

Just for Dad-to-be

Take notice of your partner

You can't actually experience pregnancy, but you can take notice of your partner during her pregnancy. Help her prepare, take pictures of her growing bump if she'd like that, feel your baby kick. But bear in mind that she might not love her new shape, and might be feeling insecure about the changes. It's a tough call – she might be feeling unattractive, full of aches, or suffering from morning sickness. What she'll want is to know that you still fancy her, but without feeling under pressure to have sex (unless of course she wants sex, that is!).

Eat Healthy

Your partner is probably doing her best to eat a healthy diet at the moment, and might be giving up alcohol or cigarettes. These sorts of things are always easier with a bit of support, so she'll probably appreciate it if you cut down on alcohol, and don't sit eating Brie or rare steak in front of her!

And if you smoke, giving up cigarettes would be a good move as well – it'll benefit your health, your partner, and your unborn baby as well.

Go to an appointment

Or a few of them – do your best not to miss the scan appointments, they really are amazing. If your partner feels happier with you at all of her antenatal appointments then try to get to them if you can. And if your partner has to have an amniocentesis, or any genetic testing, then obviously you need to be there to support her through it. Then there are antenatal classes, relaxation classes....

Face your Fear, and listen to hers

If this is your first child, you're probably feeling a certain amount of fear – will you be a good dad, will you faint when your partner is giving birth. If it's your second, you're probably feeling apprehensive about the thought of going through all those sleepless nights again. It's pretty normal to feel like this – most men do, if they're being honest. It's good to talk! Chat to your partner (who is probably going through the same feelings, or at least similar!), friends who have been through it, or look online for parenting forums. And listen to your partner's fears and worries as well.

Make decisions

You and your partner have got a lot of decisions to make – car seats, buggies, clothes, nappies, nursery furniture, toys. That's a lot of shopping trips, OR ONE ORDER ON THIS WEBSITE AND HAVE THE WHOLE LOT DELIVERED TOGETHER. Then there's the tricky stuff like picking out names!

Read a book (or a website!)

It'll generally be appreciated if you show some interest in the pregnancy – have a flick through her magazines, or get a book. (Available on littlepebbles.com) You'll understand more about what's going on, and the changes that your partner's going through.

Know her birth plans

Make sure you know what your partner wants during labour – discuss what pain relief she wants to try, what positions she wants to try, and what you can do to help. Be prepared for her to change her mind once she's actually in labour! You'll be her support, so be prepared to argue her case and help her through it all.

Know the way to the hospital

Yes, I know, it seems obvious, but make sure you know where you're going on D-Day! Do a dry run, or two – make sure you know if there's any roadworks planned on the route you'll be taking, and how long the journey takes (is it a lot longer at rush hour?). When it gets closer to the due date, make sure you've always got petrol in the car – and the number of a taxi firm just in case! And make sure that she can always get in touch with you, when the time comes.

Expect the unexpected

If you're reading this when you've just found out that you're going to be a Dad, then it probably feels like ages 'til your baby will be here. Believe me, it will fly by. Make the most of it, try to relax and enjoy the experience. And then get ready to have your world turned upside down. But it's so worth it!