You are undoubtedly feeling a great deal of pride, joy and delight at the birth of your baby. There can also be some resentment, fear, insecurity and feelings of being overwhelmed. Don’t worry, these feelings are perfectly normal. A new baby is a lot of responsibility, now and for the next couple of decades! Soon you will be feeling like a pro and very comfortable with your new role.

A new dad might think his role in breastfeeding is a minor one. Not so! Studies show that the attitude of the baby’s father is the most important factor in whether or not a mother begins and continues to breastfeed. Dad’s instinct is to protect his new family. One way you can do that is by supporting your partner’s decision to breastfeed.

• Read books about breastfeeding
• Attend classes on breastfeeding with your partner.
• Discourage others from criticizing your partner’s decision to breastfeed

Dads teach their baby there is more to love than food and that there is a world outside of Mommy. Strengthening your own relationship with your baby will enrich both your lives!

• Find your own way to have fun with the baby
• Take charge of bath time
• Walk the baby around in a carrier
• Be the one to introduce squeaky toys and rattles
• And remember, new babies love to nap on Dad’s warm chest.

Opportunities for Dad and Baby Bonding

• Change your baby’s diaper - breastfed babies’ diapers don’t smell very bad!
• Bathe your baby.
• Bring your baby to your partner, especially in the middle of the night.
• Place baby on your chest for skin to skin contact so your baby will get used to your smell.
• Cuddle and walk your baby. Movement is calming for fussy babies.
• Talk to baby, read a book, sing a song which will help your baby learn to communicate.
• Give your baby a massage by lightly stroking his or her back.
• Play games with your baby.
• Wear a baby sling and take him or her on errands or to a friend’s house.
Ways to Help with Breastfeeding

- Help your partner get comfortable while breastfeeding.
- Bring her something to drink.
- Check how the baby is latched as mom might not be able to see how your baby is positioned or latched.
- At night help her get the baby latched so she can doze off.
- Remind her to nap when the baby sleeps during the day.
- Offer to do her chores so she can rest.
- Run errands for her so she can focus on the baby.
- Cook a meal.
- Shop so you know she has healthy snacks always available.
- Make sure she has help and arrange for others to do things when you can’t be there.
- Protect her privacy.
- Limit visitors.
- Act as a buffer for those who do not support her breastfeeding.
- Be vocal about your support.
- Share thoughts and feelings as it is vital to talk about your changing roles.
- Spend time with older children to help her relax and rest with the baby.

Dads Need Support Too!

There are a host of new feelings and responsibilities for new dads. Furthermore, dads can feel left out of the “inner circle” of mother and baby. It helps to have someone to talk to. Make sure to communicate your feelings to your partner. Talk to friends and family members who have babies or someone whom you trust. Maybe your father, brother, brother-in-law, neighbor or clergyman will be able to give you valuable insight into your new role. You will probably get the most understanding and practical advice from someone who has recently been through this life experience.

Adapted from the Ameda company’s answer sheet entitled “How Can Dads Help with Breastfeeding?”

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