

YOUR Pregnancy & Baby

**SLEEPING
THROUGH**

**GOOD
HABITS
START
EARLY**

**FIGHT FATIGUE
WITH FOOD**

**6
FIXES FOR
FUSSY
FEEDERS**

**EAT
MEAT
LEKKER
LOCAL
RECIPES**

**COVER
STAR
SEARCH**

Enter now!

**SWEET AT
SCHOOL
MONSTER
AT HOME?**

Here's why

**GIVING
BIRTH**

How it works

ISSUE 152
AUGUST &
SEPTEMBER
2023
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TOP TIPS
FOR TWINS

PLAYDATE
POLITICS

DATE NIGHT
IDEAS

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✓ LOWER RISK OF DENTAL MALOCCLUSIONS

such as "open-bite", "cross bite" and "overbite"

SCIENTIFICALLY
**BEST
IN TEST**

✓ LOWER RISK FOR DEFORMITIES OF THE JAW AND PALATE

* "Pacifiers: the right shape is crucial", Pharmawissen aktuell, 2022

PACIFIER STUDY 2022

BEST IN TEST



The original
NUK Shape ✓



Best for
teeth, jaw,
palate

Four pacifier shapes in a scientific comparison*

A pacifier is often a knight in shining armour. But which one is the right one for healthy development? A scientific study now proves it: the original NUK shape has the lowest risk of malocclusions as well as the lowest risk of jaw and palate deformation among all the pacifier shapes tested.



TO THE BEST IN TEST



Discover more at [NUK.co.za](https://www.nuk.co.za)

The Orthodontists' Choice

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Storm from Boss Models

RETOUCHER

Dewald Spies

PHOTOGRAPHER

Aubrey Jonsson

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Digital magazine!

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MEDIA24



ON THE DOT



MOOING ALL THE WAY

I just spent a few days in Polokwane attending my daughter's volleyball tournament. Early every morning we'd have to wind our way halfway around the traffic circle with the imposing concrete Polokwane Gateway Sculpture rising up from the centre.

We'd drive in at the side that says "unity", curve around the side that says "prosperity" and then I'd spot "equity" in my rearview mirror as we left the circle.

For some reason, on the way home every afternoon, there was always a truck in the way, so for three days, the final word on the north side of the sculpture remained a mystery. My daughter and I speculated what it could be. Justice, liberty or freedom maybe? Would we ever find out?

Some parenting habits die hard, and finding topics for car conversations is one of them. I still point out cows along the road whenever we travel anywhere, and my children still moo in response, albeit ironically. Or we hold our breath as protection against trolls when we pass under a bridge. Spot the windmill is also still popular. And we always shout "yee-hah!" while pulling away from a tollgate. I'm sure every family has their own car games, sometimes passed down from generation to generation, or shared between families when new friends come



HELEN SCHÖER

along for the holidays. Like licence plate cricket. The long road is part of our culture. Padkos, anyone?

I don't like a mystery to drag on too long though, so on the last morning of the tournament when we realised it would be our last trip around that circle, we went all the way around, just for fun, to discover the missing word.

Later, at the end of the holiday, driving south on the N1 with tired, sleeping teens

in the car, I felt such a pang that our holidays as a family all together in one vehicle are coming to an end. Sophia has her driver's licence, and Emily's lessons are coming along nicely so that she can get hers as soon as she turns 18 in less than four months' time. They'll no doubt be doing their own road trips after that.

A new chapter awaits. I guess you could call it progress, but it does make me a little sad. I hope they'll still moo, even when I'm not in the car.

(Want to know the word? It is waiting for you in Polokwane.)

Helen

PS. Here's a weird coincidence. I was researching Polokwane and found out that it is a sister city to Reggio Emilia in Italy. Read all about the Reggio Emilia method of early childhood education on page 111.



FREE, FOR YOU!

Thank you, Reuterina, for sponsoring *Play & Learn Milestones Guide 2023*, bagged for free with this issue. Use it to track your baby's progress and encourage development through playful activities.

COVER STAR SEARCH

#coverstarsearch

GIRLS ARE NEXT! ENTER NOW!

Your Pregnancy & Baby has six issues per year, and we alternate between baba and mama by featuring a pregnant woman on every second cover. That means that there are three opportunities per year for a baby or child to appear on the cover: one cover for a boy (the winner was on a previous cover), one for a newborn (the winner was on a previous cover), and one for a girl to go on the last cover of 2023.

Baba & Kleuter has three issues per year and therefore three winners.

For the next two covers, we are looking for two girls, by 31 August. Turn to pages 6 & 7 to see what you can win. Each winner receives more than R5 000 worth of prizes! Turn to page 121 for the full terms and conditions.

Use #CoverStarSearch on social media, so you don't miss out on any of the competition announcements.

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YOUR **COMPETITION**

**COVER
STAR
SEARCH**

THE SEARCH
IS ON FOR

2023's

last two cover stars

**WE'RE
ONLINE!**

Social media



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media for regular
updates on

#CoverStarSearch

For all the rules and full
terms and conditions, see
page 121.



To enter a girl email a picture to
coverstar@ypbmagazine.com

Make sure it is a recent, clear,
good quality image. Remember to
include name, age, where you are
from, and contact details.

Age limit: 48 months.

**ENTER GIRLS BEFORE
31 AUGUST 2023**



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EPI-MAX® PRIZE FOR COVER STARS 2023

WIN one of six Epi-max® Baby & Junior product hampers to the value of R1 000 each and stand a chance of being on the cover of *Your Pregnancy & Baby* magazine or *Baba & Kleuter* magazine.

Everyone is a finalist!

Where to see all the winners?

WINNER 1

The winner (a boy) was on the cover of a previous issue.

WINNER 2

The winner (a boy) was on the cover of *Baba & Kleuter* February-May 2023.

WINNER 3

A newborn was on *Your Pregnancy & Baby* June & July 2023 cover.

WINNER 4

A newborn is on *Baba & Kleuter* June-September 2023 cover.

WINNER 5

The winner (a girl) will be featured on *Your Pregnancy & Baby* October & November 2023 cover.

WINNER 6

The winner (a girl) will be on *Baba & Kleuter* October 2023-January 2024 cover.



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No wonder **1 in 3 moms** who shop at Clicks buy the Clicks Made 4 Baby nappy.



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*based on Clicks sales data



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scan the QR code to shop now





win

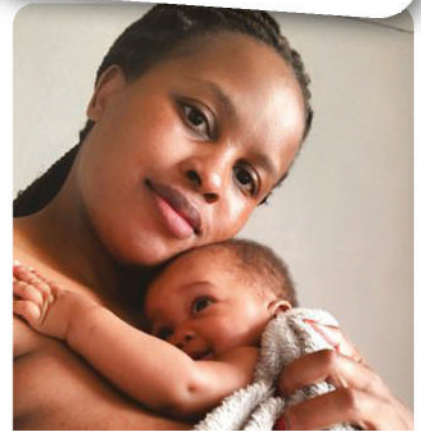


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Little Amani, just days after she was born, wearing incubator "goggles" to protect her eyes from the light.



Despite her fears, Somikazi and Baby Amani have bonded beautifully.

WINNING LETTER

A SUDDEN AND SCARY START

About five months into my first pregnancy I developed gestational diabetes, which was quite scary, since everything had been going well before that. I did a complete sugar fast for two weeks, and everything seemed to clear up.

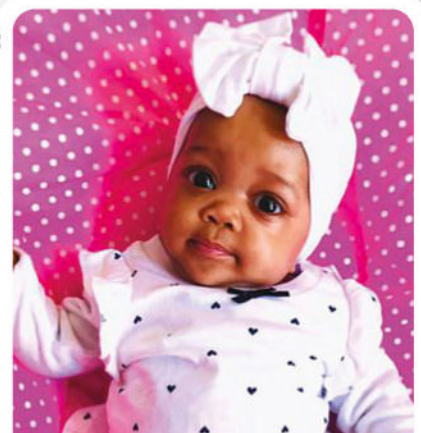
So when I noticed some swelling in my feet and hands, I wasn't too worried and thought we still had lots of time for baby shopping. I went for what I thought was going to be a routine check-up, but the doctor told me that my blood pressure was dangerously high, and I was rushed to hospital. Confused and lost in my thoughts, I ended up spending Friday night sleeping in a chair in the hospital's waiting room, while my blood pressure got higher and higher.

In the early hours of the morning, a nurse woke me up and told me that my baby was having difficulty breathing.

Then everything happened so quickly. I was rushed to the operating theatre with the words "emergency c-section" being thrown about.

My baby girl went straight to ICU when she was born. Hours passed after the procedure, without me seeing her. Anxiety consumed me. Countless questions raced through my mind, with my blood pressure rising: Is she okay? What if we aren't able to form a connection? How would I know if she was even the right baby? What if she has been switched? But every nurse reassured me that no news was good news, and I would see her the next day.

Finally I was allowed to see her. There she was, my tiny baby girl Amani, connected to an oxygen machine, and the only way I recognised her was because of my surname on the incubator. My heart sank. This was far from the first meeting I had imagined.



After her sudden rocky entrance to the world, Baby Amani is thriving – and all smiles!

It's been a year – Amani turned 1 in June and has started walking: what an amazing journey filled with great memories!

SOMIKAZI TYALITI

CAPE TOWN, WESTERN CAPE

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WIN A GIFT CARD!

Send a high-resolution photo of you and your bump, and you could win a Dis-Chem Baby City gift card worth R580. Email your entry to sharing@ypbmagazine.com with the subject "Baby City". Include your ID number, contact details and nearest Dis-Chem Baby City store.

Dis-Chem
babycity

MY SPECIAL FAMILY IS GROWING

Ditlhora Mashaba and her growing family live in Centurion, Pretoria. They are so excited to give birth in 5 weeks' time! "Everyone had written me off, but at 41 years, God finally blessed me with a baby boy: Ntiyiso. And now I am expecting another! My boys complete me and I'm forever grateful. A big thank you to my fertility specialist and supportive husband."



Said on social




We spotted a few parenting truths that made us giggle.

Gina Milne says: "I love it when my kids sigh. Like what ails you, my little unemployed freeloader?"

Anonymous: "My 8-year-old daughter asked me if our baby was still an alcoholic – 'you know, when she cries all the time.' Me: 'I think you mean, colic?'"

@DudeDad says it is like it is: "There isn't enough coffee in the world for the 1st week with a new baby..."

@LHlodder "You think you are going to have a pretty ordinary day, and then your 5-year-old announces that she only walks backwards from now on!"

For Funny Grandmas  **posted:** "After putting the grandchildren to bed, I took off my make-up and changed into my dressing gown and slippers, and decided to wash my hair. I heard the children getting louder and louder, playing instead of going to sleep. So I threw a towel on my head, stormed into the room and gave them a stern warning. As I walked away, I heard the 3-year-old say in a trembling voice whisper: "Who was *that*?"

Motherhood is a blessing

I've always wanted kids and to be a mom. So when I fell pregnant, it was a real blessing. I love being a mom: babies really are innocent little angels. Yes, I know that we have to deal with our fair share of screaming and baby-yelling, but you learn to adapt, bond and grow with your child and baby. I can't wait to nurture my daughter, Saskia, to the best of my ability and watch her grow. I want to see her become everything she dreams and hopes to be – not many people or children get that opportunity.

SUZANE LOTZ, CAPE TOWN, WESTERN CAPE

Right: Big brother Bongokuhle Shabangu turns 4 in August.
Far right: Hlelokuhle Shabangu has just turned 1.



TEARS OF JOY

I will never forget 10 December 2022. It was the day my three-year-old son was given the "Best in Speech" award at his crèche – and I was there to see it. I cried tears of joy the whole day! I know they can be stubborn, but I just want to encourage all moms to be there for their little ones: ask them how their school day was, about their teachers and what they learnt. Give them the support they need. We as parents can also be good educators. I'm so proud of him!

VUYISILE SHABANGU, DAVEYTON, GAUTENG

#Glowing

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Bea du Toit (25), from Somerset West, Western Cape, is 31 weeks along with her first baby (a boy!).



Ndivhaleni Emily Bulasigobo (31), from Cape Town, Western Cape, is 36 weeks pregnant.



Emma Thabedi (38) from Soweto, Gauteng, is 36 weeks along.



Mphumy Zuma (35) from Pietermaritzburg, KwaZulu-Natal, at 28 weeks.

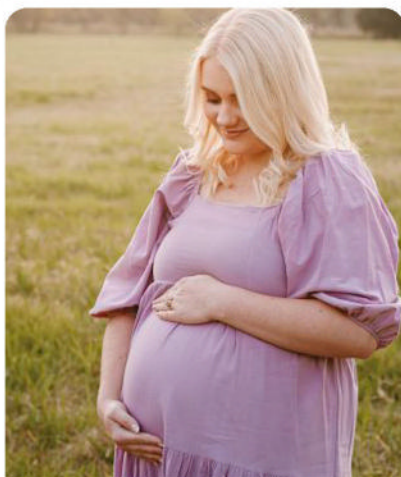


Kasandra (31) and her husband, Nirosh Beharilal (31), from Sandton, Gauteng, are 27 weeks.

WINNER



Nicolene Steyn (33) from Faerie Glen, Pretoria, Gauteng, is 32 weeks.



Rochelle Redelinghuys (27) from Boskruin, Randburg, Gauteng, is 34 weeks along.



Shannon Warner (22) from Bedfordview, Gauteng, is 39 weeks pregnant.



I don't often write reviews, but I had to for this.

My skin is in the best shape it's ever been in.

#loving

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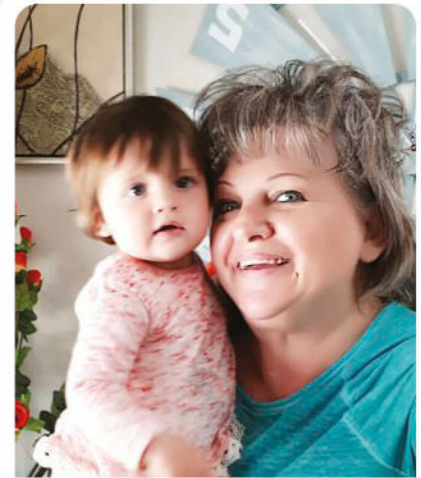


WIN 1 OF 8 BABYJOY HAMPERS WORTH R880!

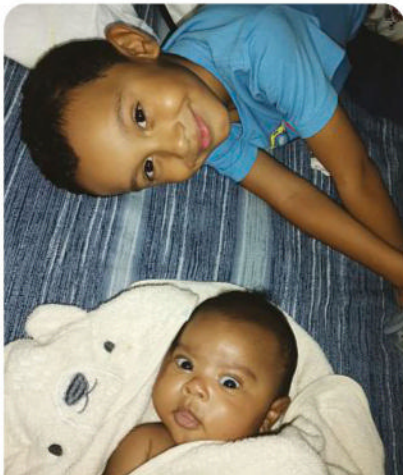
Eight lucky readers stand a chance to win four packs of BabyJoy Diapers worth R880. BabyJoy Diaper Pants are ultra-dry, easy to wear and easy to change with a 360° stretchy waistband. The new diamond pad absorbent layer rapidly draws moisture away from the skin and is absorbent for up to 12 hours. Available in four sizes from Babies R Us, selected retailers and online stores. To enter, send a hi-res image of your baby with Mom or Dad or a grandparent or sibling to sharing@ypbmagazine.com.



Steven and Angela and their youngest, Joanna Faye Louise Chiaberta (8 weeks) are from Pennington, KwaZulu-Natal.



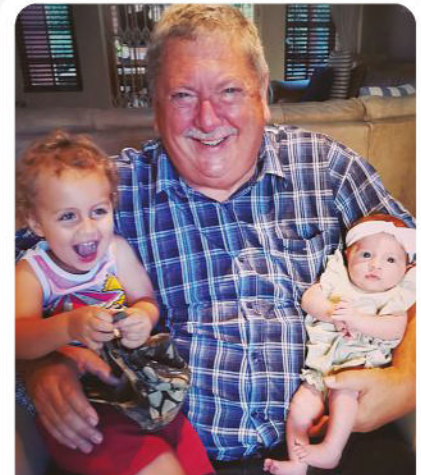
Abby Smith (9 months) and Ouma Martie Horn, who looks after her during the day, are from Ramsgate, KwaZulu-Natal.



Tylo (2 months) and Brooklyn Moriarty (5 years) are from Bluff, Durban, KwaZulu-Natal.



Mom Tshepiso and Muneiswa Sepeng (7 months) are from Rynfield, Benoni, Gauteng.



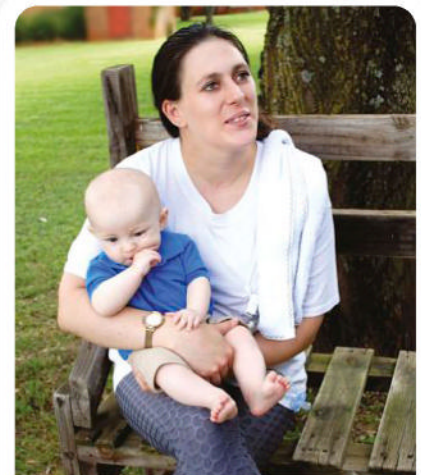
Oupa Hein, Elaih (2 years) and Zeahlé Langenhoven (5 weeks) are from Lynnwood, Pretoria, Gauteng.



Joseph (36 years), Leo George (4 years) and Ashley George (32 years) are from Bloemfontein, Free State.



Elize (30 years), Luka (2½ years) and Brandon Pretorius (29 years) are from Somerset West, Western Cape and 35 weeks pregnant.



Tazmin (30 years) and Kayden Rother (11 months) are from Benoni, Gauteng.

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#Growing

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Aarush Ramchander from Umzinto, KwaZulu-Natal, is 2 weeks old.



Axel Murphy from Walmer, Port Elizabeth, Eastern Cape, is 6 months old.



Uminathi Mbikwana from Bassonia, Johannesburg South, Gauteng, is 7 months old.



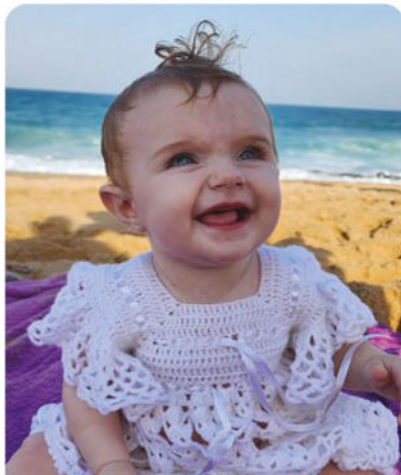
Johann Hattingh from Potchefstroom, North West, is 20 months old.



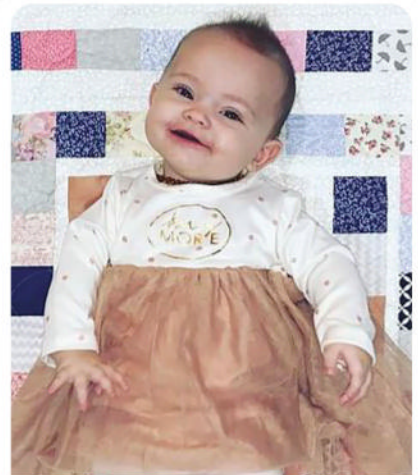
Jeanri de Jager from Bothaville, Free State, is 9 weeks old.



Lebogang Modiba from Bloemfontein, Free State, is 9 months old.



Mia-Maé Scholtz from Boksburg, Gauteng, is 8 months old.



Lara Lewis from Pretoria, Gauteng, is 7 months old.

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#Crib notes



WEIGHT OF THE WORLD

Ja, parents really carry it.

91%

of parents are concerned about climate change, with a majority indicating the crisis has even impacted their perspective on having more children.

64%

of parents prefer products that are sustainably sourced.

60%

say sustainable company practices play a large part in their purchasing habits. That is despite the findings that the vast majority of parents (84%) acknowledge the cost of living is rising and more than half (57%) believe engaging in environmentally friendly practices takes a lot of time.

Source: The study was commissioned by HP and included 5 007 adults in five countries.

CRACKING OUR MATHS PROBLEM

A+Students is a franchise that combines playing with educational toys like the Japanese soroban (abacus) and the A+Play Maths range of educational toys in a way that aids brain development, improves concentration and boosts self-confidence and intelligence and creates a love for mathematics. Even children as young as 2 ½ years (30 months) can be solving complex problems in no time.

A session for the little ones typically starts off with exercises to integrate the left and right brain through flash cards and speed writing.

The kids move about, on the carpet, on their feet, then use the big abacus to familiarise themselves with concepts.

Practising finger exercises on the soroban will start to refine motor skills. This moves learning from the abstract to the concrete and helps them to grasp the notions of adding and subtracting, after which they will be able to step up the numbers with which they are dealing.

It's "similar to teaching piano or chess to pre-school children – they have the capacity to absorb and learn at a phenomenal rate," explains A+Students founder Marlene Mouton. "It has been proven that the younger children are exposed to primary maths methods, the better equipped they will be to go into the formal school system. Maths concepts should be introduced at an age when they can gain a basic idea of the practice through language and play. Number sense or the basics of learning about numbers is the first vital math skill a child must develop before reaching kindergarten."

Interested? Find out more at aplusstudents.co.za or call 087 808 5954.



MORE INFO
aplusstudents.co.za



PREVENT & PROTECT

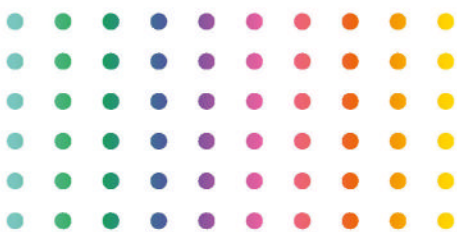
Gut health is the key to a strong immune system. Improve your family's gut health by eating the right food, lowering stress levels, getting enough sleep, staying hydrated, eating less processed, high-sugar and high-fat foods, and taking a probiotic. The other side of the coin is good hygiene and clean water, as the current cholera outbreak has so tragically shown.

When you buy a pack of the probiotic Enterogermina, Sanofi will donate R20 towards providing safe water solutions and hygiene education at early childhood

development centres in needy KwaZulu-Natal communities. Since 2022, they've provided 15 water tanks and 14 hand-washing stations, as a way to prevent totally avoidable diarrhoea-related deaths, which is still one of the leading causes of death, ill health and disability among children younger than 5 years.

Sanofi's partnership with non-profit organisation Save the Children aims to reach over 2 million lives by 2025, through education on hygiene and nutrition, and improved access to water.

Photographs: Getty Images/Gallo Images and supplied.



DIGITAL PARENTING

Millennials (born between 1981 and 1996) are the largest group of parents in South Africa. They're also digital natives, and an Ipsos survey shows that 86 percent of them believe that technology has made parenting easier, with 52 percent using technology to monitor their children's online activities, and 47 percent using technology to monitor their children's location. Tech certainly makes kid wrangling easier. According to Ronald Govender from Dis-Chem Baby City:

- 1 Smart baby monitors allow you to check in on your little ones from anywhere. Some models are equipped with features such as night vision, two-way audio, and motion sensors, giving you added peace of mind.
- 2 Technology advances have resulted in a changing pad that doubles as a scale to track baby weight.
- 3 Smart bottle warmers allow us to warm a bottle to the optimal temperature – not too cold, not too hot – via an app.
- 4 Smart dummies, baby activity trackers and sleep aids are other examples of how technology is being incorporated into baby products to help us monitor and care for our babies.
- 5 Millennials also plan and host baby showers, compile baby registries and shop for gifts as well as school requirements online.
- 6 Virtual communication (Zoom, Skype and Teams) helps us stay connected with teachers and support systems while using the same to manage our new hybrid working models. Remote learning and virtual parent-teacher conferences have become the norm, making it easier for us to stay involved in our children's lives.
- 7 With older South Africans also embracing mobile devices and smart technology, it's never been easier for us to stay connected with our families and loved ones, no matter where they are in the world.



