TOOL KIT FOR NEW DADS

OKLAHOMA
State Department
of Health

WAYS TO BOND WITH **YOUR NEW BABY:**

1. Think about a part of the baby's routine that you can consistently make just the two of you. It could be reading each night before bed-time, daily tummy-time play, walking (or pushing in a stroller) around the local park. Any of these or another activity can be a part of bonding with your child early in life.

2. Wear your baby. There are many ways to wear your new baby, from cloth wraps, to more structured baby carriers, and even baby carriers with built-in backpacks for hiking. Wearing your baby is a great way to comfort them and keep them close to you while keeping your hands free. Baby wearing is a great way to calm your baby, and releases oxytocin (a bonding hormone) connecting you to your baby.

WAYS TO BOND WITH **YOUR NEW BABY:**

3. Practice soothing your new baby. Skin-to-skin contact (holding your baby to your bare chest), shushing softly, singing, and swinging (gentle rocking) are some of the best ways to soothe and bond with your new baby. Holding eye contact while soothing your baby can also assist with bonding.

4. Take the early shift. Often (although not always) babies are in a better mood in the morning. Take advantage of this time to get more smiles as the sun comes up. As a bonus this may be a good time to give your partner a break if she has been up longer with night feedings.

WAYS TO BOND WITH **YOUR NEW BABY:**

5. Take advantage of peers who have recently had babies as opportunities to make new connections and friendships with other new dads for support. Building these relationships provides a support system for you and give your children the opportunity to become familiar with other babies.

6. Play! One of the unique ways fathers parent is through play. Flying your baby through your home like an airplane, bouncing the baby up and down and lots of tickling. This type of play ramps up the release of oxytocin, dopamine and beta-endorphin. This means babies and their dads get a head rush of bonding chemicals.

Thomas, L. (2017, May 11). 7 Ways for a New Dad to Bond With Baby https://www.thebump.com/a/7-ways-for-a-new-dad-to-bond-with-baby

NEW DAD TOOL FOR YOUR TOOLBOX:

HOW TO HOLD A BABY

1. CRADLE HOLD:

- Crook of arm supports head and neck
- Hand supports bottom
- Lean back when possible to avoid strain on your back and shoulders

2. BELLY HOLD:

- Chest and belly drape over your forearm
- Head turned outward, resting near crook of arm

3. FACE-TO-FACE HOLD:

- Support neck and head

NEW DAD TOOL FOR YOUR TOOLBOX:
HOW TO HOLD A BABY

4. SNUGGLE HOLD:

- Head rests against chest or lower shoulder
- Support neck (with one hand)
- Support butt (with other hand)
- Keep head turned to one side so baby can breathe

5. FOOTBALL HOLD:

- Baby curls around your body
- Legs extended behind you
- Draw close to waist or chest
- Supported on your hand and arm
- Support Head

NEW DAD TOOL FOR YOUR TOOLBOX:

HOW TO CHANGE A DIAPER

STEP 1:

Before starting, be sure that all of your supplies are within reach: clean diapers, baby wipes, washcloth, diaper cream, and clean clothes (in case the diaper has leaked).

STEP 2:

Place your baby on his back on a changing table, washable pad or thick towel. Unfold a clean diaper and lay it to one side. Remember, while it may be months before your baby is able to roll over, keep a hand on him at all times when he's on the changing table to ensure he doesn't roll off.

STEP 3:

Put another clean diaper beneath your baby in case she pees or has a diaper with poop.

STEP 4:

Wipe from front to back, being careful to clean inside all the creases. If your baby has had a bowel movement, use the unsoiled parts of the dirty diaper to clean up as much of the mess as possible.

NEW DAD TOOL FOR YOUR TOOLBOX:

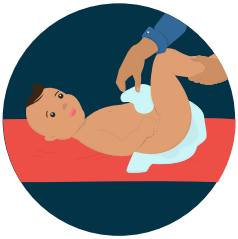
HOW TO CHANGE A DIAPER

STEP 5:

To prevent diaper rash, let the area dry completely before putting on diaper cream and/or a clean diaper. Apply more diaper cream or ointment on areas that look pink and rashy.

