthood and national organisations too. To find health services near you, please visit: <http://bit.ly/2U6FLD5>

Further reading:

- **Institute of Health Visiting**
 - » Understanding your emotional health and wellbeing following the birth of your baby (Fathers): <http://bit.ly/2AhVqVs>
 - » Understanding your emotional health and wellbeing following the birth of your baby (Mothers): <http://bit.ly/38FOMbo>
 - » Looking after your relationship as new parents: <https://bit.ly/3KyAEV8>
 - » Sex and intimacy; understanding changes to your sexual wellbeing after the birth of your baby: <https://bit.ly/3MWuC2g>
 - » What is a health visitor?: <https://bit.ly/2Bet3fx>
- **NHS:** What does a health visitor do?: <http://bit.ly/3cJ7WAd>
- **The National Childbirth Trust:** <http://bit.ly/2PZVpyv>
- **Baby Buddy** is a free interactive pregnancy and parenting app which has been created to support parents, co-parents and caregivers and is endorsed by the NHS. It provides daily advice for fathers up until the child's first birthday. More information: <https://bit.ly/3IP3a3t>
- **DadMatters UK** - Based in Greater Manchester, DadMatters UK provide great information, blogs and resources by dads for dads as well as a list of national organisations helpful for Dads. Visit their website: <https://bit.ly/3xjMMFt> or you can join their Facebook group: <https://bit.ly/3uup6fV>.
- **DadPad** is a great free* app, developed in partnership with the NHS, with information and advice for dads. Download via your app store. *Free if you live in the Greater Manchester area or £12 to those who don't. <https://bit.ly/37If3uY>
- **Dad Info UK** support for dads on the impact of becoming a dad. <https://bit.ly/3KPVek4>
- **Tiny Happy People** - New Dads guide to good mental health: <https://bbc.in/3v9G8iv>
- **Tommy's** is a website led by midwives for the latest information for parents-to-be and has information for Dads here: <https://bit.ly/3uqKC5b>
- **Straight Talking** is a national teenage pregnancy charity that offer support services to young parents: <https://bit.ly/3E4uBoB>
- **Mind, NHS, Bromley and Lewisham** have wellbeing resources for dads, partners, and non-birthing partners: <https://bit.ly/3O1YzhN>
- **Vroom** is a free app to help parents to develop babies' brain power: <https://bit.ly/3KyNOS3>
- **Factographics** - a new interactive resource combining images, text and video testimonials both from parents and health visitors signposting to support for new dads: <https://bit.ly/373puJz>

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