Families come in all shapes and sizes and configurations. And in case you haven't heard.... moms aren't the only ones changing nappies. The days are numbered for the societal norm that puts nappy-changing facilities in the women's restrooms.

PEP is challenging the stereotype by adding nappy-changing facilities in the men's bathrooms across South Africa, starting with baby stations in both Festive Mall in Johannesburg and N1 City Mall in Cape Town.

THIS WAY FOR BABY MAKING HELP



Fertility Show Africa, targeted at those trying to conceive and those on a journey to parenthood, takes place at the Kyalami Grand Prix Circuit and International Convention Centre on 5 and 6 August.

You'll get the opportunity to engage with specialists and experts in a supportive and unobtrusive environment. Meet some of the best specialists, embryologists, nurses, psychologists, social workers and fertility coaches and ask questions, find answers and gather all the necessary information for your situation.

Other highlights include an expert talks programme, Q&A sessions and an expo area showcasing the latest fertility and journey-to-parenthood products and solutions, so you can chat to exhibitors directly. All expert talks will be recorded and made available on

YouTube after the show, free to watch at any time.

Tickets are available from Quicket at quicket.co.za for R195 per person, or R350 for two. Full weekend admission is R565 (valid for two people, Saturday and Sunday).

Learn more at fertilityshowafrica.com or find them on social media.



QUICKET
TICKETS
quicket.co.za



MORE
INFO
fertilityshowafrica.com

#Crib notes

2.4 million

That's how many nutritious meals have been dished up to hungry pre-schoolers thanks to a partnership between Futurelife and the Dis-Chem Foundation. And things are about to get even more impressive, with Nivea and Octodec coming on board, aiming to reach three-and-a-half times as many children in 2023 than in the previous three years combined. Well done!

START SCREENING

Men are notoriously bad at health maintenance. Encourage your guy to go for these six check-ups.

1 COMPREHENSIVE PHYSICAL EXAMINATION

The doctor will assess various aspects of his health, including blood pressure, cholesterol levels, body mass index (BMI) and overall organ function. These tests help identify potential risk factors for serious health conditions such as heart disease, diabetes and cancer. Regular check-ups allow for early detection and treatment, significantly improving prevention and treatment outcomes.

2 PROSTATE CANCER SCREENING

Prostate cancer is the most common cancer among South African men. Starting at the age of 45, or earlier if there is a family history, regular prostate-specific antigen blood tests and digital rectal examinations should be part of everyone's healthcare routine. Early detection of prostate cancer greatly increases the chances of successful treatment and survival.

BEANS FOR THE PLANET

We're all feeling the pinch of rising food prices, né?

One way to cut your costs, increase your nutrition, trim your waistline and do something great for the planet, is to eat more beans, peas, pulses and lentils.

Beans release 90 percent less harmful greenhouse gases than some animal-based foods, contain protein, carbohydrates, vitamins and minerals, and if you buy them dried, they're downright cheap. Even better, grow them yourself and eat for free!

For inspiration, join the challenge at beansishow.org/menu-challenge and follow the hashtag #beansonthemenu



MORE INFO
beansishow.org

CLEFT LIPS & POLLUTION THE LINK IS CLEAR

An increasing trend in the incidence of babies born with cleft lip and cleft palate is associated with exposure to air pollution during pregnancy. This is according to research from the South African Medical Research Council, surgeons, researchers and Operation Smile South Africa. A total of 2 515 cases were considered, with specific focus on the living conditions of the women who gave birth to babies with cleft lips and palates.

"Air pollution levels are known to be high in South Africa, coming from coal-fired power stations, traffic, domestic fuel burning, mining, industry and other sources," says Dr Caradee Wright, chief specialist scientist at the Council's environment and health research unit.

There are several possible causes of cleft conditions, including genes and behaviour (smoking, medication) and diet during pregnancy. Another factor is the environment in which you live when you're expecting.

Cleft lip and palate birth hotspot clusters were found in district municipalities in the provinces of Gauteng, Limpopo, North-West, Mpumalanga and the Free State.

If you are planning a pregnancy, try and limit air pollution exposure. Avoid indoor fires without adequate ventilation, and avoid walking or exercising on busy roads during peak traffic hours.



3 COLORECTAL CANCER SCREENING

A colonoscopy, recommended every 10 years starting at the age of 45, allows for the detection and removal of polyps before they become cancerous. If there is a family history of colo-rectal cancer or other risk factors, earlier or more frequent screenings may be recommended.

4 CARDIOVASCULAR HEALTH ASSESSMENT

Heart disease remains a leading cause of death among men. A comprehensive cardiovascular health assessment can identify risk factors such as high blood pressure, high cholesterol, and diabetes. Your doctor may recommend an electrocardiogram (ECG) and stress or other diagnostic tests to evaluate his heart health. Lifestyle modifications and early intervention can significantly reduce the risk of heart disease and its complications.

5 SKIN CANCER SCREENING

South Africa's sunny climate makes skin cancer a prevalent concern. Regular skin examinations by a dermatologist can help detect and treat skin cancers, including melanoma, at an early stage. It is important to protect the skin from harmful UV radiation by wearing sunscreen, protective clothing and seeking shade when outdoors.

6 VISION AND EYE HEALTH EXAMINATION

Regular eye exams are crucial for maintaining good vision and overall eye health. The eye doctor can assess vision acuity, screen for conditions such as glaucoma and cataracts and detect any early signs of eye diseases. By detecting and treating vision problems early on, optimal eye health can be ensured and potential vision loss can be prevented.

DICTIONARY SCRUNCHY MOMS

MEANING: A parenting style that is a mix of the two opposites: "silky" moms and "crunchy" moms.

SILKY MOMS ascribe to Western medicine, use disposable nappies and don't see anything wrong with screens, fast food and modern conveniences in general.

CRUNCHY MOMS choose unmedicated births, buy technology- and plastic-free toys, eat organic and use cloth nappies. Scrunchy moms are a mix, taking what is for them the best of both philosophies.



SHOPPING PRE-LOVED? TAKE CARE!

The second-hand market for baby goods provides much-needed affordability and financial relief for families across the country. First-time parents in South Africa spend on average upwards of R100 000 a year to raise a child, and nursery set-up costs alone can surge to more than R5 000.

Babies R Us advises caution though, as some second-hand baby goods may have been recalled, such as, for example, the Fisher-Price Rock 'n Play Sleeper. In the US, there's calls for this product – which was linked to more than 30 deaths in the nearly 10 years it had been on the market – to be taken off the second-hand market, especially Facebook Marketplace. It was recalled in 2019, but it's estimated there are still more than a million in circulation that are now being sold second-hand.

Last year, the US had the highest number of children's product recalls since 2013, according to a report from Kids in Danger, a non-profit focused on children's product safety. We're talking everything from baby products to clothes and toys.

Nursery products, items like prams and baby swings, accounted for more than half of the over 5 million units of children's products recalled in 2022 alone, the report shows.

Experts advise that items such as car seats, high chairs, prams and cots should be bought new to ensure they meet the current safety standards and haven't been recalled, don't have any peeling paint, chips or missing parts. Also keep in mind that used baby items may contain bacteria or viruses that can cause serious illnesses in infants. It's important to clean and inspect them thoroughly before allowing your child to use them.

Bottom line: research and inspect before you buy.



WE ♥ A FREEBIE

With its top rating, the Philips Pregnancy+ app offers targeted information relating to your baby's weekly development. It helps you follow your baby's growth in the womb, tracks your medical visits, stores important contacts and supports you throughout your journey. Download Pregnancy+ from the Apple app store or Google Play.



Above: Born in May this year, these identical twins fought the odds and beat the statistics to make it safely into the world. "The tension and apprehension in the operating theatre could be felt by all," Kristina says.

Below: Dad Sergio and Kristina watch as Prof. Kypros Nicolaides performs laser ablation surgery in utero in order to separate the girls' joint blood vessels.



"My sister and I sat staring at each other in the hospital coffee shop. My abdomen had swollen extensively, and I was in unbearable pain. It was 5.50pm, and a terrifying decision had to be made," remembers Kristina Madonna from Cape Town. Just under five months into her pregnancy with identical twins, Kristina and husband Sergio found out that their babies were dying. They had just been diagnosed with twin to twin transfusion syndrome (TTTS), a rare condition that affects monozygotic twins who share the same placenta and blood supply. One twin was in heart failure from an oversupply of blood, while the other was not getting enough blood and nutrients to survive.

"Specialist perinatologist Dr Lou Pistorius explained the four options," Kristina says. "Do nothing, but this meant both twins would probably die in the next few days; terminate the pregnancy immediately; do a selective cord occlusion,



Kristina Madonna with her daughters Emilia and Sofia when they were finally put in the same bassinet after six days in the neo-natal intensive care unit.

Watch episode 1 of *The Surgeon's Cut* on Netflix for a full feature on Prof Nicolaides and his pioneering approach to foetal medicine, including laser ablation surgery.

Our daisy babies

Kristina and Sergio Madonna share the harrowing yet miraculous story of their twins' fight to survive and earn their title as daisy babies.

BY CAMILLA RANKIN

which meant choosing which baby was "sicker" and then cutting its cord giving the other twin a chance at life; and, finally, performing foetoscopic laser surgery." This intricate, high-risk surgery (also called laser ablation) uses laser to separate the babies' "shared" or joint blood vessels in the placenta, effectively rebalancing their blood flow. "But the stakes are extremely high," Kristina explains. "Our babies were at stage 3

already, where stage 4 means the babies have already passed. Dr Pistorius told us that while he was experienced with the technique, his current success rate of both babies surviving was 25 percent, but that if we could get to London, Prof. Kypros Nicolaides, the pioneer of foetal medicine and this specific surgery, had a success rate of 50 percent survival of both twins, and 75 percent that at least one would make it."

Photographs: Supplied.

A RACE AGAINST TIME

They knew they had to do it. They had to get to London. They had been through so much, including a miscarriage, to get to this point and had already started to feel the babies move. Plus, their first child, Alessia (3½), knew she was having sisters. “While we sat in that coffee shop, Dr Pistorius had already called Prof. Nicolaides and made an appointment. My sister found the last two tickets to London leaving that night, in three hours’ time,” Kristina says. “We raced to pack and sort Alessia out. Sergio wasn’t at this appointment as he was with Alessia. At the public toilet at the airport I frantically googled how to give myself an injection to reduce my pregnancy-related higher-than-normal risk of blood clotting during the flight. It was a horrific flight – all I could think was that something could already have happened to my girls.”

LONDON CALLING

Within 16 hours of the TTTS diagnosis, Kristina and Sergio were in London, in Prof. Nicolaides’ office with an ultrasound specialist hearing their little girls’ heartbeats. “That scan was intense. The detail incredible...” It took two-and-a-half hours – but despite the heartbeats, the news was not ideal. The twins had developed twin anaemia polycythemia sequence (TAPS) overnight in addition to the TTTS, so one was now anaemic, and the other had a very high red blood cell count.

“My cervix had shortened and had begun to funnel, meaning that the amniotic sac and associated fluid of the one twin had started to push into the cervix. This is a side effect of the TTTS.”

It had been a mere 24 hours after their appointment with Dr Pistorius in South Africa, and the couple were in a London hotel, prepped and waiting for surgery the next day that might save one, two – or none – of their babies.

A MOMENT OF TRUTH

The couple were back at the hospital by 10am, where Kristina was scanned every 30 minutes as the babies’ condition could change from minute to minute. “We’d watched the Netflix’s documentary, so knew what we were in for, but actually meeting Prof. Nicolaides was surreal,” Kristina says. “He was so relaxed, gentle, positive – he even said Dr Pistorius was the top guy in SA, and his stats were as good, if not better, than his – but he was also soberingly realistic.”

The procedure, performed with a camera and laser simultaneously inside the uterus, took an hour.

“We could watch our twins on screen in real life, with crystal clarity. We would

never have wanted to name any of our children until they were born and we could physically see them,” explains Kristina, “but there they were in minute detail. It was clear: Emilia (who was bright red from all the red blood cells) and Sofia (who was extremely pale from her anaemia) were 19 weeks of perfect little people.” ‘Meeting’ the girls made the two-and-a-half-hour wait for the post-surgical scan to see if the surgery had been successful, emotionally excruciating. I couldn’t feel any movement, and I had mild cramps.

“I deal with emotionally charged situations by going into a zone, by compartmentalising and dealing with the situation at hand in a calm and logical manner, knowing that I just need to keep everything together until the end. It’s the only way I know how to get through such difficult situations.

“For Sergio the worst part was that post-surgery scan: he felt petrified with fear. But there they were: two miraculous heartbeats!”

A STITCH IN TIME

The next two weeks were critical, as Prof. Nicolaides was still concerned about the cervix’s length and the fact that the membranes were still bulging out. However, after two more detailed scans and outpatient monitoring in London, the Madonnas were given the go-ahead to go back home: the surgery had been a success, the girls were growing independently.

Back in Cape Town, they had another statistic to beat. At 22 weeks along, Kristina needed an emergency cervical cerclage – a treatment that involves temporarily sewing the cervix closed to help it hold the weight of pregnancy and prevent early labour, but as the membranes were bulging from her cervix, there was a very serious risk of rupturing them, which would put an immediate end to the pregnancy.

“Dr Pistorius and our regular ob/gyn, Dr Martin Puzey, were both hesitant to do the cerclage due to the high risk, but as it was more in Dr Puzey’s area of expertise, he was the one who performed the tricky procedure. I had complete confidence in him.

“After the cerclage I was put on bed rest. As a physically active person who is used to high level training, this was mentally exceptionally challenging, but I needed to sacrifice to save them.”

OUR DAISY BABIES

Kristina’s goal was to get to 36 weeks and she crossed off the days. The babies, however, had other plans. Kristina went into premature labour at 28 weeks and was

WHAT IS TTTS AND TAPS?

Twin to twin transfusion syndrome (TTTS) and twin anemia polycythemia sequence (TAPS) are extremely rare conditions that affect monozygotic (identical) twins who share a placenta in the womb. TTTS occurs when there is an imbalance in blood flow between the twins through the shared placenta, leading to one twin (donor) receiving insufficient blood and nutrients while the other twin (recipient) receives an excess. TAPS is a further complication where there is an unequal distribution of red blood cells between the twins, with one twin experiencing anemia (low red blood cell count) and the other twin experiencing polycythemia (high red blood cell count). Both can cause serious, life-threatening, health issues for both babies, and sometimes the mother.

WHY DAISY BABIES?

The name “daisy” is often used to refer to babies who have been affected by TTTS and TAPS. “DAI” (donor-acceptor imbalance), represents the imbalanced blood flow between the twins in these conditions. Daisies are also known for their ability to thrive in diverse environments and is a nod to the strength and courage of these babies and their families in overcoming these challenging conditions.

rushed to hospital for treatment. Despite everything that was thrown at them, they made it to 35 weeks!

On 8 May 2023, Emilia Kypria (after Prof. Kypros Nicolaides) and Sofia Martina (named for Dr Martin Puzey) beat every odd and every statistic and were born safely, weighing in at 2.3kg and 2.05kg. They breastfed straight away and only spent 11 days in the neo-natal intensive care unit, passing all premie-related X-rays and brain scans with flying colours. ●

#Crafting

Show time!

Incorporate your children's art into the decor of your home in clever eye-catching ways.

IDEA #1 MAKE A WALL HANGING OR A PICNIC BLANKET

Scan a selection of artworks that have a similar look and feel, and have them printed professionally on canvas or fabric. Then ask Granny to turn it into a picnic blanket, or have it stretched over a frame for the wall.



IDEA #2 CREATE LAMINATED PLACEMATS

Have the artworks scanned, so they are all the same size. Then print them on thick paper, and have them laminated.



IDEA #3 TAKE IT TO WORK

If you use a clipboard at work, why not turn art into a daily reminder of how talented your child is. Swap the art around simply by clipping a new one in front.



IDEA #4 CLIP IT UP

If you like the clipboard idea, invest in a whole wall's worth of decorative clipboards. They're much cheaper than frames, after all. Attach the clipboards to the wall with double-sided tape, and then clip the artwork on as it comes home.



BUY NOW

Blue Geo clipboard,
R230, netdecor.co.za.



BUY NOW

Acrylic clipboard with
rose gold clip, R250 for
two, takealot.com.



Photographs: Getty Images/Gallo Images, whitehouseblackshutters.com, hellowonderful.co, placet.net and supplied

IDEA #5 KEEP IT INTERESTING

Art on thicker paper is ideal for being propped up on a ledge.



BUY NOW

Photo frames by Lego R320, nestdesigns.co.za.

IDEA #6 CONVERSATION STARTER

Another clever idea is this cube – it has six interchangeable sides, so plenty of space, and is a great conversation starter on a coffee table!



BUY NOW

Kenro photo cube R402, manicaa.com.



IDEA #7 MAKE IT SNOW!

All children are fascinated by snow globes. A DIY snowglobe is a great idea for your Christmas displays, and children enjoy making their very own snow globes.



BUY NOW

DIY snow globe picture frame R135, takealot.com.



Acrylic frames, from R227, lovecoco.co.za.



BUY NOW

IDEA #8 STAY FOCUSED

Let your art be the focus and not the frame with these transparent perspex frames. Swopping and updating is also easy.



IDEA #9 STICK 'EM UP!

If your children's art is going to live on the fridge, you can still keep things neat by using magnetic frames.

IDEA #10 SHOW OFF

A pegboard is a great way for prolific artists to display their work. You could also use string or piece of rope.



Magnetic fridge frames, from R85, lovecoco.co.za.



BUY NOW



BUY NOW

Artwork peg-board, R350, lovecoco.co.za.



IDEA #11 TAKE AWAY!

Brighten your day and print their art on a tote bag. These make great gifts for grannies and grandpas! Visit your nearest Postnet or print shop for some advice.

#Crafting



IDEA #12 TURN ART INTO SOMETHING USEFUL

Here's an idea for when you've run out of wall space: take photographs of the art and then have household items like mugs and cushions printed with the designs. You can even have the art turned into a puzzle or duvet cover. Pop in at your local Postnet or photography shop for help and to explore what is possible.





IDEA #13 HANG IN THERE

If you're as busy as we are, then this quick solution is for you. Interesting hangers are very effective.



BUY NOW

4-piece, straight black wooden clothes hangers, R399, takealot.com.

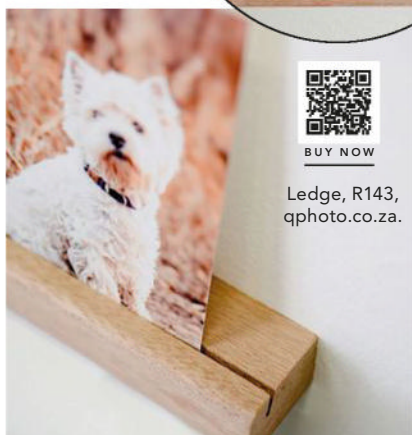


BUY NOW

5-piece premium pinewood hangers, R329, takealot.com.

IDEA #14 SITTING PRETTY

A slim photoledge is a great idea for firmer art works and photographs. Even small ceramics could go here.



BUY NOW

Ledge, R143, qphoto.co.za.

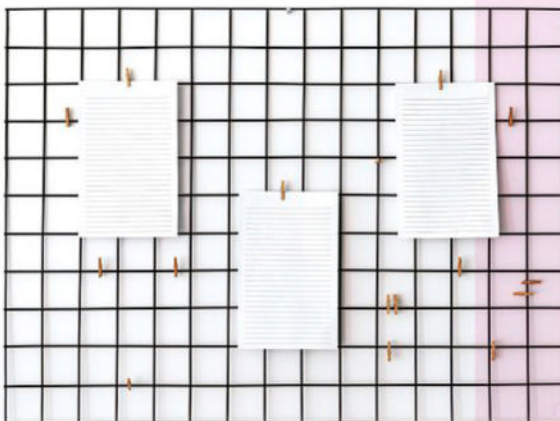


BUY NOW

Frame it! gallery tape, R149 takealot.com.

IDEA #15 TAPE IT UP!

What a novel idea! Create an instant gallery with this classy tape.



IDEA #16 WIRED AND FRAMED!

These wire frames are an easy solution to pinning up artwork of all different shapes and sizes, while still keeping a cohesive look. All you need is some wire mesh, available from most hardware stores, and a few tiny pegs, which you'll find in craft and stationery shops.



IDEA #17 ON A (SHOE)STRING BUDGET

No budget? No fuss. Do you have two nails in the wall at the same height, and a spare string? Simply tie the string around each nail, find some pegs and start pegging!

IDEA #18 ALL CORKED UP

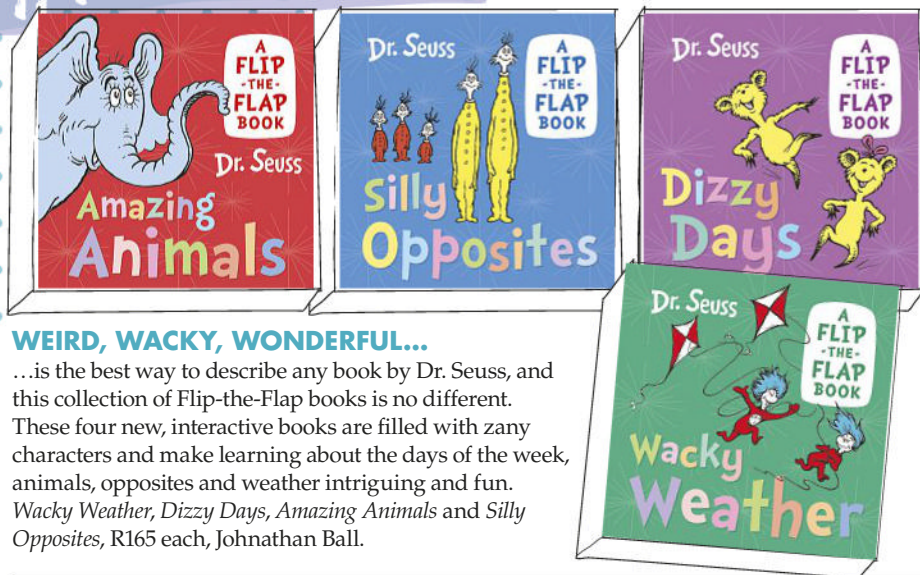
Cork boards are versatile classics and so easy to use. To pretty things up a bit, find frames for your cork boards. Add your child's name or initial so everyone knows whose work is on display.



BUY NOW

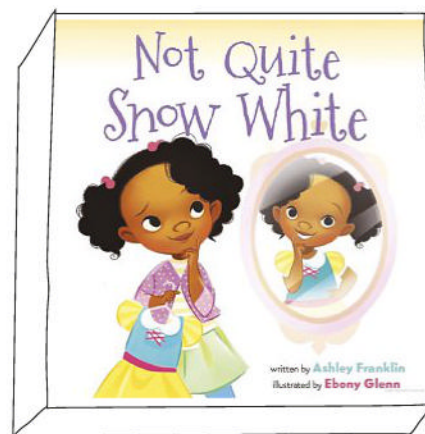
Hashtag cork board, from R1 195, lovecoco.co.za.