STEP 6:

Lift your baby's legs and place the clean, unfolded diaper that you set aside earlier under the child's bottom. If you have a boy, make sure his penis is pointing down. Pull the front of the diaper between his legs and fasten



STEP 7:

To contain the odor and mess, roll up the dirty diaper before disposing of it. Don't forget to wash your hands with soap and warm water when you're finished!

NEW DAD TOOL FOR YOUR TOOLBOX:
BOTTLE-FEEDING A BREASTFED BABY

1. **When do I feed my baby?** Rather than feeding them on a schedule, babies should be fed when their cues indicate hunger.

2. **What is the best way to hold my baby when feeding?** It is important to avoid letting the baby drink from a bottle lying down, as this can lead to increased frequency of ear infections. Also, hold your baby when not feeding to avoid the baby learning to want to eat every time they are held.

3. **How long do I feed my baby?** Feed your baby 10-20 minutes at a time to mimic the breastfeeding experience. It is important not to let the infant feed longer than this so as not to let their stomach get over-filled and risk them vomiting.

NEW DAD TOOL FOR YOUR TOOLBOX:
BOTTLE-FEEDING A BREASTFED BABY

4. **Is there a specific way to give the baby the bottle?** Yes, make sure to gently allow the infant to draw nipple into mouth rather than pushing the nipple into the infant's mouth, so that baby controls when the feeding begins. Stroke baby's lips from top to bottom with the nipple to illicit a rooting response of a wide open mouth, and then allow the baby to "accept" the nipple rather than poking it in.

5. **Should I pause when feeding?** Yes, try to encourage frequent pauses while the baby drinks from the bottle to mimic the breastfeeding mother's let-down patterns. This discourages the baby from guzzling the bottle and will minimize risk of nipple confusion between the bottle and the breast.

6. **Should I make sure my baby finishes their bottle?** No, in fact you only want to feed the baby so long as they are continuing to give feeding cues (lip smacking, opening and closing the mouth). Make sure not to aggressively encourage the baby to finish the last bit of milk in the bottle by such measures as forcing the nipple into the mouth, massaging the infant's jaw or throat, or rattling the nipple around in the infant's mouth. If baby is drowsing off and releasing the bottle nipple before the bottle is empty that means baby is done; don't reawaken.

BREASTFEEDING: **HOW DADS CAN HELP**

1. Encourage and help your baby's mom to make a breastfeeding plan and set goals. Let her know that you'll be there to support her along the way.

2. Dads too should get plenty of skin-to-skin time where you cuddle the baby on your bare chest. This is great bonding time. When you spend skin-to-skin time with your newborn hormonal changes occur including a rise in dopamine. The rise in dopamine plus the release of oxytocin means your brain creates a positive association when you have close interaction with baby. So skin-to-skin time with you can help your natural parenting instincts "kick-in".

3. Think about how you can be thoughtful in helping your baby's mother when she is breastfeeding. Small things can make a big difference. You can bring her a pillow so she's comfortable during feedings, a healthy snack, and make sure she has a glass of water.

4. Encourage her, and let her know you're proud of her. Breastfeeding can be hard. If she has problems, help her find support when she needs it here: https://oklahoma.gov/health/family-health/breastfeeding.html

BREASTFEEDING: **HOW DADS CAN HELP**

5. How to warm breast milk when mom has stored it:

a. Heat water using either a teakettle or microwave. Pour very warm (not boiling) water in a mug or bowl.

b. Place the sealed bag or bottle of breast milk in the bowl of warm water.

c. Leave the milk in the warm water for 1-2 minutes until breast milk reaches desired temperature.

d. With clean hands, pour breast milk into a bottle, or, if it's already in a bottle, screw on the bottle nipple. Swirl breast milk (never shake it) to mix in the fat, if it's separated. Test the milk's temperature on your wrist. It should be warm, but not hot.

Breastmilk, Every Ounce Counts. (2020, March 11). Breastfeeding takes teamwork. Here's how dad can help. https://www.breastmilkcounts.com/teamwork/for-dad/

NEED ADDITIONAL SUPPORT?

CONTACT US

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OKLAHOMA
WARMLINE
1-888-574-KIDS (5437)
.....because kids don't come with instructions

JAMES CRAIG, MSW, LCSW
PUBLIC HEALTH SOCIAL WORK COORDINATOR
(405) 426-8089
JAMESCC@HEALTH.OK.GOV

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