



A little planning can go a long way so start early

You have spent your first trimester getting used to being pregnant. As you enter the second trimester, you would usually feel much better as most women enjoy a burst of energy at this time. Take this time to plan for your baby's arrival so that you can cope with the changes and transit smoothly into motherhood.

Get help for the first few weeks with baby

Getting a trusted friend or a family member such as your mother or mother-in-law to care for you and your baby during the early days after delivery is a good option. If you have no support, hiring an experienced confinement nanny in-house for the first month may help you ease into motherhood. She can help to take care of your meals and your baby.

Check out reputable providers for more information, but you may want to ask for recommendations and do your own research first.

Whether you seek help from a trusted friend, a family member or a confinement nanny, it is important to define the roles and expectations. Share with them your decision to breastfeed and get their support.

Prepare your domestic helper

If you have a domestic helper, prepare and train her, especially if she is not a mother herself. But if you do not have one and plan to hire one, try to get her in a few months before your delivery date so that you can train her. It will also allow you and your family time to adjust to her and your expectations of her, as well as to give her time to familiarise herself with her chores. This allows both parties to build a level of trust, thereby reducing unnecessary conflicts and stress for the family when your baby arrives.

Sort out coverage for work

You will get 16 weeks of maternity leave, so once you know your estimated delivery date, inform your boss. Find out who will be taking over your work during your absence

and plan for a smooth handover. The last thing you want is to juggle between work and your newborn.

Child care arrangement

It is important to think about child care arrangement for your baby after the maternity leave if you are a working mum. Generally, children under three years of age benefit most from one-to-one interaction with adults. Most mothers would turn to their family members such as parents or in-laws first for help.

If you require centre-based care, some child care centres offer infant care services for babies from 2 - 18 months. Alternatively, you may consider hiring an experienced home-based babysitter.

If you are considering infant care or child care, you would want your child to be cared for in a safe, happy and nurturing environment. Locate centres convenient for you, visit these centres to find out more about their operations, educarers, programmes, safety, health and hygiene level. This will help you in choosing an appropriate centre. Visit the Child Care Link website at www.childcarelink.gov.sg or call 6258 5812 for more information on centre-based infant and child care.

If you have an older child and you are currently his primary caregiver, you would also need to plan for his care. Start him in his new care environment a few months before your newborn arrives so that he does not feel he is being packed away to strangers because of his new sibling. This will also allow both of you to have ample time to adjust to the new arrangement. Start thinking about your child care

options early and have Plan B ready in case things do not work out.

Decide if you want cord blood banking

Cord blood is the baby's blood that remains in the placenta and umbilical cord after the baby is born. It contains stem cells which can be used for treating many blood diseases, immune diseases and metabolic diseases. Stem cells from the cord blood can be collected after you give birth and stored for future use.

You can choose to discard the cord blood or store it in a private bank for a fee. You can also donate your baby's cord blood to the Singapore Cord Blood Bank, where it is made available to those in need. The bank may also store cord blood for families with a known genetic disorder or other disease.