#Reading



WEIRD, WACKY, WONDERFUL...

...is the best way to describe any book by Dr. Seuss, and this collection of Flip-the-Flap books is no different. These four new, interactive books are filled with zany characters and make learning about the days of the week, animals, opposites and weather intriguing and fun. *Wacky Weather*, *Dizzy Days*, *Amazing Animals* and *Silly Opposites*, R165 each, Johnathan Ball.



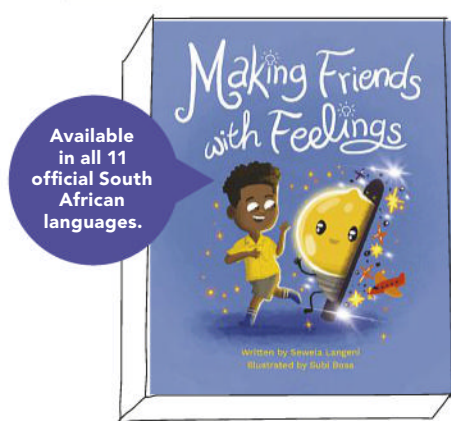
MIRROR, MIRROR ON THE WALL

But you can't be Snow White! Written by Ashley Franklin and illustrated by Ebony Glenn, *Not Quite Snow White* is about Tameika, a girl who is a fabulous actor, singer and dancer – but the other kids think she's "not quite" right to play the role of Snow White in the school play. They whisper, they snicker, and they glare. This is for any child whose confidence has been knocked. It is inspiring and very relevant for the diverse land that is South Africa. R210, Jonathan Ball.

BOOKS ARE A SPECIAL KIND OF MAGIC

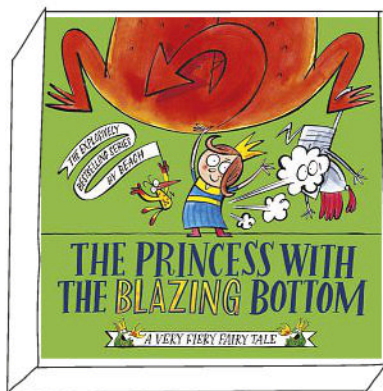
...but so are those times spent reading with your children. They will cherish it, we promise. Here are our suggestions to help keep that wonder alive.

BY CAMILLA RANKIN



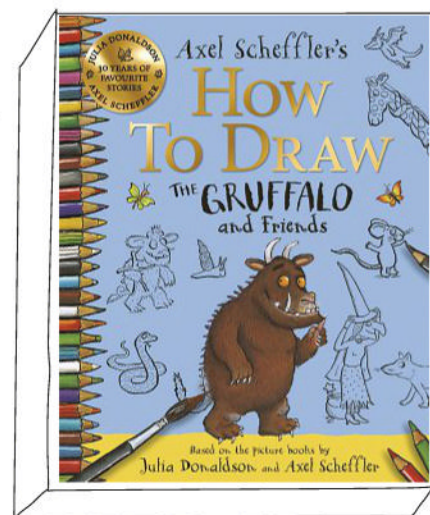
YES, BOYS DO CRY

Raising sons is hard in a world that expects them to be tough men, which is why we love *Making Friends with Feelings* by Sewela Langeni and illustrated by Subi Bosa. This compassionate story teaches boys that it is okay to cry when you're sad and that it is healthy to express your emotions. R145, New Africa Books.



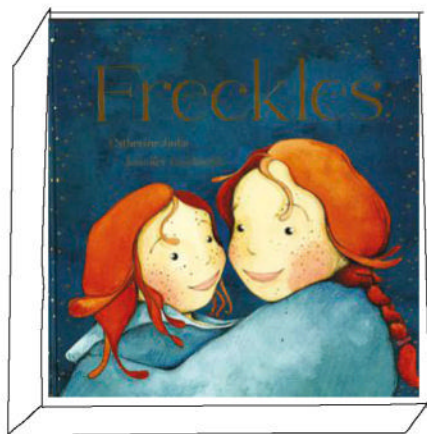
FART-ASTIC FUN

A dragon that farts flames, a knight who can climb any wall, no matter how high, and a princess held captive by a big bad beast. What could possibly go wrong? *The Princess with the Blazing Bottom* is an explosively funny, fiery tale that will get you all giggling. Written and illustrated by Beach, it is available for R210 from Simon & Schuster.



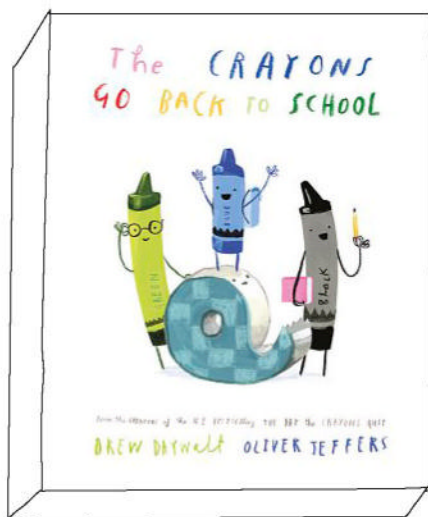
DOODLING WITH DONALDSON

This dynamic duo have teamed up again to help your child draw all their favourite characters. With step-by-step guides and activities, plus top tips from illustrator Axel Scheffler, this is a great gift for budding artists (even us grown-ups!). *How to Draw The Gruffalo and Friends* by Julia Donaldson and Axel Scheffler, R255, Pan MacMillan.



JUST FOR MOMS AND DAUGHTERS

One freckle, two freckles, three freckles more, or even no freckles at all – *Freckles* is a fab book for moms and daughters to read together. It uses simple, rhyming text that sings, loud and clear, messages of body positivity, loving exactly who you are, and the special bond between girls and their moms. Written by award-winning author Catherine Jinks and illustrated by Jennifer Goldsmith, R245, Hardie Grant Books.



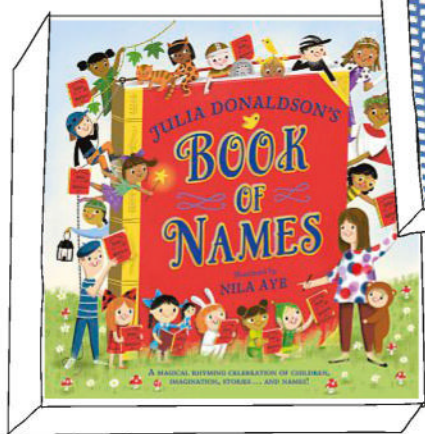
THOSE CRAZY CRAYONS

Who knew stationery could be so funny? And did you know that even crayons get excited to go back to school? They each have their favourite subject, but really they're all dying to let rip in art class. We can't get enough of Drew Daywalt's hilarious crayons and their antics. *The Crayons go Back to School*, illustrated by Oliver Jeffers, R220, Jonathan Ball.



TODDLER TRIUMPHS

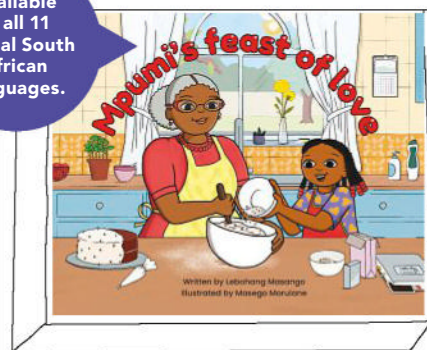
A book that celebrates how brushing your teeth, exercising regularly and being kind to other people can make you feel good on the inside? Yes, please. *The Best Me!* by Marvyn Harrison and illustrated by Rochelle Falconer is available for R210, Pan MacMillan. The best part? Marvyn is the founder of Dope Black Dads – a support group and podcast that works to challenge outdated stereotypes about Black fatherhood.



WHAT'S IN A NAME?

Find out with Julia Donaldson's celebration of children, imagination, stories and names, all woven together in her unmistakable rhyming style. *Julia Donaldson's Book of Names*, illustrated by the award-winning Nila Aye, was inspired by all the children Julia met while signing books over the years. Search for your child's name (and yours) and if it isn't included, there's even space for you to add it. R250, Pan MacMillan.

Available in all 11 official South African languages.



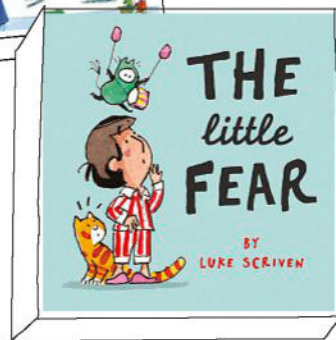
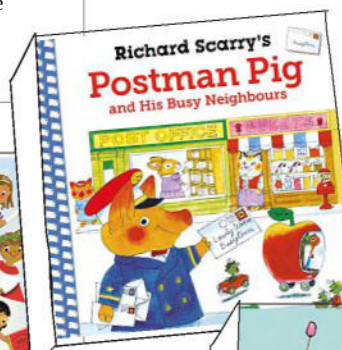
PULLS AT YOUR HEARTSTRINGS

This moving book touches on the complex feelings of love, loss and healing in the aftermath of Covid-19. Written by Lebohang Masango, with illustrations by Masego Morulane, *Mpumi's Feast of Love* is the story of how Mpumi's family and friends remember Gogo in a special way by creating a feast in her honour. Available in all 11 official South African languages from New Africa Books, for R145.

EXPLORING, SCARRY STYLE

Your little one will love helping Postman Pig do his deliveries around town: to the police station, the doctor's office, the library – and we loved that there were

stickers too! *Postman Pig and His Busy Neighbours* by the timeless Richard Scarry is available from Jonathan Ball for R210.



YOUR WORRY WORT, SORTED

This book really stood out to us as it is such a beautiful and sensitive way of dealing with an increasing childhood issue: anxiety. It helps children face their fears, overcome anxiety and learn to be just a little bit brave. *The Little Fear* from author and illustrator Luke Scriven is reassuring, empowering and wonderfully illustrated. R235, Harper Collins. ●

#Nourishing

Satisfyingly South African

Meaty meals are part of our heritage. This is how Mmule Setati, Joburg-based cookbook author, feeds her extended tribe.

Photographs: Supplied.



Mmule says

We all have that one recipe that can win over a room or, in my case, win over a heart. This is one of my husband's favourite childhood treats, and whenever I want to spoil him, I make this simple, heartwarming dish.

BRAISED PORK TROTTERS

SERVES 4

INGREDIENTS

- 1kg pork trotters
- 2 cups boiling water
- 2 bay leaves
- 2T olive oil
- 1 onion, chopped
- ½t turmeric
- 2 cups chicken stock
- Salt and pepper to taste
- Chopped fresh parsley and/or chilli for garnishing

METHOD

1. Rinse the trotters thoroughly under clean, running water.
2. Place the trotters in a large pot and add the water. Add the bay leaves and boil over a high heat for 1 hour, by which time all the water should have evaporated (see Tip).
3. Add the oil, onion and turmeric and fry for 10 minutes. Add the chicken stock and cook over a medium heat for 1–2 hours, until the meat is tender and falling off the bone.
4. Season to taste and garnish with parsley and/or chilli. Serve with steamed bread or stiff pap, or enjoy as a snack.

Tip:

To prevent the trotters from sticking to the pot or burning, keep adding water when necessary.

BRAAIED LAMB CHOPS

SERVES 6

INGREDIENTS

- Olive oil
- 2t ground cumin
- 3t smoked paprika
- 2T minced garlic
- Salt to taste
- 1T freshly ground black pepper
- Juice of 1 lemon
- 2kg lamb loin chops
- Mint pesto for drizzling

METHOD

1. In a large bowl, gently combine all the ingredients except the chops and pesto. Add the chops and turn until well coated, then leave to marinate overnight, or for at least 3 hours, in the fridge.
2. Place the chops over a hot braai or under an oven grill, then braai or grill for 10 minutes, turning once or twice. Drizzle with pesto and serve with samp salad, braai pap, or roast baby potatoes.

Delicious served with a samp salad.

SAMP SALAD

SERVES 6

INGREDIENTS

- 3 cups uncooked samp
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 1 whole red pepper
- 1 cup sun-dried tomatoes, chopped
- 1 cup baby tomatoes, halved
- 1 red onion, finely chopped
- 1 whole cucumber (cubed)
- A handful of fresh basil (roughly chopped)
- 2 rounds feta (roughly crumbled)

METHOD

1. Rinse the samp and place in a large pot with water to cover, then soak overnight. The next day, drain the water, rinse thoroughly and add fresh water to the pot, to cover. Season with salt and pepper and bring to a boil. The samp is ready once all the water is absorbed and it is soft and fluffy.
2. To roast a pepper on a braai, place the whole pepper over an open flame, turning until charred all over. Once done, remove the blackened skin and slit open the pepper. Remove the seeds and membranes, and slice into slivers.
3. Transfer the cooked samp to a large salad bowl. Add the peppers and the remaining ingredients, and mix gently to combine. Season to taste and serve with a dressing of your choice.

TSHOTLO TACOS

SERVES 6

INGREDIENTS

FOR THE SPICE MIXTURE

- 1T chipotle powder
- 1T smoked paprika
- 1t dried oregano
- 1t onion powder
- 1t garlic powder

FOR THE TSHOTLO

- 1.5kg beef brisket, in large chunks
- 2 cups beef stock
- 4T olive oil
- 1 onion, chopped
- 3 cloves garlic
- 1 bay leaf
- ½ cup orange juice
- Salt and pepper to taste
- Taco shells for serving
- 1 avocado, smashed, for serving
- ½ cup sour cream for serving

METHOD

1. Prepare the spice mixture by combining all the ingredients in a bowl. Set aside until ready to use.
2. Place the beef, stock, olive oil, onion, garlic and bay leaf in a large, deep pot and ensure the meat is covered by the liquid. Cook for 3 hours over a medium heat until tender.
3. After 3 hours, scoop out 1 cup of the cooking liquid from the pot. Transfer the meat and any leftover cooking liquid to another dish and shred the meat, using 2 forks.
4. Add the reserved cooking liquid, orange juice and spice mixture to the meat and mix. Return to the pot and fry over a high heat until the meat is evenly coated and the sauce reduced. Check the seasoning, and adjust if necessary.
5. Fill the taco shells with the spiced shredded beef, avocado and sour cream.

Mmule says

During my travels, I am always delighted to discover how similar some of the dishes of those countries are to those of my own SeTswana tradition, even though the cultures are worlds apart. In the SeTswana culture, we love making tshotlo ("pounded beef"), especially during traditional gatherings. This is my take on Mexican tacos, incorporating something I grew up eating.



Mmule says

This recipe is an ode to my great-grandmother Emily Tizzy. She worked as a domestic assistant to a family in Joburg and would come home with new dishes she learnt to make for them. My family loves this one, and when we share the meal, we share memories of my great-grandmother.

OUMA'S MEATBALLS

SERVES 6

INGREDIENTS

- 1 large head cabbage
 - 1 cup milk
 - 2 slices white bread
 - 250g lean beef mince
 - 250g pork mince
 - 1 large onion, finely chopped
 - 3 cloves garlic, minced
 - 1t minced ginger
 - 1 large egg, beaten
 - A handful of fresh parsley, chopped
 - Zest of 1 lemon
 - 1T wholegrain mustard
 - 1t ground nutmeg
 - 1t ground cumin
 - Salt and pepper to taste
 - 200g cheddar, cubed
 - 2T cake flour
 - 3T butter
 - 1T olive oil
- #### FOR THE ICE BATH
- 2 cups cold water
 - 10 ice cubes

METHOD

1. Carefully cut out the core from the cabbage and discard any leaves that are discoloured or torn.
2. Bring a large pot of water to a boil. Meanwhile, prepare an ice bath by adding cold water to a large bowl, then add the ice cubes and set aside.
3. Add the whole cabbage to the pot and boil for 4 minutes until the leaves are tender, then transfer the cabbage from the pot to the ice bath to cool.
4. Once cooled, remove 10–12 cabbage leaves and carefully cut out the lower, thicker section of the stem in the centre of each leaf, without cutting all the way through. Return the leaves to the bath of water.
5. Pour the milk into a deep bowl, then add the slices of bread, soaking them well. Squeeze out all the liquid and set the bread aside. (Use the milk elsewhere.)
6. To the same bowl, add the beef and pork mince, along with the bread, onion, garlic, ginger, beaten egg, parsley, lemon zest, mustard, nutmeg, cumin and salt and pepper. Using clean hands, mix until all the ingredients are well combined.
7. Shape the mixture into 10–12 golfball-sized meatballs, then push a cube of cheddar into the centre of each ball, making sure to encase the cheese. Roll the meatballs in flour and set aside.
8. Add the butter and olive oil to a large pan and fry the meatballs, turning often until well browned. Season with salt and pepper and remove from the heat.
9. Remove the cabbage leaves from the water bath and pat them dry. Wrap each meatball in a dry cabbage leaf.
10. Preheat the oven to 200°C and grease a baking dish. Arrange the wrapped meatballs in the prepared dish and add any juices from the pan. Bake for 20–25 minutes until cooked through. Serve with a homemade or ready-made Italian-style tomato sauce.







Mmule says

I grew up in a SeTswana household in Diepkloof, Soweto. During any traditional ceremony, seswaa was always prepared. As a little girl, I was fascinated by the preparation of the meat. I prefer to keep traditional recipes simple and as close to the original as possible, but sometimes it's also good to step over the boundary lines and play with flavours.

SESWAA (SLOW-COOKED PULLED BEEF)

SERVES 6

INGREDIENTS

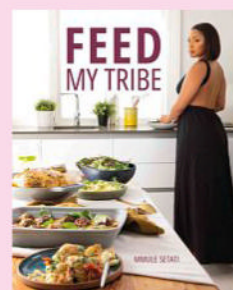
- 1.5kg beef brisket, cut into large pieces
- 4T olive oil
- 1 onion, chopped
- 3 cloves garlic
- 3 cups beef stock
- Salt and pepper to taste

METHOD

1. Place all the ingredients, except the salt and pepper, in a large, deep pot. The liquid should cover the meat. Cook over a medium heat for 2–3 hours until tender.
2. Remove any bones from the meat, drain off any excess liquid (but reserve it for later) and begin pounding the meat using a wooden spoon or a mallet if you have one. Alternatively, use 2 forks to separate and shred the beef. Season with salt and pepper. Spoon over some of the reserved cooking liquid before serving with pap or in a taco shell. Garnish as desired. ●

Mmule Setati does everything – and she does a lot! – with love. This book is testament to her belief that our relationship with food is intertwined with mental well-being, a philosophy that she embodies as wife, mother, adventurer and rising food influencer. Are you looking for something healthy and nutritious on a weeknight, but quick to prepare? A child-friendly version of a popular dish? Perhaps something to spoil your significant other on a date night, without having to spend half the date in the kitchen? Or maybe you'd like to wow your guests for a special get together? Maybe you want to impress your in-laws with your modern take on a traditional fave? In *Feed My Tribe*, Mmule has you covered.

The book also includes great tips and advice for beginners and plenty of shortcuts without compromising quality. R360, Penguin Random House.



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DOES ENDOMETRIOSIS REALLY MEAN NO BABIES?

Here's the medical low-down on endometriosis and how it can impact fertility.

Endometriosis is a condition where the hormone-sensitive layer of tissue (known as endometrial tissue) that normally lines the inside of your uterus grows outside of your womb. Endometriosis most commonly occurs in the lining of the pelvis or on the ovaries but can also affect the bowel or bladder – and in rare cases can occur as far away as the navel or lungs. Endometrial tissue responds to hormones in the same way as the tissue lining your uterus – it thickens, breaks down and bleeds. However, that shed tissue has nowhere to go, so it becomes trapped, and can be extremely painful.

HOW COMMON IS THIS CONDITION?

"It's estimated that 2 to 10 percent of women have endometriosis, but it's more common in symptomatic women, with up to half of infertile women being affected. Young women can also be affected; more than half of women with endometriosis already have symptoms in their teen years," explains Dr Annelize Barnard, specialist gynaecologist and obstetrician based in Cape Town.

AM I AT RISK?

The cause of endometriosis is unknown, but there are several theories. "The most widely accepted theory is that some of the endometrial cells that are shed during menstruation may travel backwards through the fallopian tubes and start growing outside the uterus. Endometriosis does occur more commonly in women who have relatives with the condition, but it's not inherited as such. To date there's no proven way to predict or prevent endometriosis," Dr Barnard says.

TYPICAL SYMPTOMS

The symptoms most often present as pain or infertility. This might be pelvic pain, painful menstruation, painful intercourse or pain when passing stool or urine. Other symptoms can include bloating, diarrhoea or constipation that occur in a cyclical pattern. "In some women, the symptoms may be present throughout the menstrual cycle. For some, these symptoms can be very severe and have an enormous impact on their quality of life," Dr Barnard explains. "In some women only the superficial lining of the pelvis and its organs is involved, in others the tissue may grow deeper with only the tip of the iceberg visible at laparoscopy. The latter is known as deep infiltrating endometriosis. Some women may have severe symptoms, with very little visible endometriosis and vice versa," Dr Barnard says.

HOW DO I KNOW IF I HAVE ENDOMETRIOSIS?


Unfortunately, this is not one of those conditions that a blood test can confirm. "Endometriosis is usually suspected based on the symptoms. A gynaecological exam may be appropriate to exclude other causes of pain and to evaluate the pelvic organs for mobility and palpable endometriotic nodules or cysts. A transvaginal ultrasound is also useful to assess the ovaries for endometriotic cysts and, in expert hands, can help to identify deep infiltrating endometriosis," Dr Barnard explains.

TREATMENT OPTIONS

Usually, treatment can be started based on a suspicion of endometriosis, but if symptoms persist or if deep infiltrating endometriosis is suspected, a laparoscopy may be needed to confirm the diagnosis. "In cases where severe endometriosis is suspected, more advanced scans, such as MRI, are sometimes needed to help plan appropriate surgery," Dr Barnard says.

Usually treatment is aimed at improving symptoms. "While painkillers may be useful, hormonal treatment is usually advised to help control pain symptoms. Hormonal treatment includes contraceptive pills, progesterone injectables and the intrauterine contraceptive device. These work by blocking the cyclical changes in the endometrium, and similarly, in the endometriotic tissue," she explains.

In some women, surgical removal of endometriosis lesions may be appropriate. This is usually the case with deep infiltrating endometriosis, endometriomas (endometriotic cysts of the ovaries) or where the endometriosis has caused adhesions to form between the pelvic organs. "This type of surgery can be very challenging, and it's recommended that more advanced cases be referred to a specialist centre. It's important to note that a hysterectomy is usually not a solution to the problem as endometriosis seldom involves the uterus itself," Dr Barnard cautions.



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“

ENDOMETRIOSIS LEADS TO AN INFLAMMATORY STATE OF THE PELVIS, WHICH IS SUBOPTIMAL FOR EITHER EGG PRODUCTION, FERTILISATION OR IMPLANTATION.

”

CAN I STILL GET PREGNANT?

While endometriosis is a common cause of infertility, not all women with endometriosis are affected in this way, and 50 percent can conceive spontaneously without needing treatment. “There are different theories about how endometriosis affects fertility. Inflammatory hormones are released by the endometriosis tissue. This leads to a decrease in fertilisation of the egg, or if the egg does fertilise, the embryo has a lower chance of implantation. Endometriosis scar tissue can distort the normal anatomy of the pelvis, which will lead to tubal obstruction or an altered ovarian tubal function, and endometrial tissue can destroy ovarian tissue, which in effect leads to a lower egg reserve. In other words, endometriosis leads to an inflammatory state of the pelvis that is suboptimal for either egg production, fertilisation or implantation,” explains specialist gynaecologist and fertility expert Dr Chris Venter of Vitalab in Johannesburg. “The only proven treatment effective in treating endometriosis-related fertility is laparoscopic surgery in order to remove the endometriosis,” he says.

