

A photograph of a man and a woman smiling and looking at a baby in a hospital bed. The man is wearing glasses and a white shirt, and the woman is wearing a white tank top. The baby is lying in a hospital bed with a white blanket. In the foreground, there are wooden blocks spelling 'BABY', a pair of blue socks, and two small yellow gift boxes.

Daddy know-how

Being a new dad is an exciting, yet challenging experience. Here is how you can work with the changes that come with fatherhood

Pregnancy is a major milestone for any family. Often, the focus and attention are on the mum to ensure her well-being and the baby's development. However, the importance of dads cannot be underrated as they play a crucial role too. As the pillar of support for the family, it is important that you stay emotionally and physically healthy, so that you are able to manage the challenges when the baby arrives. Here are some tips for dads-to-be:

Meeting personal needs

Your wife is pregnant and seems to be focusing more on the baby, and you are feeling a little jealous and somewhat neglected. Do not be. These are

natural responses and will soon pass. Remember, you are still her pillar of support and now, you have an equally important role – that of father to the baby. Be open with your wife, talk to her about your feelings and find time to inject romance into the relationship.

Dealing with changes

Pregnancy will result in changes to your lifestyle, and you may have to make adjustments and sacrifices. Whether these adjustments are big or small, what is crucial is that you equip yourself with knowledge so that you can manage the changes. Read and talk to experts on pregnancy and child care, or research on managing family finances. Most importantly, stay positive and adopt healthy coping strategies to manage the changes effectively and smoothly.



“Taking her to the doctor for every visit. Just being there means a lot of support for her.”

– Tan Wing Onn, dad to twins Kai Ming and Kai Li, 7 months.

“My wife had cravings. So I always have to be ready to get them for her! It makes her happy.”

– Greg Lim, dad to Yen Yen, 3 months.

“I cabbled to Yishun to get my wife her favourite food at night. Twice. Haha.”

– Dennis Yin, dad to Christian, 6 months.

Managing stress and anxiety

With changes to come when your baby arrives, you may feel overwhelmed, have doubts about being a good dad, or be worried about the health of your wife and baby. Do not despair. Talk to friends and family, or even a counsellor (see page 99). It will help you to see your anxiety in a different light and increase your confidence in managing them. Set aside short breaks for personal time: take a few minutes off each day for yourself by listening to music or getting some rest. Plan a little getaway with your wife while she can still travel. Do not let work and duties overwhelm you, learn to organise your schedule and set priorities for things you need to do first.

Managing expectations from others

Learn to be practical and be realistic about your expectations. Talk to your wife and family on the duties and responsibilities e.g. the household

chores, care arrangement if there is another child, etc. to avoid unnecessary stress and pressure on each other as both of you are dealing with this transition at the same time.

Juggling work and family

You may want to spend more time with your wife, or accompany her for antenatal appointments and classes. This can be challenging if your job does not allow much flexibility. Inform your boss of your wife's pregnancy and negotiate with your boss for the possible need to take time-off or urgent leave. At the same time, speak to your wife and let her know that you might not be able to get off work at times to accompany her for antenatal appointments or classes. That way, you will not feel trapped in between and be frustrated.



■ Dealing with additional financial expenses

Planning ahead in the area of finance is important, especially if you have a baby coming. The following are steps that will help you in your planning. Additionally, you can seek help from professionals to plan your finances.

• Know your baby expenses

Ask your doctor for a chart of estimated fees that you can expect to spend during each antenatal appointment and for the delivery. Compare the cost of the various delivery packages and discuss together how much you are willing to spend on the room.

• Check your finances

Do a stock-take of what you have in the bank. Decide whether to seek help from a trusted family member, a friend or if you can afford a confinement lady. Having a money management plan will help you spend within your limits.

• Track your monthly income and expenditure

From diapers to wet wipes and visits to the doctor, these expenses can add up to a hefty sum. Work out your combined income and expenditure. You and your wife may decide to contribute a small sum every month to a “baby fund” for expensive purchases such as a car seat.

• Set a goal

You may opt to cut out certain expenses such as having just one meal in a restaurant every month instead of your usual weekly treat. This is also a good time to relook some habits that may be draining your wallet. Spell out your goal and start working towards it!

■ Preparing for the big day

As the delivery date gets nearer, anxiety levels may get higher for some of you. In order to be well prepared, make a checklist of the things to bring and to do with your wife. If you are driving to the hospital, familiarise yourself with the different routes to the hospital in the event of a traffic jam. Keep important numbers in your phone or address book and have the necessary items in the car for your wife that would make her comfortable.

Staying healthy

A healthy lifestyle helps you de-stress, makes you feel positive, confident and builds up your energy and stamina as you keep up with the changes and challenges. Engaging in physical activity is a great outlet for coping with stress and to recharge yourself. Selecting healthier food options, avoiding alcohol and being smoke-free not only benefits you, but also go a long way when it is your turn to teach your child healthy lifestyle practices. As children model after their parents, start building healthy lifestyle practices for your children.