“If a patient doesn’t conceive within six to 12 months after surgery, then in vitro fertilisation (IVF) is indicated. It’s very important that patients should not go for repeated surgeries in order to improve their fertility, as this may cause more harm. IVF still remains the most effective method to treat endometriosis-related infertility. In most cases surgery is not even indicated if a patient goes directly for IVF,” Dr Venter explains. ●



DATE NIGHT?

Craving some alone time with your partner, but scared to leave your tiny baby behind? Here's how to have an anxiety-free first post-birth date...

BY KIM NOVICK

Date night!

As with most things, having a baby turns the usual into the unusual, so don't be too surprised if the prospect of going out and leaving your baby for a date night out with your baby daddy, suddenly feels like a tremendously difficult hurdle. However, while leaving your baby behind may not be as simple as walking out the door, it's important for you as a couple to spend some time alone, even if you find yourself talking about your little one for the entire evening!

When your baby is born, you may feel as if you no longer have any time for yourself or your partner. This is simply not true. You can and should still have plenty of time alone as a couple. Going out for the first time may feel daunting, so the main tip from counsellors and psychologists alike is to plan and prepare in order to feel as comfortable and relaxed as possible.

“IT'S COMPLETELY NORMAL TO LOVE YOUR BABY TO BITS YET YEARN FOR TIME AWAY FROM HER.”

IT'S ALL IN THE PLANNING

Before your date, write down a list of the “what ifs” that are running through your head. These may include questions like, “What if she won't stop crying? What if she doesn't want to feed? What if she wakes up and won't go back to sleep?” Once you've done that, write down all the answers, and discuss them with the babysitter. You'll feel far more confident about your big night out if you've told your sitter exactly what to prepare for. If the babysitter knows the baby (is your domestic worker, or a family member like granny, for example), remember that she will likely be familiar with some of your baby's ways and routines; this should give you a little more ease of mind.

Being as prepared as possible will also help you ready yourself for leaving your baby. Even if you're only going for a quick dinner, do whatever needs to be done to ease your concerns. This could mean writing up

a list of emergency numbers (including the restaurant where you'll be) and sticking them by each telephone in the house, putting out nappies, bottles, extra dummies and any medication for easy access, writing up a list of what the baby usually does around this time of day and so on – although you're actually doing this for you more than the baby!

BRIEFING THE SITTER

Whether your babysitter is your domestic worker, a family member or a professional, be sure they have an understanding of your needs regarding your baby. Misunderstandings can be upsetting and can leave you feeling nervous about going out again, so remember to be clear in your expectations of your sitter.

Discuss the following:

- Go through all your “what if” scenarios.
- Explain exactly what medication to administer and have the measured dose ready. Some parents prefer their sitter call them first before administering any medication.
- Clarify where your sitter needs to be while you are out. If you'd prefer they sit in the baby's room, so be it.
- Check if your sitter has done a first aid course. It is highly recommended that both you and your regular domestic worker/nanny also do a first aid course.

BABY STEPS

Don't get too creative on your first date out: a restaurant 10 or 15 minutes down the road will do just fine. This is not the time to go to the theatre or even a movie. If you factor in the travel and the show, you'll be out for at least three hours. There are practical considerations to factor in too, like whether or not you're breastfeeding. Any delay, and you could have a very hungry, grumpy baby to deal with upon your return. Make your decision based on your own comfort levels, but ideally keep it short and sweet until you are happy that you, your baby and your sitter can all cope. ●

PAM AND JETHRO'S FIRST POST-BIRTH DATE

“I was pretty torn about going out for the first time after Mikkah was born,” Pam says. “On the one hand, I was desperate to get out and feel ‘human’ again, but on the other I was in a real panic about leaving her alone. Jethro was the calm one; he gently told me I needed a treat – we both did; he was just being diplomatic! – and Mikkah would be fine without us for a couple of hours. I must admit, when I got dressed it was such a great feeling. I felt like a woman, not just a mom, for the first time in ages. I think we took about half an hour to leave the house, checking the

phone numbers were there, doors were locked, bottles were ready and dishing out instructions to our sitter like a pair of sergeant majors!

When we got to the restaurant, I had the most enormous glass of wine and immediately picked up the phone to see if all was well. Jethro let me make my call, and once I was reassured that Mikkah was happily sleeping, he said, “Now we are going to forget about home for an hour.” Although we both pretty much bolted our food down, we managed to have a wonderful evening together. It showed me how important spending time with him, without Mikkah around, is.”

Tip

It's completely normal to love your baby to bits yet yearn for time away from her – in fact it's very healthy. Everyone needs a break as well as quality time as a couple. Even if it's just one date night a month during those early days, it will be good for both you and your partner to connect on an adult level.

TAKE IT TO THE NEXT LEVEL

(over)

DATE NIGHT



The Seven Villa Hotel & Spa by The Capital in Sandton offers the perfect overnight spoil for weary parents. Check in from 2pm onwards where you can chill out in your gorgeous room, or in the gardens, champagne and cigar lounge, restaurant or poolside.

At 6pm you'll enjoy romantic canapés and a relaxing Cointreau by the pool, set up just for two. Then it's off to the spa for an hour-long couples massage, followed by a two-course dinner.

Check-out is before ten, so you get to enjoy a leisurely breakfast before you head home.

We tried it all, and loved it! Our tips:

- Before you check in, you'll get a pillow menu. Take your time to pick the best pillow option for you, so your night away from the children can be extra restful.
- Make time to stroll around and have a look at all the amazing Anton Smit sculptures scattered around the garden. They are very instagrammable! A book at reception tells you more. If you fall in love with one, you can buy it!
- Relax and let the charming staff take care of you from arrival to departure. Everything works like clockwork, so exhale and go with the flow.
- Try and book the jacuzzi suite for extra fun.
- If you're really tired, or just keen for privacy, request to have dessert in your suite.

For more information, pictures of the different rooms and to see all the specials on offer, visit seenvillahotel.co.za.



PULL UP A CHAIR!



Lack of flexibility in your muscles and ligaments will burden your pregnant body, which is very busy adjusting to make space for your growing baby. A simple prop like a chair can go far to help you stay supple and strong – and your body and mind to cope.

FLEXIBILITY of a joint is related to the ability of the surrounding muscles to stretch and then to relax. Muscles tend to shorten when they are not used or when they are compensating for postural imbalance, such as during pregnancy, when your centre of gravity changes. Flexibility increases with stretching exercises, lengthening your muscles and making them more pliable. Stretching is nature's prescription for relaxing the body, and relieves stress as well.

Take note

A strong body will help to carry the added weight that pregnancy brings. It will improve your balance and stability, increase your energy levels and improve your self esteem. Physical strength gives you better endurance and tolerance.

STRENGTH is defined in a variety of ways and is affected by the kind of muscular contraction involved as well as the speed of those contractions. Strength can be increased during pregnancy if the level and the length of the exercise/workout are extended very gradually. Toning and weight-bearing exercise increases strength.

Building strength goes hand in hand with building flexibility, but building stamina, which involves endurance exercises, should also be included.

Please keep in mind, a well-balanced exercise routine involves an aerobic (cardiovascular) element, which is not included in this article.

PHYSICAL = MENTAL

When you stretch, take it only as far as is comfortable. Never overstretch or push into or past pain. Your tissues and joints are softer during pregnancy due to the action of relaxin and progesterone, and you don't want to tear or injure anything.

The benefits of improved muscle tone and strength are numerous. A strong body will help to carry the added weight that pregnancy brings. It will improve your balance, your stability, increase your energy levels and improve your sense of well-being and self esteem. Physical strength gives you better endurance and tolerance. Both will help you deal with birth and early motherhood.

As with everything you do in pregnancy, moderation is the key. Do not overwork or strain your muscles.

All you need is...

a wall, a chair, some small pillows and a towel for your workout. We carry a lot of tension (never mind everything else) in our shoulders, so doing these stretches daily will alleviate a lot of pain and discomfort. Most of these exercises can be done at your desk too.



THE EXERCISES



SEATED SHOULDER STRETCH WITH CHAIR

This stretches tight shoulders and opens your chest. It is an ideal stretch for any time during pregnancy, but especially during the third trimester and when breastfeeding.

Place a chair about 50cm from a wall. Sit on the front portion of the chair with your knees as far apart as is comfortable. Turn your feet out slightly.

Extend your arms straight up the wall, allowing your forehead to touch the wall and making sure your bum is pressed firmly into the chair.

Inhale as you stretch upward, and exhale as you press gently forward towards the wall. Keep your arms straight while stretching towards the wall. Hold for a slow count of eight counts.

Push back from the wall, and lean back in the chair as you drop your arms to your sides. Relax and breathe normally.

» REPEAT 4 TIMES

CALF RAISES

This strengthens the calf muscle and increases circulation to your legs. It is particularly helpful if you suffer from swelling and varicose veins.

Stand one pace back from a chair, with your feet hip-width apart and your knees soft. Move your body weight slightly forward, and grip the top of the chair. Keep your head up and look straight ahead. With your weight evenly spread between both feet, slowly rise up onto your toes. Lift the arch of your foot as high as you can. Hold, and then slowly lower both heels to the floor.

» DO 2 SETS OF 8 REPETITIONS

Remember that too many repetitions done quickly may cause muscle cramps, so don't overdo it.



ALTERNATE LEG STRETCH WITH CHAIR

This exercise stretches the back of your legs, shoulders and bum.

Place your chair about one and a half metres away from the wall. Stand with your back to the wall, and place your left heel against the wall while you extend your right leg and foot in front of you (A).

Stretch arms forward and grip the top of the chair. Stretch the back of your leg by pulling up your front thigh muscle (lock your knee) and squeezing your bum.

As the stretch becomes easier, push the chair forward and stretch until your chest becomes parallel with the floor. Release and repeat on the other side (B).

» REPEAT 4 TIMES ON EACH LEG



CHEST & SHOULDER STRETCH WITH CHAIR

This stretches the muscles of the chest and shoulders, helps to relieve upper back pain and counter poor posture.

Put the chair against the wall. Sit on a small pillow or blanket to lift your bum, and extend your arms behind you, resting them on the chair. Interlace your fingers. Your feet should be widened slightly, with your legs straight and the front of the thighs firm. Gently brace your back by pulling your stomach muscles in towards your spine.

Inhale and press the back of your legs and bum to the floor. Exhale, lift your chest, and roll your shoulders up and back.

Breathe normally and hold for a slow count of eight. Release by removing your arms from the chair and bringing them down to your sides.

» REPEAT 4 TIMES

**LEG EXTENSIONS**

This will strengthen the muscles of the front of your thighs and help to support your knees.

This exercise can be done standing or sitting on a chair.

Sit upright in a straight-backed chair (or place a pillow behind you for support) and slowly bend and straighten each leg. Brace your back by pulling your belly button to your spine.

» DO 2 SETS OF 16

REPETITIONS ON EACH LEG

**DOWNWARD DOG POSE WITH CHAIR**

This well-known yoga pose will relieve lower-back tension, strengthen arms and back and stretch hamstring and calf muscles. Tight hamstrings are one of the biggest causes of backache.

Push chair securely to the wall. Hook your thumbs around the front edge of the seat, and place your palms on the chair seat. Straighten your arms and walk your feet backward. Place your feet parallel and hip-width apart. Tighten your front thigh muscles as you straighten your legs and lift your coccyx towards the ceiling.

Inhale and push down on the chair to stretch your arms and shoulders. Exhale and lengthen your entire back away from your hands. To release bring feet forward slightly, bend knees and slowly uncurl.

» REPEAT 4 TIMES

**PRESS-UP**

This exercise will strengthen the pectorals (chest muscles) and tone the triceps (the muscles at the back of your arms).

Kneel on all fours, with your hands slightly wider than your shoulders, your fingers facing forward and your knees slightly apart and placed directly under your hips.

Tighten your abdominals to keep your back from arching, and lengthen your spine, keeping your neck and back in a straight line. Ensure that your body weight stays over your hands.

Bend your elbows and lower your chest, and face towards the floor, exhaling as you go down. Pause. Inhale and exhale as you slowly start to push your body up towards the starting position.

» DO 2 SETS OF 8 REPETITIONS

Should this position become too uncomfortable as your pregnancy progresses, do this standing, placing your hands directly in front of your face pressing against a wall. Brace your abdominals, and allow your elbows to bend as you sink your body towards the wall, exhaling as you do this. Pause at the bottom, and then push back to the starting position.





SINGLE LEG-CURL

What do your arms have to do with it? A lot! Working your arms now is important, because carrying a baby around requires upper body strength. Plus, toned arms look great.

This exercise also challenges your core muscles.

Stand with feet hip-width apart, and hold a dumbbell in each hand, arms extended at your sides and palms facing forward. Shift weight to your left leg, and bend your right knee, lifting your right foot off the floor behind you. Bend your elbows, curling weights toward your shoulders (A). Extend your arms to the starting position, then rotate your wrists back as you raise them behind you (B). Return your arms to the starting position, and repeat four repetitions, switching legs halfway through the set. (Too challenging? Keep both feet on the floor.)

» REPEAT 12 TIMES

SQUAT

Tone your legs and bum with this easy move. Your lower body muscles are working harder than ever to support your growing belly. Strengthening them can help.

Stand with your feet wide apart. Hold a dumbbell in each hand, arms extended in front of you and palms facing forward. Make sure to keep your back straight, and then bend your knees.

» REPEAT 12 TIMES



QUADRUPED EXTENSION

Strong abs during pregnancy make it that much easier to lose the belly after birth. A strong core will also help keep your balance in check and prevent poor posture (which can cause back pain).

Get on your hands and knees with your wrists aligned under your shoulders and knees under your hips. Slowly extend your right leg to hip height behind you, then extend your left arm to shoulder height in front of you. Hold for two to five breaths. Return to the starting position, and repeat on the opposite side to complete the set.

» REPEAT 12 TIMES

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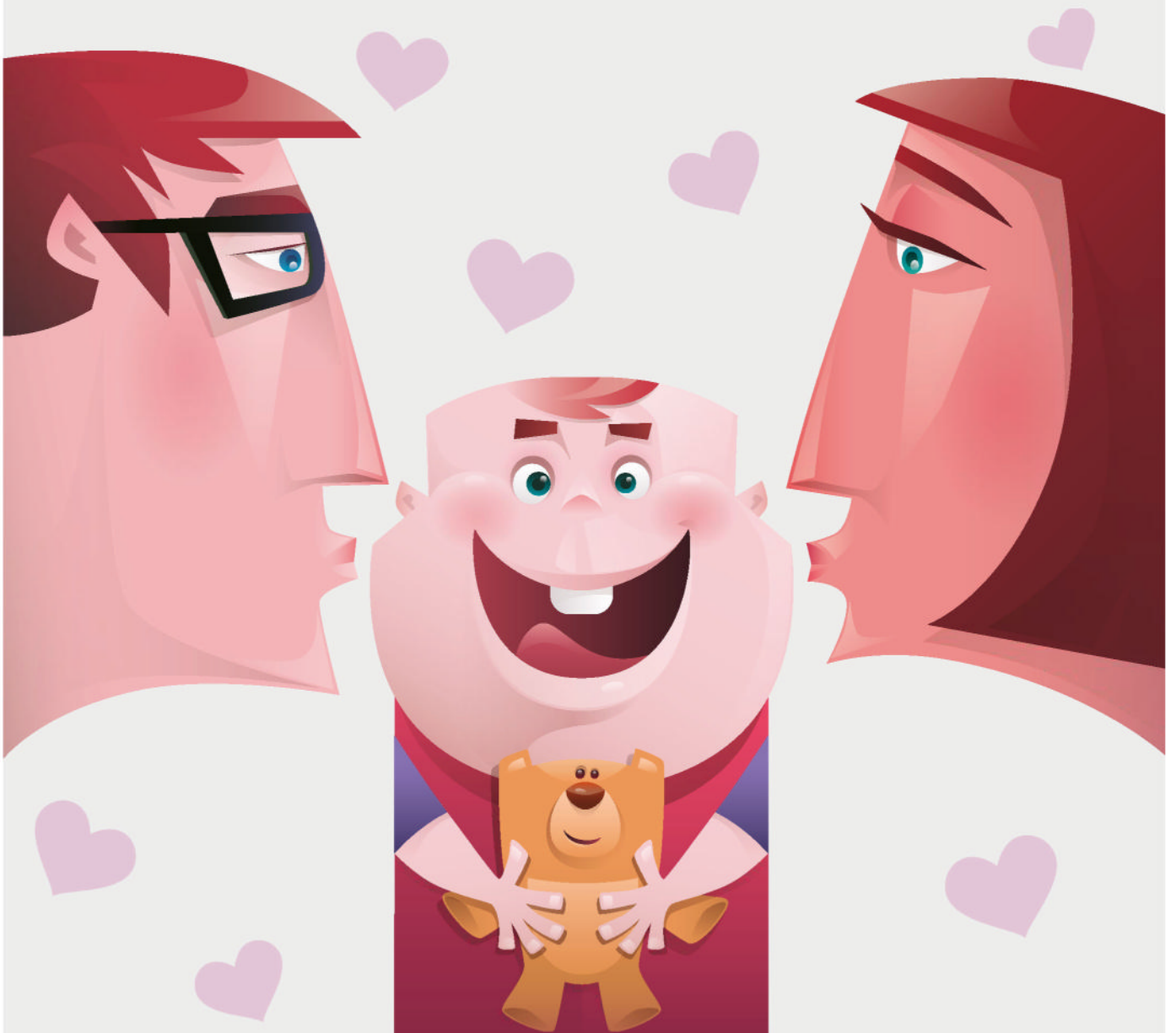
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THE DISCIPLINE WARS

The need to discipline starts much earlier than you may think, so make sure you and your partner are on the same page from the get-go to avoid painful arguments and a confused child.

BY **STACEY VEE**



Photographs: Getty Images/Gallo Images and supplied.

// It was just after 3am and our 12-week-old son Oliver had been crying for what felt like an eternity, but it was probably only 15 or 20 minutes at the most. My husband and I had decided a few days before to move Oli to his own bedroom, which was right next to ours, so that we could all start getting a better night's sleep," explains Cape Town mom Nicole*.

"I wanted to rush into Oliver's room and cuddle him back to sleep. But my husband said we needed to be firm and let him soothe himself back to sleep. His attitude made me furious; we had a huge argument. That was the first time I realised that we might have different ideas on discipline and how to raise our kids.

To be honest, at that moment, I was feeling unsure that I'd made the right decision to have a family with this man."

*Names changed

DIFFERENT IDEAS ON DISCIPLINE

Nicole's story is not uncommon. Many new moms (and dads) can relate.

"When you fall pregnant, you spend nine months preparing to start a family, but zero time preparing for a lifetime of parenting. After the birth, many parents find themselves drowning in reality," says Johannesburg-based parent coach Stephanie Dawson-Cosser. As a new parent, you most likely assume that you'll only need to start disciplining your children when they hit the toddler stage, and their personalities begin to develop. It is also natural to assume that you and your life partner have the same ideas about how to raise

your children. But as Stephanie explains: "Often, the first time that you realise that perhaps you have very different ideas about discipline is when the baby is not

“YOU AND YOUR PARTNER NEED TO CONSTANTLY STEP BACK AND GAUGE HOW YOUR JOINT APPROACH IS WORKING FOR THE CHILD.”

sleeping, or there are feeding issues." How you and your co-parent decide to discipline your children comes down to your personal parenting styles.

CLUES IN YOUR OWN CHILDHOOD

"When it comes to your parenting style, you tend to revert back to what you've known, and the value system that you grew up with. This is, of course, unless you've made a very conscious decision to reject this system," Stephanie says. Your own childhood experiences become the foundation for the type of parent you want to be. However, what you learnt and experienced as a teenager and a young adult, when you were influenced by your peers, and then later by society at large, will also shape you and your partner's parenting styles.

Check the box below to start figuring out your parenting style.

WHAT'S YOUR STYLE?

Parenting styles cover a wide spectrum, with the very strict but often unaffectionate parent at one pole, and the negligent and uninvolved parent at the other. The most widely known model is developmental psychologist Diana Baumrind's *Three Parenting Styles* published in 1966. While these models have been expanded considerably over the years, they still remain the best basic tool to help you identify which type of parent you and your co-parent are, and what type of discipline you favour.

AUTHORITATIVE

Also called the democratic or balanced parenting, this style also includes the concept of "emotion coaching", where both parents and children are encouraged to recognise and express their feelings appropriately.

Authoritative parents express more warmth to their children than totalitarian parents, but still set rules and limits, and have a give-and-take parenting style.

They expect their children to be responsible and accountable from an early age.

MOST LIKELY TO:

- Question a child's behaviour first before handing out a punishment.
- Explain to the child the motives behind household rules and punishments.
- Allow a child to make mistakes, to better understand life lessons.

AUTHORITARIAN

Also called the totalitarian or perfectionist parent, a modern approach to this parenting style came into the spotlight with the 2011 release of Amy Chau's book *Battle Hymn of the Tiger Mother*. Amy advocates for the strict traditional upbringing favoured in Chinese families – with the argument being that Chinese children are often more disciplined and more successful academically than other children. The overly strict parent does not realise that the child sometimes does not feel loved, or worse, lives in fear of disappointing you. This is because the authoritarian parent's mantra is: "I'm only doing this because I love you," Stephanie explains.

MOST LIKELY TO:

- Expect orders to be obeyed.
- Have a punishment-and-reward system.
- Met out physical punishments.



PERMISSIVE

Also called indulgent or free-range parenting, this type of parent is lenient and forgiving.

A helicopter parent "hovers" and is over-protective in the extreme, anticipating the child's every need and meeting it.

This can undermine the child's self-esteem, as they don't feel they are capable of doing anything for themselves.

MOST LIKELY TO:

- Easily forgive bad behaviour by making excuses for the child.
- Not hold a child accountable for any misconduct or discretions.
- Have few recognised "house rules".



STEVEN KAPLAN
CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGIST

AN EXPERT ANSWER TO YOUR QUESTION TO SMACK OR NOT? *The debate*

Q *My husband and I have very different views on discipline. I believe in giving our 2-year-old a smack when he's naughty, and my husband is really against smacking. As you can imagine, this leads to quite a heated debate. I don't understand why he's so against smacking or how to resolve this. Do you have any advice on this?*

A **CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGIST** **STEVEN KAPLAN ANSWERS:**

Presumably the debate is not about whether or not discipline is required at all, rather it is about what form that discipline should take. If you take that as your starting point, the problem is simple enough. The traditional argument in favour of corporal punishment is that it is convenient, and that, "It never did me any harm." The truth is that it is very convenient for the parent but generally ineffective as a consequence, because it easily becomes the standard parental response for any behaviour deemed inappropriate. Consequently, children either become terrified of the parent or, more commonly, perceive a smack on the bum or hand as fair trade for being rude, disobedient, having a tantrum, stealing, lying or any other misdemeanour. If the aim is to teach your son self-restraint, smacking is generally pointless because consequences should have meaning to a child specific to the misdeed.

Parents who vehemently oppose smacking normally do so either because they were never on the receiving end and find the notion barbaric or more commonly because they were extensively on the receiving end and remember it very clearly. It is, after all, quite a trick to justify the perpetration of violence towards a loved one without

coming across as abusive. Having said that, a verbal debate with a 2-year-old about the inappropriateness of his behaviour is like trying to nail jelly to the ceiling!

Both of you have a point. Punishment for toddlers should be tangible for the child and conceptual for the parent. So, the conversation between you and your husband should be about the long-term goals of discipline. Hitting only works in the very, very short term. And sometimes that is okay if your aim is to administer a short, sharp shock. I stress though that this is only effective in *very* extreme circumstances, but still limited. The aim of discipline is generally to extinguish bad behaviour and encourage healthy behaviour. Do you think you'd make much of a point with your husband if part of your argument was to punch him in the face?

I suggest that the two of you establish a hierarchy of rules for your child where you determine a consistent response for specific behaviours. Debate is pointless with a 2-year-old who throws tantrums, just as hitting is pointless with a 2-year-old who bites other children. Punishments must be unanimous and consistent, or they just breed fear and mistrust. Your child will take far more notice if both of you respond in the same way to the same naughtiness, and in the same different way to different naughtiness.



FIVE TIPS TO GET ON THE SAME PAGE

TIP #1

TALK ABOUT YOUR OWN CHILDHOOD AND HOW YOU WERE RAISED

"Have the grace to listen to your partner describe childhood experiences," Stephanie says. It helps you both have a better understanding of the roots of your parenting and discipline styles.

TIP #2

FIND COMMON GROUND

"And remember, the environment that you raise your children in will not be the same as your parents'."

TIP #3

VERBALISE WHAT KIND OF CHILD YOU WANT TO RAISE, AND DON'T JUST ASSUME YOUR PARTNER WANTS THE SAME

There's nothing wrong with hoping to raise an A-student, but make sure that you express your hopes out loud.

TIP #4

CONSULT WITH EACH OTHER

"If, for example, your child asks if they can sleep over at a friend's house, and you are not sure how your partner will feel about it, you can say: 'Let me speak to your dad first.' Then make sure to come back to the child with an answer."

TIP #5

ASSESS YOUR DISCIPLINE TECHNIQUES

"You and your partner need to constantly step back and gauge how your joint approach is working for the child. It's important to parent appropriately for the right stage of life. Your approach might seem right for the child's age, but not necessarily be a good fit for the stage the child is at emotionally. Each child develops differently." ●

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THE MORE *the merrier!*

With so much information out there about preparing yourself mentally and physically for a new arrival, what about the rest of the family – especially your new baby's big brothers or sisters? Here's how to help them prepare for the new family member.

BY **MARGOT BERTELSMANN**

If you're expecting your second (or third, or fourth) baby, you worry about how your older kid(s) will deal with the shock of the new arrival. So, is there a "right" way to bring home a new baby? "Every family is different," says Durban-based counselling psychologist Robyn-Leigh Naude. "Your children's ages, genders and temperaments, your conscious and unconscious expectations, your family set-up, plus your cultural context, will affect how everyone reacts. This means there can be no hard and fast rules about how to prepare your eldest for a sibling. "It's a process, and takes time," she adds. "Accept that mistakes will be made. What is most important is your ability to repair any damage or mistakes, and try again, as opposed to getting it right all the time." You may not even need to do anything special. Robyn-Leigh says that with masses of child-rearing advice, parents can forget how to trust their instincts and just be with their children. To get you on the right track, here are a few ground rules for the adjustment period.

SPILL THE BEANS!

You must inform your child about the coming sibling. Trust yourself to know when the time is right for you and your child – but know that the pending disruption is real! "For example, an eldest child who is not yet able to share, especially their parents, will now have no choice," she says.

Children sense there is a new baby on the way, she adds, even if their parents have not yet told them. In a 2004 study, psychotherapist Sarah Gustavus Jones, author of *Understanding Your One-Year-Old*, found that even some 1-year-olds can feel pushed aside, and regressed behaviour, such as clinginess and wanting to sleep in the same bed as the parents, was common before the births of their siblings.

BE REALISTIC

Your child feels anxiety about the arrival of the rival – just like you do. In fact, Sarah found that older children often felt relief once the baby had actually arrived.

“KEEPING YOUR TODDLER'S LIFE MORE OR LESS THE SAME AS PRE-BIRTH ALSO MEANS NO POTTY TRAINING, WEANING, OR MOVING THEM TO A NEW ROOM, BIG BED OR SCHOOL CLOSE TO THE BIRTH OF THE SIBLING.”

Robyn-Leigh says parents can overemphasise the positive or negative feelings about becoming an older sibling, depending on their own histories. If you feel a need to focus only on the positives, your child might feel that "their negative feelings are bad, resulting in acting out or turning the negative feelings

inward", she warns. She says it's far better to acknowledge that your child might feel anger, jealousy, forgotten, lonely or left out, as well as joy, love, pride and excitement. If you "allow" all of these feelings, the siblings can have a fuller relationship – and your older child will feel more understood by you too. "Would you like a brother or a sister?" is what everybody will ask your eldest. But, says Robyn-Leigh, your child has no choice, so don't encourage a preference.

Did you know?

A 2-year-old child is going through a stage of life that is psychologically referred to as "primary narcissism", says Joburg-based clinical psychologist Steven Kaplan. "Essentially, from the child's point of view, they are the world. They only recently learnt to separate their identity from yours, and they believe the world exists only for them. When you introduce a new baby, it is incredibly confusing for them. To help ease them into it, create a connection between them and the baby as tangibly and soon as possible."

WE ALL WANT TO KNOW

SHOULD WE BUY OUR ELDEST A DOLL TO "PRACTISE ON"?

Yes, but don't force this if your child is not interested. "It should not be used to minimise the child's difficult feelings," says counselling psychologist Robyn-Leigh Naude.

Allow your eldest to spend some time around an actual baby – perhaps a friend with a newborn – to form an impression of babies for themselves.

SHOULD THE ELDEST GET A PRESENT FROM THE BABY?

"Well, the baby cannot really 'give' the gift," Robyn-Leigh points out. "Something from the parents may be more appropriate." Make sure you are not using toys to sugar-coat an older child's negative feelings towards their sibling or this life change. Remember that the new baby, too, will have to manage the experience of having an older sibling, she says.

“

INVOLVE THE OLDER CHILD IN THE PREGNANCY AND AFTER THE BIRTH OF THE BABY.

”

MINIMISE DISRUPTIONS

"Children thrive on consistency as it creates a sense of safety and order," Robyn-Leigh says, "so try to keep to your eldest's daily routine. But add to it a special time where the child can be with you without any distraction from the baby."

TIME OUT

While you are pregnant, let your eldest hang out with your co-parent, grandparents or other family members or another caregiver to get used to time away from you.

However, don't artificially separate the siblings after you've brought home the baby. "Rather involve the older child in the pregnancy and after the birth of the baby," Robyn-Leigh says. This is the best way to encourage them to be a part of the "new baby" world.



AN AGE-BY-AGE TROUBLESHOOTING GUIDE

Once baby has arrived, your older kids could act out their displeasure in the following age-appropriate ways. Here's what to expect – and what to do.

IF YOUR CHILD

IS 1 TO 2 YEARS

ISSUE: WEANING

At this age, your eldest may not be weaned, so do it soon if you're planning to. "Seeing the baby breastfeed may be a painful reminder that they are no longer a baby," Robyn-Leigh says. She could want to breastfeed again – she's trying to tell you she wants to be the baby again. This is also why forcing your toddler to wean as your newborn arrives is a bad idea. Give her a treat and a cuddle while breastfeeding to make her feel special as well.

IF YOUR CHILD IS 2 TO 3 YEARS

ISSUE: INTENSE MIXED FEELINGS

A hug turns into a punch, a stroke ends with a toddler's finger in Baby's eye. This is typical for 2-year-olds as the battle between love and hate for their sibling rages in their hearts. They cannot understand or manage their feelings, they simply react to stimuli. "The 2-year-old needs to feel that there is enough space in their parents' minds for both children," Robyn-Leigh says. So don't deprive her of love. Do protect your baby, though – for safety reasons – but also because by seeing that the baby isn't deprived either, "The toddler's confidence in their parents is vastly increased and their horizons expand accordingly," Robyn-Leigh says, quoting from psychologist Lisa Miller's book *Understanding Your 2-Year-Old*.

IF YOUR CHILD IS 3 TO 4 YEARS

ISSUE: PHYSICAL FIGHTING

Some say the birth of a baby intensifies the developmental conflicts all 3-year-olds go through: feeling at times like a needy, dependent baby and at others like a grown child. "Between the age of 3 and 4, Caplan and Caplan argue in their classic book, *The Early Childhood Years: The 2 To 6 Year Old*, sibling rivalry can be the most physical and open – such as breaking or hiding the sibling's toys, as well as tattling, fighting or teasing," says Robyn-Leigh. While some fighting between siblings is inevitable, you can lay down ground rules, such as "no hitting" and "no biting". Giving your eldest a plastic bat may help – tell them that they may beat their mattress and pillows when they're angry, but not their baby sister.

We asked our Facebook moms



What did you do to get your baby ready for their sibling?

ZARA ESSELIN I took my daughter to every gynae visit so she could see her sister on "TV", as she would say. We also let her break the good news to her grandparents, which she was very excited to do. Don't forget to let your child know where she will be when Dad is with you at the birth. Arrange in advance who will be taking care of her while you are in hospital.

FARAH SULIMAN My daughter was 20 months old when my son was born, and I involved her from day one. She helped me bath, feed and change him. When he was a newborn, and mostly slept, I spent all that time with her to make her feel special. During his awake times, I let her "play" with him. They are now 4 years and 2 years old respectively, and they are inseparable. I am six months pregnant and will do the same thing again.

MICHELLE CURTIN I have 21-month-old twins, and their brother was born a month ago. I bought them each a doll and taught them to rock them. I also bought them each a pram. I showed them where the baby was in my tummy. He's now born, and they love him! They help push the pram with me and cover him with blankets. They also love "helping" me feed him! I help, of course.

TARA FORDMAN We took our daughter shopping so she could choose a toy to welcome her baby brother into our family, and she loved this. We also bought her a surprise gift from her brother, and this way she also felt special on the day of her brother's birth. She was also the first to meet him.

MARISKA VAN DER VELDE When I was pregnant with my second baby, I used to let his brother talk to Baby, and sometimes Baby kicked as he heard his brother's voice! He also used to sing to Baby, kissed my tummy and every night before we went to bed, he would say, "I love you" to Baby. And today, two years later, they have an incredible bond.

CELESTE BROWN Talk with your older child. Make them understand that you love them. Prepare things for the baby with them to make it exciting, like asking them to choose colours to decorate the baby's room. They will be excited.

ALICE DAVIDS I was lucky. My oldest was 18 months when her brother was born, and she didn't even realise he was here! She just accepted him without tantrums. But not everyone is so lucky. Today, a year later, they have such a strong bond that if one cries, the other starts too.

TALK ABOUT IT

If your family is struggling with sibling rivalry issues, see a family therapist – it could save you years of heartache. If money's tight, use government and NGO resources such as Ububele, an NGO that provides free family counselling (see: ububele.org) or Famsa (see: familylife.co.za). And lastly – try not to worry too much. Robyn-Leigh says studies show that siblings play a very important role in the lives of young children. Having another baby will be good for you – all of you! ●



ububele.org



familylife.co.za



Photographs: Getty Images/Gallo Images and supplied.

PREGNANCY

Practical advice from conception to birth.

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MANDISA PATALA
PARENT INFANT MANAGER
AT THE PARENT CENTRE AND
REGISTERED SOCIAL WORKER

#gratitude

You're pregnant – with a whole lot more to be thankful for. Here's a happy list of things to be grateful for during each month of your pregnancy.

BY MARGOT BERTELSMANN

Month 1

1.

It's a big fat positive! Whether those two lines on the test were a surprise or a much-prayed-for event, new life has taken hold inside of you, and you have decided to welcome it. What could be better?

Month 2

1.

Sleep, glorious sleep. You've never known tiredness like this, but it's all good, because your body is busy building a miracle, which takes huge amounts of work – and yet it's letting you sleep through it. Amazing.

2.

You're chatting daily on the big white telephone, and that's great. We're serious: it's physically uncomfortable, sure, but science suggests strong nausea = reduced chances of miscarriage. And there are studies that prove this. And that's great news.

Month 3

1.

It's your little secret. You're not really showing yet, which means you have had a few sweet weeks of luxuriating in your new status of being one-and-a-half people all by yourself.

2.

Now you get to tell! The joy of sharing pregnancy news with your mom or your partner is a once-in-a-lifetime event. Cherish it.

3.

By the end of this month, your chances of having a miscarriage decrease markedly. For most women, the chance of a miscarriage after 14 weeks is less than 1 percent.

Month 4

1.

Sorry to be vain, but have you looked at your hair lately? Is it glossy, strong and abundant? Do you look full of vitality and just plain gorgeous? Thank you, pregnancy!

2.

All of the above, but for your nails. Whether it's the prenatal vitamins or your body going into manufacturing overdrive, who knows, but your talons are long, strong and gorgeous.

3.

Not to be indelicate, but what's going on with your libido? You're not alone, many women report increased vaginal lubrication, stronger sex drive and bigger, better orgasms in their second trimester.

4.

All of the above make for great reasons to plan your babymoon now. The second trimester is the ideal time to have a just-the-two-of-us getaway before all of life as you know it changes in a few short months' time. You're gorgeous and horny, not yet uncomfortably big, and all major airlines will still let you fly. Seize the day.



Photograph: Getty Images/Gallo Images.

*Exciting times***Month 5****1.**

You know how they say all good things must come to an end? Well, have you had your first major “baby” fight with your partner? Do they not get it at all? Are they an insensitive fool you’re not sure is fit to be a co-parent? Good. It happens to everyone, and at least now it’s out of the way. You are on your way towards accepting your changed identity as parents. It’s a process, and you’ve taken the first step.

2.

Sometime this month, you can expect to feel your baby’s first movements. There is, quite simply, no better feeling in the world.

3.

Cravings. Take full advantage and send your partner out for olives and ice cream at 2am. If they dare complain, remind them it’s their baby you’re carrying, and that you are doing all the actual work.

4.

Needless to say, foot massages and back rubs are daily essentials at this stage of your pregnancy.

5.

You will have told your boss you’re pregnant recently. Now schedule all gynae check-ups to coincide with death-by-PowerPoint presentation meetings at work. Double score!

Many women report increased vaginal lubrication, stronger sex drive and bigger, better orgasms in their second trimester!

Did you know?

Just before labour, your house will be the cleanest it’s ever been. It’s called nesting. Go with it.

Month 6**1.**

You’re showing. Your old clothes don’t fit. New clothes!

2.

New shoes are the least depressing pregnancy item to buy: guaranteed to fit for the whole of pregnancy and beyond.

3.

This is the one time in your life you’re supposed to be gaining weight.

4.

People will want to start doing things for you: carrying heavy items, giving up seats on trains and busses, on the whole just being nicer to you. Lap it up.

5.

You get to decorate a nursery!

6.

Every ultrasound is amazing (and you might even experience a 4D scan!)

Month 7**1.**

Nothing is your fault – it’s all the hormones.

2.

Your boobs are enormous.

3.

Due to worries about toxoplasmosis, you can’t change the kitty litter tray while pregnant. #Sorrynotsorry

4.

It’s been, oh, about 30 weeks since your last period.

5.

Your in-laws love you now.

6.

Childbirth is safer now than ever before in human history – plus, our pain management options are exhaustive and effective.

7.

Your stomach is your own built-in tray table. Take that, Lift!

Month 8**1.**

Feeling antisocial? You don’t have to go to your partner’s best friend’s birthday. You have the perfect excuse!

2.

Your body is doing incomprehensibly complex stuff, without any help or a manual, all by itself. Aren’t you proud?

3.

Some of the good habits you’ve adopted (no alcohol, regular bedtimes, regular gentle exercise, healthy eating) will stick past pregnancy and make your life better, long-term.

4.

Two words: baby clothes.

5.

Do you struggle with small talk? All that is suspended while you’re pregnant. “When are you due? Is it a boy or a girl? Are you having a caesarian?”

6.

Forget hallucinogenic drugs: your dreams have got this as they take vivid to the next level.

7.

All your new bumps are meant to be there – there’s no body shaming during pregnancy.

8.

You don’t need to do the monthly worry and stress about getting pregnant. You are pregnant.

Month 9**1.**

You get to choose your baby’s name.

2.

You’ve learnt so much in the last nine months, you could pass exams in pregnancy and parenting. And you’ve aced it.

3.

Maternity leave in SA is a full 16 weeks, and there’s UIF benefits to be had too.

4.

Soon sushi, cheese and wine will be back on the menu.

5.

You’re already putting another person’s – your baby’s – needs first, and it actually feels good!

6.

You have an almost-baby, but you don’t need to change any nappies yet.

7.

Also, feeding happens automatically at this stage – no need to wake up for it.

8.

Just before labour, your house will be the cleanest it’s ever been. It’s called nesting. Go with it.

9.

You’re about to meet your new favourite person! ●

DAD, *you're up!*

Here are some tips and ideas for you, as you all prepare for your new arrival, so that you can feel useful, more connected (and not such a third wheel!).

PRACTICALITIES YOU CAN HANDLE

GET STUCK INTO BABY-PROOFING!

Your baby will be crawling before you know it, and you and Mom will be happy you had the foresight to get the baby-proofing done early. Put on the pool net, secure the plug covers, move cleaning materials and medicines to upper shelves, and get the baby gate ready.

CHANGE YOUR POLICIES

It's time to alter your wills to include your baby, speak to your medical aid about adding a child, and think about a life insurance policy if you don't already have one.

FIT THE CAR SEAT

There's always the chance baby might come early, so have his car seat ready and waiting securely in your car, at least two weeks before the due date.

LEARN HOW TO OPERATE THE PRAM, AND GIVE MOM A LESSON, TOO

Even the latest designs can be tricky to assemble if you've never done it before, so work out how to get the pram up and going, and give your partner a demonstration, too.

READ THE BOOK SHE'S LEFT ON YOUR BEDSIDE TABLE...

...or at least a section of it, then talk about it with her. Your partner likely has piles of books and magazines that she's poring over, so show an interest and get reading!

GO TO ANTENATAL CLASSES WITH HER

This goes without saying – this is your baby too, after all! She wants to know you're as clued up as she is, and you're in this parenting journey together.



FIVE THINGS NEW DADS NEED TO KNOW ABOUT NEW MOMS

1.

**SINCE SHE CAN'T GET ANGRY
WITH THE BABY, SHE'LL GET
ANGRY WITH YOU**

Newborns come with so much more than their cute gurgles and squishy cheeks. The sleepless nights, constant feeding and nappy changing and crying on end would get anyone's nerves shot eventually. New moms can't become angry with their babies, so they'll most likely direct their anger at you. Make sure you're helping as much as you can, and communicate with her and encourage her daily. This edgy time will soon pass, so hold on tight.

2.

SHE WANTS TO BE PROTECTED

Now more than ever, your partner is going to need to feel safe. Even if that means knowing when to put a halt to the endless visitors! Make your home a safe and comfortable space, and tone down any talk about crime and major news events. She's going to feel extremely sensitive, and now that you have a baby to protect and take care of, the last thing she wants to hear about is how the world can sometimes be a scary place.

3.

**YOU MIGHT FEEL LIKE A THIRD
WHEEL FOR A WHILE**

Your partner is going to be obsessed with your baby, so let her be. It's her natural instinct to check on him fanatically, question every cry and squawk, and stare at him at length. You might feel a bit spare for some time, but the more you show her love through acts of service, the more she will appreciate you. Promise!

4.

SHE DOESN'T FEEL ATTRACTIVE

Her clothes don't fit, her body is saggy in places it was never before, and she's leaking constantly. How would you feel? Make a point of telling her she's beautiful, and also doing a great job. Comforting words soothe a new mom more than you know.

5.

**SHE WON'T ALWAYS KNOW
WHAT SHE WANTS!**

Communication will keep you going through these first few weeks. Because she's just given birth, her body is going through major changes. Brace yourself! One of the best ways you can help is by asking exactly what she needs. And even if she doesn't know, offer her tea, a foot rub, a warm bath, or to take the baby for a while.

“

NEWBORNS COME WITH SO MUCH MORE THAN THEIR CUTE GURGLES AND SQUISHY CHEEKS. THE SLEEPLESS NIGHTS, CONSTANT FEEDING AND NAPPY CHANGING AND CRYING ON END WOULD GET ANYONE'S NERVES SHOT EVENTUALLY.

”

GOOD
BUY



It is never too early to get your home or the grandparents' home safe and ready for an exploring baby. Choose the ultimate protection with Aqua-Net. The company is rightly proud of having saved countless lives, with zero reported drownings over the past 50 years. A great feature of the product is that the size of the mesh is designed to be small enough so a toddler can't get their head through and large enough to discourage movement. Aqua-Net installs nationwide and will ensure the correct fit to match the exact shape of your pool. When the net is properly positioned, anchored, and tensioned, there won't be any gaps around the edge for your little one to crawl under. From only R8 000, it is a simple, cost-effective and safe investment with a lifespan of over more than eight years. Visit aquanet.co.za to find a branch near you.

10 WAYS YOU CAN REALLY HELP WITH BREAST- FEEDING

- Set her up.
- Warm her gel pads, fetch the feeding pillow and prop her up comfortably.
- Burp and change Baby after feeding.
- Give her words of encouragement, and tell her how proud you are of her.
- Let her rest afterwards while you soothe Baby to sleep, or hold him if he's not ready for a nap yet.
- Bring her something to drink and a snack to nibble on – breastfeeding is thirsty work.
- Attend a breastfeeding class with her.
- Reduce stress in the home – limit visitors in the very beginning, and don't expect her to get up and make tea for people.
- Prepare the breast pump in between feeds. Provide some entertainment for her, like a new TV series to watch, a book or magazine to read, or her phone or iPad.
- Occupy pets and your other children so she can focus on the new baby. ●

QA

Email your question for our experts to:

sharing@ypbmagazine.com

Please note that experts unfortunately cannot respond to each question personally. The answers provided on these pages should not replace the advice of your doctor.

OUR EXPERT



TRACY ZIMAN JACOBS

INTIMACY AND
RELATIONSHIP COACH



I JUST DON'T WANT TO

Q After our first baby, we were all loved-up and still had sex, even though some things did change... more stolen quickies and morning sex than long lovemaking into the night. Now our second is already nearly a year, and we're in a dry season. My pregnancy was difficult, and I was so much more tired than with the first one, also having a toddler to contend with. So already then, the frequency started dwindling, as I just wanted to be left alone.

What worries me though, is that I have zero interest in reviving things. I love my husband very,

very much, but all I want is to go to bed early and not have anyone demand anything of me, especially not physically.

I've stopped breastfeeding and thought that my libido would come back, but it hasn't.

My husband doesn't believe I owe him sex, but I've noticed we bicker a lot more and just seem out of sync. I'm not the type who can just fake it or plan it.

How can we get our lovely spontaneous sex life back again? Or at least, a once-a-week thing, as at the moment it is once a month or less.

A TRACY ANSWERS: It makes perfect sense that after your first baby you still had the time and energy for sexual intimacy. It also makes total sense that with two small children, sexual intimacy is placed on the back burner. Young children are physically and emotionally exhausting. There is always somebody wanting a piece of you and then leaving pieces all over you. As wonderful and joyful as these early years are, they are filled with pressure, especially on stay-at-home moms, to be doing the "right thing". Am I feeding them the right solids? Am I spending enough time with them? Am I reading to them enough? Am I stimulating them enough? Our heads are filled with so much anxiety and worry about doing it right that sometimes we forget to enjoy our babies and simply bear witness to their constantly changing journey. No wonder you just want to be left alone when you do have a few minutes to yourself. It's no wonder your libido has taken a dive. You're a human being. As much as human beings crave

Photographs: Getty Images/Gallo Images and supplied.



connection, we also need to recognise when our cups are empty and, if we do not refill our own cups, we will be running on empty and eventually burn out. Your second baby is nearly a year old, which means your hormones have not yet stabilised yet either. You are juggling too many balls.

What you and your husband need right now is to slow things down and snatch quiet times for quiet conversations where you each have a turn to be heard. No troubleshooting, just listening.

Make sure to hold hands and take a few minutes to gaze into each other's eyes. Just breathe and connect with your husband.

You can do this lying down on pillows and facing each other. Pillow talk is a wonderful way to connect.

The two of you are bickering a lot more simply because you are disconnected now. I am sure he would like sex; however, men need emotional intimacy and quality time (physical intimacy) as much as women do.

When he feels he has your attention, and you don't have to make grand gestures, both of you will feel closer to each other.

Our brains are the largest sex organ in the body. We can decide if we want to engage the brain thinking about sex or not.

All our experiences, past and present, will determine how we think about – and therefore behave around – sex. Positive or negative thoughts impact behaviour or action. In your case, your brain is too full now with other stuff to even consider whether you feel like it or not.

Our skin is the second-largest sex organ in the body. Touch is the very first sensation a baby feels. Sometimes touch is the only thing we need to soothe emotions and feel safe. During pillow talk, I suggest you broach the possibility of giving and receiving touch that will allow you

both to activate feel-good hormones such as oxytocin, serotonin and dopamine.

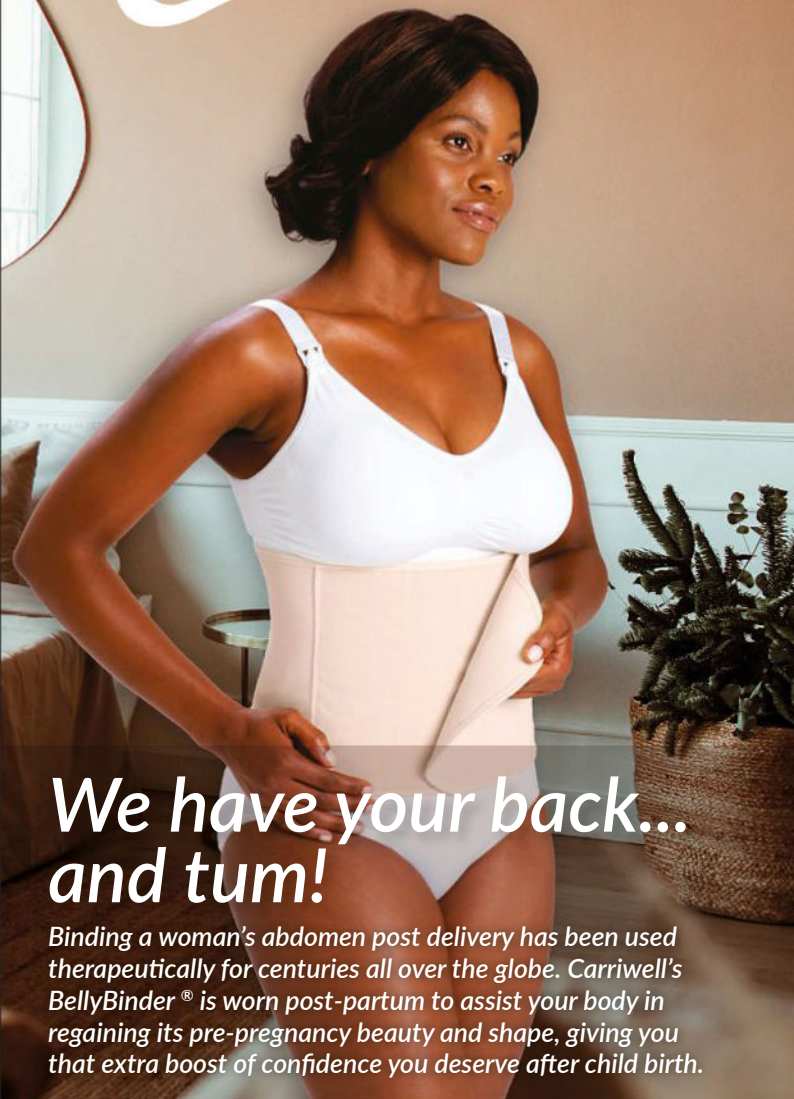
Examples of giving and receiving touch can be: lightly tickling each other's faces while looking into each other's eyes, foot massages and keeping eye contact, cuddling naked in bed but setting boundaries around expectations, dancing hands (holding hands gently and moving fingers, softly entwining them and tickling palms) while keeping eye contact, or having a bath together and reminisce about the old days, having agreed on boundaries around sexual expectations.

Sometimes when couples say they need sex to feel connected to their partners, what they really want is intimate connection.

Intimacy is about connection. There are many other ways to feel intimate with another without having sex. Sure, sexual intimacy is wonderful, especially when there is passion and a lot of pleasure involved. Timing is *everything*!

I suggest you give yourself a break. Create an environment of honesty, open communication and trust with your husband, so that there will be no resentment and bitterness around this period while raising small children. If the space between the two of you is safe, then connection is automatic. Your spontaneous sex may have to become scheduled sex, but that's okay too. When you schedule sex, you allow your erotic brain to start churning. And then, stand back and watch sparks fly! ●

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GOT
THE
glow?

—
NOT.
SO.
MUCH.

*Here are some quick
fixes for all your
pregnancy niggles.*



Photographs: Getty Images/Gallo Images and supplied.

While some of us sail through pregnancy without a moment of morning sickness to show for it, most of us experience our fair share of pain and discomfort along the way. These useful tips might help ease those common complaints.

OEDEMA (SWELLING)

WHY Your body carries more extracellular fluid during pregnancy, and this can cause normal swelling of the feet and ankles that subsides once you put your feet up. If the onset is sudden and severe, affecting the face, hands and legs, it could be a sign of pre-eclampsia. This should be checked out by your doctor immediately.

FOOD FIXES Onion and garlic are good circulatory tonics. Natural diuretics, which help in the release of waste, are celery, asparagus, artichokes, grapes, blackcurrants and parsley. Vitamin C is a mild diuretic, so increase your intake of citrus fruits, red berries, peppers and leafy greens.

IDEAL EXERCISES Regular exercise stimulates circulation, which speeds up the release of waste products in the tissues. It's this accumulation of waste and water that causes the swelling. Swimming is excellent for this.

SAFE MEDICINE Try Nat Sulph (no 11) tissue salt for water elimination and Combin L for circulation.

NATURAL ALTERNATIVES Go for a lymph drainage massage to stimulate the lymphatic system, which absorbs waste and toxins from surrounding tissues. Herbal teas, such as dandelion and nettle, stimulate the kidneys to process more fluid. Drink plenty of water.

TRY THIS Get plenty of rest while you elevate your feet. Lie on your left side when sleeping or resting.

HEARTBURN

WHY The uterus pushing up against the stomach can promote acid reflux. Also, pregnancy hormones relax muscles in the body, including those in the gastrointestinal tract. Food then moves slowly through the digestive tract, giving you heartburn.

FOOD FIXES Avoid fatty foods and fizzy drinks.

IDEAL EXERCISES Kneeling on all fours can release the pressure of your pregnant belly on your stomach.

SAFE MEDICINE Gaviscon, Maalox, milk of magnesia, Rennies.

NATURAL ALTERNATIVES Slippery elm, powdered peppermint, fennel, caraway and dill. Herbal teas: lemon balm, chamomile, peppermint.

TRY THIS Eat small meals regularly to prevent acid build-up. Sleep with several pillows, wear loose clothes and drink fluids between meals.



The Carriwell Maternity Support Belt dramatically reduces or completely eliminates lower back pain by gently lifting the abdomen and thereby encouraging a more erect posture. The broad belt applies counter pressure to any possible area of discomfort in your lower back. The belt is easy to put on and fully adjustable to your exact needs. The soft fabric is gentle on your skin as it gently lifts your tummy, relieving downward pressure. R299,99 at Baby City, Babies R Us at Toys R Us, Dis-Chem, Takealot, Loot, Woolworths and leading baby and maternity stores. Find out more at www.carriwell.co.za.



HEADACHES

WHY They can be caused by hormonal changes, back strain, eye strain, food triggers or noise or light irritation. Headaches may be a sign of something more sinister like high blood pressure. If you have swollen hands and feet and blurred vision, you may be suffering from pre-eclampsia. Notify your caregiver urgently.

FOOD FIXES Eat frequent small meals and nutritious snacks to stabilise sugar levels. Eat slow-release carbohydrates (porridge, bread, pulses, whole grains). Avoid caffeine, artificial sweeteners, fatty and high-sugar foods, cheese, chocolate and citrus fruit.

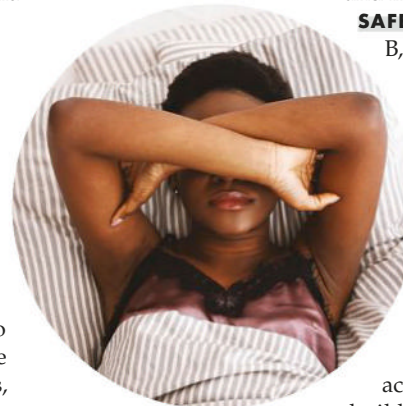
IDEAL EXERCISES Do exercises to stretch the neck. Try not to tense your neck or jaw.

SAFE MEDICINE Paracetamol.

NATURAL ALTERNATIVES

Apply gentle pressure between eyebrows with your thumb. Treat yourself to an Indian head massage or, for severe headaches, put ice packs on your eyes and neck. Drink chamomile or ginger tea. You can also put lavender oil on a compress and apply to your temples. Acupuncture, reiki, reflexology, massage, homoeopathy and chiro could all help.

TRY THIS Get plenty of fresh air and rest, avoid stress, and drink plenty of water. Avoid noise and light triggers.



FATIGUE

WHY Nature casts upon you a natural lethargy to slow you down while your baby's most critical development is taking place. Fatigue is also common in the last trimester when you are

feeling heavy and the weight of pregnancy is really taking its toll. It could also be a sign of a lack of iron.

FOOD FIXES Increase iron (leafy green vegetables, seeds, dried fruits, chicken, fish), folate (nuts, leafy green vegetables) and vitamin B (eggs, milk, cheese).

IDEAL EXERCISES Deep abdominal breathing, yoga and meditation.

SAFE MEDICINE Combin B, Ferrum Phos and Calc Phos tissue salts improve the absorption of iron. Try Nutilite Vitamin B. Take an iron supplement under prescription if you become anaemic.

NATURAL ALTERNATIVES

There are points along the meridians that an acupuncturist can treat to build up the blood, or these points can be stimulated with moxa cones or acupressure, or try reflexology with foot gel. Be sure to consult an expert who has experience with pregnant women, and always check with your caregiver before you go.

TRY THIS Drink water throughout the day. Take one tablespoon of molasses twice a day. Avoid caffeine.

Did you know?

It's not a real niggles – but a heightened sense of smell could be a first sign that you might be pregnant. It's said that up to two-thirds of pregnant women experience this condition, which is also known as hyperosmia. It's associated with early pregnancy.

VARICOSE VEINS

WHY Pressure on the circulatory system due to increased weight and blood volume may enlarge veins, especially in the legs.

FOOD FIXES Eat vein-strengthening foods and foods that prevent swelling and constipation (see piles).

IDEAL EXERCISES Good circulation helps prevent varicose veins, so get regular exercise.

SAFE MEDICINE Apply commercial preparations of calendula, aloe vera or witch hazel.

NATURAL ALTERNATIVES Place your leg in hot water for two minutes and then cold water for two minutes. Or direct a shower spray onto the affected area, first with hot and then cold water. Water constricts or dilates blood vessels, depending on its temperature, and cold water stimulates circulation.

TRY THIS Avoid standing for long periods. Put your feet up whenever possible. Avoid salty foods. You may need to wear support stockings.

LEG CRAMPS

WHY Poor circulation, dehydration and a magnesium and calcium deficiency.

FOOD FIXES Bananas are the best natural form of magnesium. Eat lots of milk products, leafy greens, whole grains, wheat germ, nuts, seeds, soya and dried apricots. Drink plenty of water.

IDEAL EXERCISES Stretch before bed by flexing your feet.

SAFE MEDICINE Tissue salts relax muscles and relieve cramps. Try Mag Phos and Calmag. You may need a bone mineral complex of magnesium before bed.

NATURAL ALTERNATIVES Gently massage your legs with a natural plant oil, such as wheat germ or grape seed, to improve circulation. Avoid massaging over varicose veins.

TRY THIS Walk or swim for at least ten minutes every day. Stand with your feet on the cold floor.

NAUSEA

WHY Pregnancy hormones, low blood sugar, stress, fatigue. If this persists and you can't keep anything down, you may need to be admitted to hospital. Severe vomiting is known as hyperemesis gravidarum and can cause dehydration.

FOOD FIXES Nausea is linked to B6 and zinc deficiencies. Good sources include whole-wheat bread, chickpeas, seeds, nuts, raisins, milk, yoghurt, white fish, green leafy vegetables, yeast extract, fortified breakfast cereals, pulses, broccoli, apricots, sardines, chicken and tofu.

IDEAL EXERCISES Deep breathing into your abdomen before meals. Yoga and meditation can ease nausea by relaxing the diaphragm and inducing general relaxation.

SAFE MEDICINE Vitamin B6 in low doses. Homoeopathic choices include Ipecacuanha, Colchium, Natrum mur, Sepai Melissengeist, Magen, Pulsatilla, Ipecac.

NATURAL ALTERNATIVES Ginger is the key herb because it is rich in zinc. Eat crystallised ginger or ginger biscuits or drink ginger tea. Other herbal teas to try are chamomile, fennel, spearmint and peppermint. Try acupuncture, acupressure and reflexology. Place a drop of peppermint, rose or chamomile oil on a tissue and inhale when you feel nauseous.

TRY THIS Rest as much as possible and drink plenty of water. Have lemon tea after supper. Snack on Provitas and citrus fruit. Always have an energy snack in your car or handbag. Do not rise on an empty stomach. Carry peppermints.

INSOMNIA

WHY General physical discomfort, heartburn, leg cramps, worry, restless leg syndrome, low blood sugar, vitamin B deficiency.

FOOD FIXES Calcium helps induce sleep, so eat almonds, yoghurt and sesame seeds for evening snacks. Sources of vitamin B include pulses, leafy greens, nuts, whole grains and meat. Have a light supper.

IDEAL EXERCISES Get plenty of fresh air during the day, and do some form of water aerobics or swimming.

SAFE MEDICINE Iron, calcium or magnesium supplement.

NATURAL ALTERNATIVES Try meditation before bed time, a lavender bath or a shoulder rub. Burn lemon or mandarin oil in a vapouriser.

TRY THIS Do slow, deep abdominal breathing. Don't watch television before bed. Listen to white noise or other sounds that are conducive to sleep. Check the app store for some recommendations.

CONSTIPATION

WHY Softening of the walls of the digestive tract causes slower digestion and puts pressure on the intestines.

FOOD FIXES Get your fibre fix.

Drink plenty of water and eat whole grains and raw, unpeeled fruit and vegetables. Try legumes, bran cereals, brown rice, seed bread, nuts and seeds.

IDEAL EXERCISES Brisk walking.

SAFE MEDICINE Duphalac, Metmucil, Fybogel.

NATURAL ALTERNATIVES Chamomile tea, rooibos tea, fresh ginger and prune juice can help. Try an abdominal massage with mandarin oil. Be sure to massage in a clockwise direction.

TRY THIS Swallow a tablespoon of linseeds with water twice a day.

ITCHY SKIN

WHY Stretching, dryness, increased blood flow. If you have intense itching, especially with no rash, and it is worse at night, you need to consult your doctor. This could be a liver disorder known as intra-hepatic cholestasis of pregnancy (ICP).

FOOD FIXES Important foods are protein, vitamin A, B, C and essential fatty acids. Eat nuts, seeds, oily fish, carrots, broccoli, sweet potatoes, watercress, melon, meat, whole grains, pulses, avocado and cashew nuts.

SAFE MEDICINE Echinacea or primrose oil capsules. Chamomile cream. Avoid cortisone creams unless prescribed.

NATURAL ALTERNATIVES Mix oats with water, and gently rub on the skin. Use homoeopathic alternatives such as Eureka cream.

TRY THIS Avoid hot baths or showers. Moisturise your skin while it is damp, and avoid scratching vigorously.

STRETCH MARKS

WHY As the skin stretches, the elastin and collagen in its deeper layers may weaken and break.

FOOD FIXES Eat foods rich in zinc (ginger, cheese, whole grains) and vitamin E (lettuce, peanuts, seeds, milk and eggs).

IDEAL EXERCISES Keeping your skin toned with regular exercise will improve tissue elasticity.

SAFE MEDICINE There are some good stretch-mark creams on the market. Go for one that penetrates into the deeper layers of the skin.

NATURAL ALTERNATIVES Apply calendula cream or cocoa butter. Massage the skin with a gentle oil, like mandarin or wheat germ.

TRY THIS Sudden weight gain increases the risk of stretch marks. Keep your skin well moisturised.

TINGLING HANDS OR FEET

WHY The carpal tunnel is a narrow band of tissue and nerves that can get compressed when there's swelling. This will restrict blood flow and pinch the nerve, causing tingling.

FOOD FIXES B vitamins are good for the nerves. Good food sources are sesame seeds, chickpeas, bananas, Marmite and hazelnuts.

IDEAL EXERCISES To stretch the carpal tunnel, do gentle circling and flexing of your wrists in ice cold water, or crouch down and press your hands gently flat on the floor.

NATURAL ALTERNATIVES

An osteopath will manipulate the wrist to improve lymphatic drainage. You could also try acupuncture, shiatsu and homoeopathy, or arnica oil massage, but only after 20 weeks.

TRY THIS Sleep with your arm on a pillow. You can give your wrists a massage.

**BACKACHE**

WHY Extra weight in the front, softening of ligaments due to pregnancy hormones and the pressure of the baby on your pelvic joints. A change in your centre of gravity also affects this.

FOOD FIXES Watch your diet, and don't be tempted to overload on fatty foods. Rather eat small amounts frequently. Try to gain weight steadily.

IDEAL EXERCISES Do the "angry cat" exercise – on all fours, pull your belly button to your spine and press your lower back towards the ceiling.

SAFE MEDICINE See a physiotherapist or chiropractor. You could also try wearing a support belt. Do not sit for extended periods of time.

NATURAL ALTERNATIVES

A chiropractor can realign vertebrae in the lower back. Several yoga positions ease backache. Acupuncture and reflexology also give relief. Use a therapist qualified in pregnancy though.

TRY THIS Avoid curvature of your lower back by maintaining a good posture. Keep your back supported when sitting. Make sure your mattress is firm.

PILES

WHY Pressure in the pelvic region as a result of weight gain, constipation or sitting for long periods can restrict blood flow and cause pooling.

FOOD FIXES Eat vein-strengthening foods that are rich in vitamin C such as parsley, garlic and onions. Avoid constipation by drinking lots of water and avoiding processed foods. Eat linseed to soften stools. (You can swallow it with water.)

IDEAL EXERCISES Do pelvic floor exercises. Yoga and other forms of gentle exercise help ease varicose veins and haemorrhoids.

SAFE MEDICINE Hemorrha Plus cream is a homoeopathic preparation or try the tissue salts Calc Fluor and Nat Mur no 9.

NATURAL ALTERNATIVES Apply cotton wool balls soaked in witch hazel or commercially available preparations of calendula or aloe vera.

TRY THIS Apply St John's Wort ointment that has been kept in the fridge, a cold witch hazel or nettle tea compress or ice cubes made from water in which leeks were boiled. ●



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FATIGUE?

Fix it with
FOOD

Make sure you build up your energy reserves by eating healthy, energy-boosting foods.

BY CHILDBIRTH EDUCATOR TINA OTTE

Fatigue associated with pregnancy ranges from mild to debilitating. It most commonly occurs in the first trimester but often reappears during the third trimester. The good news is that you can increase your energy levels naturally by maintaining a healthy diet and lifestyle.

Start by following a satisfying and nutritious anti-inflammatory diet (one high in a variety of organic fruits and vegetables, and as few processed foods as possible), being sure to avoid rapidly digesting carbohydrates such as white bread, and staying well hydrated.

TOP UP ON THESE FOODS

ALMONDS This healthy nut has antioxidants and vitamins that increase body metabolism, control food cravings, and is good for the foetus's growth and development.

BANANA has folate or folic acid that is considered a prenatal vitamin. Foods rich in folic acid increase haemoglobin count, reduce body pain and prevent birth defects.

BARLEY is rich in iron, which helps fight fatigue during pregnancy.

LEGUMES like red lentils, red kidney beans, black-eyed beans and aduki beans help fight anaemia, which can make you tired. To increase haemoglobin count, include kidney beans in your diet.

VEGETABLES like beetroot, radishes, red cabbage, red chillies and peppers, spinach (green with red stems), tomatoes, watercress, horseradish and parsley are loaded with iron.

BROCCOLI This superfood is also a rich source of essential vitamins and proteins. It's one of the effective foods that fight fatigue.

CARROTS are rich in vitamin A and have folate, which is really good if you're expecting. Eat carrots raw or blend them into a juice.

FENUGREEK LEAVES To stay strong and healthy, include calcium-rich foods. It fights fatigue and improves bone density.

FRUITS Go wild on cranberries, raspberries, red apples, cherries, plums, strawberries, watermelon and pineapple.

HERBS Cayenne, mint, mustard, sage, rosemary, thyme.

ORANGE This citrus fruit is a rich source of vitamin C and folic acid. To fight fatigue, you need healthy fluids like orange juice. It also helps with the absorption of iron.

POMEGRANATE The red juicy fruit increases blood circulation in the body, which fights fatigue and also increases body metabolism.

SEAFOOD is a rich source of omega-3 fatty acids and essential antioxidants that are

required during pregnancy. However, consume in limited amounts, as it's rich in mercury, and over-consumption of mercury can be harmful.

SUNFLOWER SEEDS are not only for the birds. These seeds are packed with nutrients in the form of minerals – iron and magnesium, vitamin E and other essential fats.

TOFU This is a healthy alternative to paneer. It's low in calories, fat and healthy too. Tofu is filling and rich in calcium.

TURNIP GREENS Calcium deficiency can cause health disorders and also lead to fatigue during pregnancy. Have turnip greens to overcome fatigue and stay strong during pregnancy.

WHOLE GRAINS Whole grains are nutritious and rich in fibre. Eating heavy foods make you feel sluggish and tired easily as the body energy is spent in breaking down your meal. So, include light, filling and easy-to-digest whole grains in your diet.

YOGURT is rich in calcium and vitamins. The healthy probiotic bacteria in yogurt fight fatigue and also cleanse the system.

SPINACH This superfood is a rich source of vitamins, minerals and essential proteins. The green vegetable is rich in folic acid and iron that helps to fight fatigue during pregnancy.

SKIP THE SWEET STUFF

Sugary treats may give you an instant energy boost, but when your blood sugar drops, you'll feel even more tired than before. A better choice: complex carbohydrates, such as yogurt or a piece of fruit with a slice of cheese. ●



Remember to feed your hair too! We love the Garnier Ultimate Blends Hair Food Coconut & Macadamia range, designed for curly and oily hair. The blend of coconut oil and macadamia nut oil provides deep nourishment and hydrates your hair from root to tip, leaving it soft, shiny, and smooth. Conditioner (R95,95), Shampoo (R95,95) and Hair Mask (R125,95) at Clicks and Dis-Chem. The Ultimate Blends Hair Food is also available in watermelon, as well as banana and coconut.



Up your WATER intake

A glass of water does more for energy levels than a cup of tea. That's because fatigue is often a symptom of dehydration. The ideal amount: at least six to eight glasses a day.

Fill up on soups, fruits and vegetables. Their high water content counts toward daily hydration totals.

THE HIGHS AND LOWS OF amniotic fluid

This vital liquid is your unborn baby's first form of protection. But what happens when it works against you?

BY MELANY BENDIX

I was in my last trimester of an otherwise healthy pregnancy when a routine scan picked up a worrying dip in amniotic fluid. I was told to prepare for a possible induction or caesarean, as too little amniotic fluid could be dangerous for the baby. I was confused, as it wasn't clear why my baby had suddenly started producing too little amniotic fluid. (For the first four months of pregnancy the placenta produces amniotic fluid, after that it's the baby's job.)

A decrease, or increase, in amniotic fluid can be difficult to explain if there's no obvious cause. "This is because it's not a diagnosis in itself," says Dr Catherine Elliott, a Cape Town-based gynaecologist and obstetrician who specialises in high-risk pregnancies, "but rather a sign that we need to look more closely at the pregnancy." Often it's no cause for concern, and doctors will only monitor you more closely to ensure there's no immediate danger, but in some cases a decrease or increase in amniotic fluid can indicate something more serious. "Not enough fluid is often associated with poor placental function and a small baby who's not getting enough to grow to potential, while too much fluid can overstretch the uterus, increasing the risk of premature rupture of membranes, pre-term labour and premature delivery," explains Johannesburg-based gynaecologist Dr Bronwyn Moore.

POLYHYDRAMNIOS (TOO MUCH)

Too much amniotic fluid is called polyhydramnios (or hydramnios) and is more common in multiple pregnancies, where mom is diabetic or when gestational diabetes develops. Polyhydramnios has also been associated with chromosomal abnormalities and most foetal structural (organ) abnormalities, the most common being those that prevent swallowing or circulation of the amniotic fluid, such as intestinal atresia (blockages), Dr Elliott says. Or it could be a sign of heart failure in the foetus or a sign of foetal infections, she adds.

What polyhydramnios means for your baby really depends on the underlying cause, Dr Elliott stresses. "If the amniotic fluid volume is greater than expected, then there is a risk of pre-term labour and/or pre-term rupture of membranes, and in some cases cord prolapse. It may be tricky for the foetus to maintain the correct position, and the foetus may lie transverse or breech." In severe cases, there may be a risk of abruption placenta (separation of the placenta prior to delivery). "This can have catastrophic consequences," Dr Elliott says. Problems may continue after birth, she adds: "After delivery, the uterus, which has become used to the increased stretch, may find it difficult to contract – a condition called uterine atony."

OLIGOHYDRAMNIOS (TOO LITTLE)

There are also many possible causes of oligohydramnios – too little amniotic fluid. Dr Elliott says these range from genetic kidney conditions to baby not receiving enough nutrients from the placenta to produce sufficient amniotic fluid, as is the case in conditions such as foetal growth restriction or a maternal condition such as pre-eclampsia. Another

cause is that, unlike with the dramatic water-breaking scenes in the movies, sometimes you could be totally unaware that your waters have broken (called a pre-labour rupture of membranes) and you could simply be "leaking" amniotic fluid. If oligohydramnios develops in the first or early second trimester, it's usually more serious. "Adequate amniotic fluid is critical for foetal lung and limb

WHAT IS TOO HIGH OR LOW? POLYHYDRAMNIOS

(pol-e-hy-DRAM-nee-os), also called hydramnios, is defined as an amniotic fluid index of greater than 25 centimetres when the deepest pools in each quadrant of the uterus are added together, or when the deepest pool of amniotic fluid is measured as greater than 8cm.

OLIGOHYDRAMNIOS

(oli-go-hy-DRAM-nee-os) is defined as an amniotic fluid index that is less than expected for gestational age – usually this means a volume of less than 5cm.

development. So it can lead to severe consequences, such as pulmonary hypoplasia (underdevelopment of the baby lungs) or malformed limbs," explains Dr Elliott. If oligohydramnios develops late in the third trimester, the pregnancy may progress normally, or your doctor may advise you to have an induction or a C-section. Most women who develop oligohydramnios in the last trimester continue to have normal pregnancies. In fortunate cases, you can carry on as normal, go into labour naturally and deliver a healthy baby.



GOLDBLOCKS LEVELS

The amniotic fluid performs important functions: it protects the foetus, allowing foetal movement and muscle development; it reduces cord compression, especially in labour; and it is vital for foetal lung and gut development, among other functions. This is why it's so important to monitor amniotic fluid regularly throughout pregnancy, to ensure your baby has perfect Goldilocks levels (not too much, not too little).

Gynaecologist/obstetrician Dr Bronwyn Moore explains the basics of monitoring: "During your pregnancy, your healthcare worker will use various markers to monitor the progress of your pregnancy.

"One of the most important is the size of your uterus, measured from pubic bone to the top of the uterus, known as the height of fundus (HOF). How big your uterus is depends on how many babies you're carrying, the size of your developing foetus and the amount of amniotic fluid.

"A uterus that is bigger or smaller than expected will alert your healthcare worker to a possible problem with amniotic fluid volume and will need further investigation.

"A sonar scan is then performed to assess what's going on inside the uterus. The size of the foetus can be estimated and the amount of amniotic fluid determined. Experienced sonographers can judge the amount of fluid while conducting routine scans, but if it's felt that the amount of fluid is abnormal, it can be measured by doing an amniotic fluid index. Here, the uterus is divided into four and the depths of the deepest pool in each quadrant are added up. This total value is then compared to normal values. Too much or not enough amniotic fluid is associated with specific pregnancy problems, and these possible causes would need to be looked for and excluded." ●

COLLAGEN

What's the buzz?

Collagen is not just for actors and Instagram superstars who are terrified of looking old – it has a big job to do in the whole body, especially during pregnancy, birth and breastfeeding.

BY FOOD SCIENTIST ELMARIE NELLES

Hydrolysed collagen – which we know just as “collagen” – is a protein and one of the main building blocks of our entire bodies: from skin to bone, ligaments, connective tissue and tendons. During pregnancy and breastfeeding, protein is especially important for the growth of your baby and placenta, as well as your own health and well-being. Here are 9 reasons why.

1.

BONES

During pregnancy, the baby uses huge amounts of your calcium reserves to make body tissue, teeth and its own skeleton. Supplementing with collagen helps prevent you from losing bone integrity and density.

2.

WOUND HEALING

Protein, especially collagen, is vital for proper wound healing – think of collagen as your body's own natural “stitches”. Having enough protein and proper nutrition can help reduce the risk of, and recovery from, vaginal lacerations (tears), episiotomies and caesarean sections.

3.

MOOD SWINGS

Pregnancy-related hormone changes can bring on mood swings and premenstrual syndrome-ish symptoms, and low protein levels have been found to make stress, anxiety and depression worse. Collagen is also rich in the amino acid glycine, which is essential for mental health and brain function, plus it plays a role in preventing or alleviating post-partum depression.

4.

DIGESTIVE HEALTH

Pregnancy hormones are well-known for slowing down and “clogging up the works” with constipation being a common pregnancy woe.

Water helps keep things moving through your colon and to get waste matter (that's poo) out easier.

Collagen actually binds with water in the intestinal tract, stopping the colon from absorbing too much water, which means food and waste moves through your system and out of it faster.

5.

SUGAR CRASH

Gestational diabetes affects 5 to 25 percent of all pregnancies, and can increase the likelihood of a c-section delivery, pre-eclampsia and large birth weight. Studies show that collagen intake improves glucose metabolism, promotes stable blood sugar levels and reduces the chances of pregnancy diabetes crashing your baby party.

6.

CREAKS AND SQUEAKS

Relaxin is a hormone released in pregnancy that does what the name says: helps your uterus and cervix “relax” and open so that you can give birth.

But it also affects other ligaments and muscles in your body and can result in severe back, pelvic and joint pain. By adding collagen to your diet, you help strengthen and repair ligaments, protecting against and alleviating pain naturally.

7.

ALL ABOUT SKIN

Stretch marks appear when skin is stretched too quickly and affects 50-90 percent of pregnant women. Collagen (the elastic netting that gives skin greater strength and elasticity) reduces the formation of stretch marks. Collagen also plays a role in reducing scarring and calming down pregnancy acne breakouts, as glycine is also an anti-inflammatory.

8.

ALL ABOUT THE ZZZZZs

We've all heard of (or even experienced) “baby-brain”: poorer memory and concentration. As it turns out, pregnancy hormones are not to blame – poor sleep is. Taking glycine-rich collagen before you fall asleep helps improve sleep quality, especially the restorative deep sleep, and reduces daytime sleepiness and fatigue.

9.

STRONG HAIR AND NAILS

For some women, pregnancy hormones do not mean thick, flowing locks and that “glow”, but collagen supplementation can stimulate hair growth and reduce hair shedding during and after pregnancy.

It can also improve growth, strength and health of nails while reducing brittle nail syndrome.

So, it seems like a no-brainer to add collagen to your diet while pregnant and breastfeeding – but is it safe? Absolutely! Many studies have shown that collagen powder is a great supplement, that it is easily digested and absorbed and does not contain harmful ingredients. From stronger bones to faster healing and a glowing skin, adding collagen to your diet during and after pregnancy is the ultimate health hack for both you and Baby!

DID YOU KNOW?

The average woman needs about 46g of protein a day. This goes up to 71 to 76g when pregnant, but studies have shown that we really struggle to consume the recommended daily amount of protein. It's not hard to understand why when you break down the amount of protein in some of the common foods we eat:

1 egg (depending on size)	6.3 - 7g protein
Milk	7.69g protein per 250ml
Instant maize porridge	7g protein per 100g meal
Chicken breast	20g protein per 100g cooked portion
One cup of raw spinach	1g protein
One cup of raw kale	2g protein
Whole medium avocado	3g protein
One cup boiled soya beans	20g protein
One cup of mushrooms	3g protein
100g lentils	9g protein



THANK YOU



Thank you to our expert,
Pretoria-based food scientist
Elmarie Nelles for writing this
article exclusively for YPB.

THE FLITTER FLUTTER

Have you felt your baby move yet? It's one of the best feelings of pregnancy and a sure sign that all is well in there.

BY COLETTE DU PLESSIS

of tiny feet

Are you eagerly awaiting that sign of life that is definitely not just a hunger pang? Are you beginning to worry that it will never happen? Or maybe your baby is so active that you can't sleep. Read on...

HOW WILL I KNOW?

The answer is a little unsatisfactory. You'll just know! Speak to other moms and they'll mostly be able to tell you exactly when they felt it the first time and the descriptions can be very interesting: air bubbles, but not gas, like popcorn popping, or a gold fish swimming in the tummy or a butterfly.

First-time moms usually notice movement somewhere between 18 and 22 weeks. With your second baby you will most likely feel it earlier, simply because you know what to be on the lookout for.

The location of your placenta also plays a role in when you will feel the first movement. If your placenta is attached to the front of your womb wall, you may only feel movement at 22 weeks. And after that, you might have to wait for many days before you feel it again. This is normal – remember, your baby is still teeny-tiny at 22 weeks, with tiny feet and fists.

Your baby's personality is already playing a role too. You know how some people can sit motionless on the couch for ages, and others can barely stop twitching and moving for half a minute? The same is true for babies. Some are simply more active in the womb than others. In general, doctors and midwives take ten felt movements per day from 25 weeks onwards as an average. Another

way to measure is to observe if you feel four movements per hour. Keep in mind that movements are very light early in the pregnancy and only get powerful in the last trimester. You might feel less movement then, simply because space is getting tight.

It is very common for pregnant women to report that their baby is more active in the evening compared to during the day. This is because you are more active during the day and your movements soothe baby and lull him to sleep. Then, when

you begin to wind down, baby wakes up. He likes to move

his arms and fists about, and kick his legs. He also regularly makes turns of 180 or even 360 degrees. Another cute move to be on the lookout for is hiccups. Your baby starts to swallow amniotic fluid from 25 weeks and can

begin to hiccup, and you can feel it!

Another factor that influences your baby's movement is the amount of amniotic fluid in the womb. Think of the womb as a swimming pool. Some are full of water and some are maybe only half full. A baby in a half-full pool can't move as freely and easily as one in a full pool.

So if you have little amniotic fluid, the same applies – there is less water in which baby can move around. This doesn't influence the number but rather the quality of the movements.

One big thing you might be worrying about, especially if your baby moves a lot, is whether they can get entangled in the umbilical cord.

And yes, the cord can twist around their neck, but this does not pose any danger for you or for them. It can, however, lead to complications during labour.



Did you know?

Your baby starts to swallow amniotic fluid from 25 weeks and can begin to hiccup, and you can feel it!

NO MOVEMENT?

Panic can set in very quickly when you realise you haven't felt your baby move for a while. What should you do?

KEEP A KICK COUNT

Sit or lie down peacefully where you will not be disturbed, and keep your hands over your belly. Now count how many times you feel baby move in 20 minutes. If Baby doesn't move at all, get up, walk around for a few minutes, and then sit down again with your hands on your belly. Pay attention and count again.

It is possible that your baby was asleep during the first 20 minutes. Babies sleep for up to an hour at a time in the womb, and then they don't move much.

You can even draw up a table to chart your baby's movements if you are really worried. Especially if you have high blood pressure, this is a good idea.

DO IT LIKE THIS:

Set aside 30 minutes or an hour at a set time each day, for example teatime between 3 and 4pm. Pay attention and count your baby's kicks. Write the number down. Use this as a baseline, and repeat the exercise the next day. This information will be very useful to your gynaecologist if you are at all worried about your baby's movements to discuss your concern. It is of much more use to be able to say exactly by how much your baby's movements have decreased than to merely say that your baby is moving less. If you notice a significant drop in movements, you should see your doctor. They will monitor your baby's heartbeat and, if everything is satisfactory, you will be sent home at peace that everything is fine.

Do keep in mind, though, that it is normal for you not to feel your baby move for long periods. If you are very busy during the day, you might only notice movements in the evening. Finally, remember that light movements – not only the big kicks – also count as movement. ●

QA

SHOULD WE GET TESTED?



Email your question for our experts to:
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Please note that experts unfortunately cannot respond to each question personally. The answers provided on these pages should not replace the advice of your doctor.

OUR EXPERT



DR LIZLE OOSTHUIZEN

SPECIALIST GYNAECOLOGIST
SPECIALIST IN REPRODUCTIVE MEDICINE AT
CAPE FERTILITY

Q *I'm 34, he's 40, and we've been trying to get pregnant now for two years, and nothing is happening. I think it is time to go and get tested, but I would really like to know what we can expect. It is going to take some convincing to get my husband there, and the more information I have beforehand about the consultation and what we'll have to do, or what will be expected of us, the better. And can we just make our own appointment with the specialist, or do we need a referral?*

A DR OOSTHUIZEN ANSWERS:

Statistically, most couples trying to conceive will be pregnant within the first year of trying.

Our general advice is that under the age of 35, any couple trying for more than a year should get tested. This decreases to 6 months once the woman is older than 35. The reason for this is that egg quality and quantity start decreasing at a faster rate after 35, so we want to avoid long delays. After 40, I would even advise coming to see a fertility specialist even sooner.

Your fertility is fluid and does not stay the same – it changes as we age and is affected by individual factors such as underlying medical or gynaecological problems, your partner's health, and most importantly, your age and egg quality.

The first consultation will involve a fertility specialist taking a medical history and doing an examination and pelvic ultrasound. What we do is different from what your gynae will look for, as we focus specifically on fertility and not just overall gynaecological health.

Many couples are nervous to see a fertility specialist, as they worry about what news they will hear, or if they are in the right place. The aim of the consultation is to help identify any problems and find a solution for you. If your partner is not keen to join on the first visit, you can come alone as well.

We will check the ovaries for egg numbers, check on the uterus to assess the health of the lining and rule out any obstacles to conceiving. We also look for suggestions of endometriosis, although this can't be diagnosed on ultrasound alone most of the time.

Your partner will need to do a sperm test. He can produce the sample in the comfort

of your home and drop it off for analysis on a day that suits him.

We will give the containers and any important instructions to follow.

Both of you will need to do blood tests. You will need to do the "routine pregnancy bloods" – such as HIV, syphilis, blood group and rubella immunity.

You also need to have several hormones checked, including your egg reserve, which shows how many eggs are in the ovary, and how quickly one has to act. He will need to have HIV, syphilis and hepatitis screened for the sperm test. You can bring any prior blood results with you if you recently did some testing.

All the examination and scan findings are then put together with the blood results and sperm test. At this time, any further testing needed (such as checking the tubes are open) can be identified, and advice can be provided on the best course of action.

Fertility treatment is never a dictatorship – we decide together what the best course of action for you as a couple is.

My job is to let you know where the problems may be, and what options you have for the best chance of taking home a baby. If you're not keen on the suggested treatment, then it's my job to make sure you're informed of the limitations of your chosen plan but to still support you through it.

We don't require a referral to see us. You are able to book directly. I always advise checking with your medical aid if they require a referral from a GP. Although they probably won't pay for treatment (only two medical aids contribute), you can still claim the consultation, scan and blood work in accordance with your medical aid scheme rules. ●

LABOUR

comforts

Make labour more tolerable and increase your comfort by focussing on some small aids that make all the difference.

BY CHILDBIRTH EDUCATOR TINA OTTE

When preparing for any journey, we always make sure we have enough to eat and drink, something to read, music to listen to and extra blankets and pillows to increase our comfort. We even stop to stretch our legs and empty our bladders. Labour is often described as a journey, and it is definitely a journey into uncharted waters with your first child. Even a second or third labour is by no means mapped out, and comfort aids are always worth packing.

USEFUL ITEMS FOR THE LABOUR BAG

LIP BALM For when lips become dry and chapped due to heavy breathing.

ICE CHIPS Sucking on ice chips will make your mouth tingle and quench a slight thirst or reduce nausea when labour becomes long and drawn out.

COOL OR WARM CLOTH Use the cloth to wipe down your face, neck, shoulders and chest when you start to feel hot and sweaty.

DEODORANT AND ROSE-WATER SPRAY Rose-water spray may be a better alternative to a face cloth as it can be sprayed on and left to evaporate off the skin. It also has a subtle rose fragrance that can overpower the typical smell of a hospital. Deodorant spray also goes a long way to freshen up damp skin.

POPSICLES AND BOILED SUCKING SWEETS will help you keep up your energy levels. Remove during contractions and store in a cup of ice chips.

FRUIT JUICE Natural fruit juice that has been diluted will help keep you from becoming dehydrated. Dehydration can increase your perception of pain.

MASSAGE OR TENNIS BALLS There are many aids that one can use for massage during labour. These include tennis and reflex balls as well as rollers. Hands, knees and elbows are the best tools of course, and firm yet gentle touch can be very reassuring.

But don't go overboard: a few personal and useful items will be of benefit, while two bulging suitcases and a Venter trailer full are merely a burden. Listed below are some guidelines as to what's potentially useful. Choose five or six items that you think you may need and try to remember to make use of them if appropriate. Add some ideas of your own and have your labour bag packed and ready about four weeks before your due date.

BIRTH BALLS A useful addition to the childbirth arena is the birth ball.

This can be used in many ways during pregnancy as well. Sitting on it during labour allows you a different type of freedom of movement and encourages the pelvis to open to the max during the first stage.

WARM COMPRESSES Warmth can be very soothing to sore ligaments and painful joints. Hot water bottles can be used, but the popular buckwheat huggers are safer. Heat in the microwave for a few minutes, and enjoy at least an hour of warmth. They are great for back labours.

ICE PACKS Buckwheat huggers can also be placed in the ice chest of a refrigerator and used to cool a hot body or to numb a sore back. They are safer to use than ice, which is another alternative. Never place ice directly against the skin.

AROMATHERAPY OILS These are soothing and work on one of the most important senses – smell. Oils can be used to rub directly onto the skin and enhance the massage, which relaxes you.

HOMOEOPATHIC REMEDIES Find out from your childbirth educator or midwife what homoeopathic preparations can be used for labour and afterwards.

There are some preparations that can help ease the dilation of the cervix as well as deal with the pain of the contractions.



MORE HELPERS

URINATING Wee as frequently as you can, as a full bladder can make labour a lot more uncomfortable.

BREATHING Your breath is a constant companion. As soon as a contraction starts, relax your body, inhale deeply, then release. Breathe deeply and rhythmically throughout the contraction. When the contraction ends, inhale and exhale and release any tension as you wait for the next contraction.

POSITIVE ATTITUDE AND VISUALISATION

Maintaining a positive outlook and keeping your spirits up may be a lot harder during labour than you may anticipate. Practise positive affirmations during pregnancy, and gather supportive people around you to see you through this challenge. Your state of mind influences your labour more than you realise!

TOUCH This is incredibly subjective. Some women do not want to be touched at all, and this must be respected. Others like a soft, gentle massage on tummy, arms, legs and face. Still others prefer firm counter pressure on the lower back and squeezing of the hands or feet during a contraction. Lots of hugging, if desired, is recommended.

FOCAL POINT Many women find it helpful to have something to focus on during a contraction. It may be a picture or a sentimental object. Eye contact may work for you, as may an altered breathing pattern.

MUSIC A universal language that has many pain-relieving properties as well as the ability to distract you by lifting you up, up and away from your uncomfortable situation. Choose a range of music before the time, and listen actively. Use headphones if you don't want to disturb others. ●

QA

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sharing@ypbmagazine.com

Please note that experts unfortunately cannot respond to each question personally. The answers provided on these pages should not replace the advice of your doctor.

OUR EXPERT



DR JP DU BUISSON
GYNAECOLOGIST AND
OBSTETRICIAN



MOUTHWASH

MAKE IT YOURSELF

Dissolve half a teaspoon of salt in a cup of warm water. Allow it to cool, then use it as a salt-water mouth rinse.



Is it safe?

Q *I'm 12 weeks pregnant with my second child. I used mouthwash every day throughout my first pregnancy. Recently, I read that it is dangerous for the foetus though. Is this true? Is it better to forgo it during this pregnancy?*

A DR DU BUISSON ANSWERS:
As you'll experience, oral hygiene can be quite a challenge for pregnant women. Brushing teeth could make you feel nauseous in the morning, but if you skip it, plaque could become a problem very quickly. And when you do brush, your gums tend to bleed so much that you fear for your teeth! This is all completely

normal during pregnancy as pregnancy hormones cause blood vessels to dilate resulting in slightly swollen mucous membranes. A mouthwash is therefore an excellent idea. However, it is true that long-term exposure to a mouthwash containing iodine could lead to your baby having thyroid problems. And of course, some mouthwashes contain alcohol. You wouldn't normally swallow your mouthwash, but especially the ones containing alcohol should not be swallowed. It is best to avoid all exposure to alcohol during your pregnancy. So go ahead and use mouthwash, but choose one that does not contain alcohol or iodine. You can also make your own mouthwash by dissolving half a teaspoon of salt in a cup of warm water, allowing it to cool and then using it as a salt-water rinse. Make a large quantity and keep it in the fridge. ●

1,2,3 **PUSH!**

Labour has distinct phases and stages, each with characteristic traits that are easy to recognise. Understanding them will empower you through labour and birth.

BY **CHILDBIRTH EDUCATOR TINA OTTE**

Despite what it looks like in the movies: the sudden gush of water, the mad rush to hospital, some slightly pink-faced, mascara-smudging hollering, one big push and “whoop!” out pops a gorgeous baby – labour is a well-designed, step-by-step process. Every labour goes through three distinct stages (yes, faster for some than others!), each with specific phases, each designed to gear you, your baby and your body up for birth. Knowing what’s happening now, and what is still to come, will make labour and birth much more tolerable!

STAGE ONE

This first stage of labour is all about gently opening you up and moving your baby into, and down, the birth canal. It has three phases: early first stage; passive to active labour and the transition phase.

EARLY FIRST STAGE

Also known as passive labour, most women start to sense that something is different but often deny that it could be labour – but it is. Your cervix begins to soften and thin (efface) and open slightly (dilate). Contractions are short, mild and irregular but might only feel like a mild backache or “period pain” low down on your abdomen, which will slowly increase.

You may feel a nesting instinct kick in, and start to clean, paint or wash baby clothes, or you might feel lethargic and just want to rest. You might notice a mucous discharge with slight tinges of blood – this is normal and, unless you see a large amount of blood, there’s no need for concern.

Tips!

- Do not start anything strenuous (even if your nesting instinct is telling you to!).
- Rest as much as you can.
- Eat small “snacky”, high-energy fruit and carbohydrates, and drink lots of water.
- Focus on relaxing and breathing deeply as you start to tune into your body.

PASSIVE TO ACTIVE LABOUR

For many women, this is when they feel that labour is really kicking in. Contractions slowly intensify, getting longer, stronger and closer together. Women can usually talk through their contractions during the first phase but not during the second phase. Your cervix continues to thin, and will open out to reach 8cm. Vaginal discharge becomes more profuse, and you may have a mucous show tinged with a bit of blood. Your amniotic bag will break at some point – for some it will be earlier in this phase, for others it may only break much later.

You may experience mixed feelings: excitement and anticipation, restlessness and nervousness, wanting companionship and wanting to be alone. You will be alert and concentrate during contractions, and sleepy and tired between them.

Towards the end of this phase, you may experience a plateau in your labour where your contractions continue, but dilation may pause for a while. You may feel frustrated that labour has slowed, but try and relax – your body is pacing itself, taking a breather before taking the next step: transition.

Tips!

- Eat lightly and sip clear fluids.
- Rest, sit in a rocking chair, or take a slow walk.
- Distract yourself between contractions by reading, talking, listening to music or making phone calls. (This all depends on what time of day or night it is.)
- Change positions frequently in order to help your baby get into a good position, and keep as upright as possible, using gravity to get your baby to move down into the pelvis.
- Empty your bladder hourly, and rest between contractions.
- Use visualisation techniques, and continue to breathe in a way that keeps you focused and calm.

TRANSITION

This is the last phase of labour before you move into pushing and birth, hence the name “transition”. You will sense a change in how your contractions feel as their function changes from pulling your cervix open (as it is now fully dilated: 10cm) to pushing down to get the baby out. You may start to feel the urge to push (but this does not happen to every woman). You will feel pressure and fullness in the vagina, rectum and groin area. It is common to shiver and shake and feel nauseous, as your adrenalin and endorphin levels are very high.

Adrenalin gives you your second wind and enhances your concentration. It can also make you very aggressive to others and protective towards your about-to-be-born baby. Some women become grouchy and confused and extremely discouraged. At this stage, it is normal to express fear of dying, or simply wanting to leave and “do this” later – this is actually a good sign and tells you that birth is imminent.

“

IN THE TRANSITION STAGE, IT IS NORMAL TO EXPRESS FEAR OF DYING, OR SIMPLY WANTING TO LEAVE AND ‘DO THIS’ LATER.

”

Tips!

- Deal with one contraction at a time! Each contraction is one closer to seeing your baby.
- Relax as much as possible between contractions to save your energy for pushing.
- Pant or blow if you feel the urge to push before it’s time.

STAGE TWO

PUSHING AND BIRTH

This part of the journey can be as short as 10 minutes or as long as an hour. Your natural urge to push, your baby and the muscles in your vagina and uterus all work together to move your baby down the birth canal and into the best position for birth. As the baby's head presses against your pelvic floor, you will feel pressure in your rectal area. Most women (but not all) will feel a reflexive urge to bear down. This urge and your uterine muscles work together to push your baby out.

“

PANTING IS A GOOD WAY TO TRY AND CONTROL YOUR VERY STRONG URGE TO BEAR DOWN.

”

CROWNING GLORY

The hardest part of pushing is getting your baby over the curve of your pelvis. For every three steps forward during a contraction, the baby will slip back two steps when the contraction is over. There does come a point when your baby's head does not slip back between contractions, and can be seen in your vagina. Your baby is crowning!

As your baby's head stretches your vagina, you will feel a burning sensation. You may need to stop pushing to give the tissues of your perineum a chance to thin out and stretch slowly and avoid tearing (or the need for an episiotomy). Panting is a good way to try and control your very strong urge to bear down.

BIRTH

As soon as your baby's head has been born, her head will turn to the side, lining her shoulders up for delivery. Your contractions may slow down, and your caregivers will use this moment to feel around your baby's neck for the umbilical cord, lifting it up over her head, or creating a loop through which she can be born. During the next contraction, your baby's shoulders will be born, one after the other, allowing the rest of your baby's body to glide quickly out. Your baby may be followed by a great gush of amniotic fluid and may already be breathing and crying. Your baby is here.

STAGE THREE

DELIVERING THE PLACENTA

It's not over yet – you still need to deliver the placenta (or afterbirth). You may feel cramping as the uterus starts contracting to expel the placenta. It is common to shake or experience chills, and you may be asked to help with a few more little pushes to get the placenta out.

Try to breastfeed your baby, as this releases the hormone oxytocin that causes your uterus to contract.

Despite intense feelings of relief and joy, don't be surprised by the utter exhaustion (physical and emotional) that you will also feel. Take a moment to hold your baby, skin-to-skin if you can, and breathe. You have done it! Welcome little one. ●



When motherhood means MISERY

When you start a new job, everything and everyone is strange, you feel out of place, and you think you'll never remember everything you were told on your first day! Motherhood is no different. What makes it harder is that there's very little support once you have left the safety net of the hospital. What now? Who's there to help? Added to the ethos of playing "superwoman" is your own practical inexperience when it comes to baby care. It's not surprising then that the "wonderful world" of motherhood can quickly pop and become a blur of misery – it's called postnatal depression (PND).

Postnatal depression is so much more than baby blues. We shed some light on this common – often crippling – post-baby reality.

BY **BURGIE IRELAND**

WHAT POSTNATAL DEPRESSION IS NOT

JUST FEELING "A BIT DOWN"

Any type of depression affects your everyday life.

A SIGN OF WEAKNESS

Any traumatic or life-changing experience can, for some people, cause an imbalance of chemicals in the brain. In her book *Pregnancy and Parenthood: Heaven Or Hell*, Professor Bev Chalmers prefers to call PND maternal depression and explains that this type of depression begins some time (usually about six weeks – or any time during the first year) after giving birth.

A PUNISHMENT

Some women feel that they are being punished for something they may have done in their past – a previous miscarriage (or abortion) – or because they feel no flowing love for this baby, or because they had a caesarean or an unpleasant birthing experience.

SOMETHING TO FEEL GUILTY ABOUT

You may feel guilty because you're a single parent with no means of supporting your baby. Sometimes, goals to be the perfect mother are set too high. It doesn't help when people say: "Stop feeling sorry for yourself!"

TYPES OF POSTNATAL DEPRESSION

Most women have the third day blues. Think of it as stress brought on by the responsibility of early parenthood, sleepless nights, endless days of nappy changing, feeding and soothing a crying baby. Many new mothers feel helpless

when the crying never stops. The blues usually begin a few days after birth and resolve within the first six weeks.

POSTNATAL DEPRESSION (PND) begins later, lasts longer (months, sometimes years – if unresolved, even a lifetime) and needs intervention such as counselling, a support group, a psychologist and sometimes medication for a short while. PND is not only hormonal – "If it was, then all women would get it," writes Bev. Even adoptive mothers can have PND! Major causes include a history of depression

and a lack of social and family support. For most, however, PND resolves within a year or so and does not necessarily recur when another baby is born.

POSTNATAL PSYCHOSIS is serious and needs urgent attention. This type of depression becomes obvious by the woman's severe emotional distress, usually neglecting herself and her baby. She may even hallucinate – thinking she has fed her baby when she has not. She may even harm her baby. Hospitalisation, medical and psychological counselling is essential.

DID YOU
SUFFER FROM
PND?

37.5%

I didn't experience this at all.

36.7%

I had a few days of the baby blues, but nothing serious.

15%

I had postnatal depression but could handle it with therapy.

10.8%

I had a severe case, and it affected me and my relationship with my baby quite badly.

DO YOU HAVE PND?

Gauge yourself according to the Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale. How have you felt in the past seven days? Rate yourself on the following questions, where 0 is low and 3 is very high.

1. I have been able to laugh and see the funny side of things.

0 1 2 3

2. I have looked forward to things.

0 1 2 3

3. I have blamed myself unnecessarily when things went wrong.

0 1 2 3

4. I have been anxious or worried for no very good reason.

0 1 2 3

5. I have felt scared or panicky for no very good reason.

0 1 2 3

6. Things have been getting on top of me.

0 1 2 3

7. I have been so unhappy that I have had difficulty sleeping.

0 1 2 3

8. I have felt sad or miserable.

0 1 2 3

9. I have been so unhappy that I have been crying.

0 1 2 3

10. The thought of harming myself has occurred to me.

0 1 2 3

This scale is supplied by the Postnatal Depression Support Group and Cape Town-based psychologist Linda Lewis, who is an expert in the field. Having suffered postnatal depression herself, Linda has written a book called *When Your Blessings Don't Count* to help women recognise and overcome it. "If your score on this scale is

13 and above, speak to your family doctor or clinic sister about how you are feeling," Linda advises. "If your score is **18 and above**, you need to pay urgent attention to these feelings and get professional help." ●



QA

Email your question for our experts to:

sharing@ypbmagazine.com

Please note that experts unfortunately cannot respond to each question personally. The answers provided on these pages should not replace the advice of your doctor.

HOW CAN I HELP?



OUR EXPERT



MANDISA PATALA

PARENT INFANT MANAGER
AT THE PARENT CENTRE AND
REGISTERED SOCIAL WORKER

Q *My domestic helper has just had her first baby. She worked for me until right before, travelling to work and back every day, and now I've given her maternity leave for three months. But I'm a bit worried about her. I don't think her conditions at home are great, and I picked up during the pregnancy that she wasn't very well informed. I tried to help a bit as far as I could, without getting in her personal space, as she is an introverted person. After sharing the first baby pics with me, she has gone very quiet. How can I help her? Or can I organise someone "official" in the community to see that she is coping? I'm sure she could benefit from breastfeeding advice and encouragement to go to the clinic and vaccinate and so on. What would you advise?*

A MANDISA ANSWERS: I must acknowledge how difficult this situation must be to you and your employee that has just given birth.

The birth of a baby can evoke powerful emotions – from excitement and joy to fear and nervousness – which could lead to stress and anxiety. This is completely normal for any mother who is expecting a child or who has just had a baby. Most new moms experience "baby blues" after childbirth, which commonly include mood swings, crying spells and anxiety. "Baby blues" normally begin within the first two to three days and can last up to a few weeks. Some moms experience a more severe, long-lasting condition known as post-partum depression. Your employee could be experiencing a lot of stress during this time due to financial difficulties, lack of support from loved ones, environmental factors, and balancing the need for work with parenting.

In communities there are baby clinics that mothers can attend with their babies to get baby immunisations, more information on breastfeeding and bottle feeding, and any other issues that are related to the baby and the new mother. New mothers can easily access the baby clinic in their community by going to their nearest community health centre. These centres all have baby and child units, and that's where new parents are sent.

A discussion about how to deal with the practicalities of feeding can be a good route into having a deeper conversation about being a working mother. This will also help put the mother at ease without her feeling guilty about going back to work and leaving her baby at home. It may be that she does not want to talk about private or family matters, which is her choice, but you can still show your support and willingness to help her.

Lastly, at the Parent Centre, we have well-trained parent infant attachment counsellors who provide information and support to pregnant women during and after birth to encourage positive parent and infant attachment. Our parent infant attachment counsellors come into the home of the new mother to render support and information (within certain communities around Cape Town). This can also be done telephonically for those not within the Cape Town area. The Parent Centre also offers 0-5 counselling, a specialised service for all parents with their infants and toddlers.

This counselling helps you understand the difficulties you experience in raising your infant or toddler, to explore alternative ways of managing problems, and to promote knowledge and awareness of infant mental health. You are welcome to contact us on 021 762 0116 or email: parentinfant@theparentcentre.org.za. ●

PARENTING

Taking you from newborn to baby to toddler to preschooler.

files



YOUR NEWBORN

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OUR EXPERTS IN THIS SECTION



DR SIMON STRACHAN
PAEDIATRICIAN



ROBYN-LEIGH NAUDE
COUNSELLING PSYCHOLOGIST



SUE PILKINGTON-WILLIAMS
HEAD OF REDHILL EARLY LEARNING CENTRE



DR CHIZGANI NYASULU-EGBUNIKE
PAEDIATRICIAN AT NETCARE LINKWOOD HOSPITAL

Thula Baba, Thula Sana

New-parent sleep deprivation can feel like a special kind of torture. Which is why understanding Baby's sleep and how to help your baby master it will be your key to getting through this. And you can.

You may find that your baby sleeps much better – or “worse” – than someone else's. Just like adults, babies are individuals with different personalities and needs, but you can help your baby to gradually adopt healthy sleep habits from birth. Learn more about sleep, and you will feel better prepared.

Also, don't listen to everybody's advice – if you are worried about something, consult an experienced, trusted parenting expert or medical professional.

The first step is to always rule out illness and discomfort if your baby is battling to sleep. Remember too that “sleeping through the night” means sleeping for five hours, so don't expect your baby to sleep the way an adult does.



**GOOD
BUY**



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THE SCIENCE OF SLEEP

Expect your newborn to wake at least twice during the night for food. He does this because his melatonin levels are not functional yet. Melatonin is the hormone regulating sleep cycles.

Production of melatonin will evolve over a few weeks, and your baby will then start learning the difference between night and day. Meanwhile, you can start teaching him about his environment and facilitate better understanding of night-and-sleeptime.

Here are the different sleep-cycle phases:

AWAKE STATE

Your baby's eyes are open, and he is physically alert. Although he is calm, he waves his arms and legs around, startling occasionally.

QUIET STATE

Your baby is quiet yet alert. This state is perfect for quality time, because your baby will watch and listen to you attentively for a relatively long time.

DROWSY STATE

His eyelids flutter, open and close, and your baby moves very little. And when

he does, he moves smoothly rather than jerks. If there is an unexpected noise, he will startle.

LIGHT SLEEP

Although your baby's eyes are closed, there is rapid eye and random body movement with occasional sucking. A loud noise will startle him at this point and could disturb the sleeping pattern so that he reverts back to the awake stage.

DEEP SLEEP

Your baby is fast asleep, and nothing will disturb him. His eyes are tightly closed, there is no eye movement, his breathing is regular, and he won't be disturbed by noises or wake up if he is moved.

STAY THE HOSPITAL COURSE

For at least the first week, try to stick to the routine you settled into in the hospital, although you should always be guided by your baby in a baby-led routine. At this stage, your baby has no concept of night and day as he needs to eat regularly over a 24-hour period, and melatonin will only be secreted as he is exposed to light and dark (which takes about six weeks).

WHAT HE NEEDS

A newborn baby requires about 20 hours of sleep daily. Although this seems a lot, you won't necessarily feel rested, because you'll be busy with chores, bathing and feeding him, holding and cuddling or catching up on some sleep yourself.

Your newborn will also feed around eight times a day. At around three months, he'll probably decrease his required number of sleep hours to 15 or so. As he hits toddlerhood and beyond, he will slowly relinquish his day nap too.

Sleep deprivation and exhaustion are part and parcel of early parenthood. While many babies seem to sleep on schedule at hospital, they really "wake up" once you're home, and it's quite natural to feel out of your depth as your baby cries, poos, wails and demands food in a seemingly never-ending cycle.

No matter how difficult these first few weeks are, bear in mind that the tricks to get him sleeping through don't work. Don't introduce porridge early or add it to his formula to "fill him up" or try to make him drink water during the night. Simply prioritise your time by decreasing the number of visitors you receive, if possible, and worry less about housework and administrative tasks.

TEACHING BABY TO SLEEP

Babies are not robots, and just when you think you've got your sleeping routine sorted out, your baby may very well change his mind – and your plans! Sleep guidelines are generally sound, but be aware that because your baby is unique, you can "tweak" suggestions to fit your particular situation and family.

- Get to know your baby. He may need lots of cuddles or want to be independent. Tailor your sleep routine around his preferences.
- Know the various stages of the sleep cycle. Only move your baby once he is in deep sleep. Gently lift him, and then put him in his sleeping place; warm the spot with a hot water bottle first and then remove it.

- The next step in getting him to fall asleep independently is putting him down when he's in the light sleep state. Ensure that you move him smoothly, since jerky movements might wake him up. Theoretically, he should be able to go from a light to a deep sleep without your input.

- Once he's able to go from light to deep sleep, try feeding and putting him down in a drowsy state, so he learns to fall asleep independently. You can pat and soothe him until he closes his eyes, but don't leave him until he's in a light sleep state.

- Mastered putting Baby to bed in a drowsy state? Now try conquer the quiet alert state. Put him down, tuck him in firmly, and pat him until he's drowsy, then very quietly leave. Because he's tired, trusts you and is familiar with his surroundings, he might happily go to sleep. You can also try this step when he's in a quiet awake state and it's time for his nap.

WHERE SHOULD HE SLEEP?

Your sleep routine and sleeping arrangements depend entirely on what suits your family. Some parents might want to co-sleep with their newborn, while others choose a strict routine with baby in their own room from early on. Try a few arrangements to see what works for you and remember that old habits die hard, so what you choose should work as well as possible for everyone concerned.

To help you decide where to put your baby to sleep, consider these tips:

- In the first few weeks and months, your baby will need to feed at night, so choose an arrangement that minimises disruptions all around.
- You may change your sleep routine and place once your baby is feeding fewer times at night.
- It will probably be more difficult to transition a toddler to his own room or sleeping place, but this depends on how you do it and your child's unique temperament.

Did you know?

In newborns, deep sleep averages about 47 minutes compared to 90 minutes for an adult. This sleep pattern will gradually change as your baby gets older. We all wake, or almost wake, several times during the night. Most of us don't even realise or remember this, though. At the peak of the rapid eye movement cycle, your baby will sleep very lightly. If he feels warm and safe in a familiar environment and isn't hungry, he will go back to sleep. But if he wakes up in a strange environment, feels insecure, is cold, wet and uncomfortable, with a full nappy or is hungry, he will quickly wake up and cry for attention.

SAFE SLEEPING

- Your baby must sleep on his back and never on his stomach, as this increases the risk of sudden infant death syndrome.
- Use only cotton blankets and sheets, which must be securely tucked in, or a baby sleeping bag.
- The mattress must be dry, firm, clean and aired.
- Room temperature must be between 20 and 22°C.
- Only use a beanie for newborns; thereafter, keep his head uncovered in bed.
- Learn first aid techniques such as CPR.
- Don't use sheep skins, quilts, duvets and pillows.
- Don't allow smoking near your baby or in the house. It is dangerous to sleep with your baby if:
 - You or your partner smoke.
 - You have been drinking alcohol.
 - You are on medication or drugs.
 - You are very tired.
 - You doze off on a sofa or in an armchair.

TOP TIPS FOR HAPPY SLEEP

- Baths are soothing and sleep-inducing. Most babies will sleep well after a bath.
- Massage your baby while playing gentle music.
- Ensure some quiet time before he goes to bed, as over-stimulation hampers sleep.
- Keep lights dim for sleeptime by using a night light or an ambient light nearby.
- Don't play during the night; feed and change him and then put him back to sleep.
- Don't leave your baby to cry when he wakes up, as he will trust you if you meet his needs immediately. If you don't, he'll learn that only long, hard crying gets your attention.
- Sleep promotes sleep. Try to have your baby nap after his first feed/breakfast, and he'll sleep better for the rest of the day and at night.
- Experts say that good sleep habits are promoted during the first four months, when babies are establishing them. If you can, and if baby is happy about it, you can gently help him to comfort himself and fall asleep independently. ●

1, 2, 3...

With twins or triplets on the way, preparation is key. What to expect during those first few weeks – and how to prepare.

BY **BETH COOPER HOWELL & BRUCE COOPER**

MORE THAN YOU BARGAINED FOR?

Surviving the first six weeks with a baby is a mammoth task – but doing it with multiples is even more daunting. Mothers who have been there and survived it say that although caring for their babies is the most difficult in the early months, things do get much easier with time. There is so much fulfilment and satisfaction in raising multiples – but preparation is crucial for your survival in the early days.

PREPARING FOR MULTIPLES

Try to find a “multiples group” in your area, or join a WhatsApp group to chat to other parents in the same boat. You’ll make new friends and have the opportunity to discuss details and concerns with other parents who have been through – or are about to experience – your situation. Here are some tips about important things to do before your babies are born.

ORGANISE HELP: Coping with multiples is a heavy burden, and knowing you have support makes the task a lot easier. Speak to family and friends about what they can do for you – not only in emergencies, but at times when you need a break.

NAME YOUR BABIES: Don’t forget to choose your babies’ names. There will be little time to think about it once they break onto the scene. Write your birth announcement now too.

PREPARE OLDER SIBLINGS: Discuss with your multiples’ older siblings how different things are going to be when the babies arrive, and involve them in decorating the nursery. Put together some “quiet time” toys, and relax about screen time.

PREPARE A WELL-EQUIPPED NURSERY:

Allocating an area where your babies will sleep, bath and even feed is essential. Make sure it is adequately stocked with accessories and consumables and that they are easily

accessible when you need them. Consider a twin crib if you are not co-sleeping.

CHILDBIRTH CLASSES: If possible, attend a childbirth class specific to multiples. But don’t leave it too late, because multiples are invariably born prematurely, and you’ll want to be trained and ready before they arrive.

UNDERSTAND THE SIGNS OF

PRE-TERM LABOUR:

Statistics show that around 70 percent of multiples

are born prematurely.

Understand the signs of pre-term labour so you can act quickly and effectively when it happens.

Your doctor, gynaecologist and books are good sources of information, but according to Sasha Tyson, mother of twins Samantha and Alice, any unexpected symptoms, no matter how odd or minor, should be reported to your doctor immediately. “I was induced at 38 weeks because I’d experienced excessive itchiness, particularly on my wrists. A Google search revealed that this is one of the symptoms of obstetric cholestasis, which is to do with an overworked liver, and common in the last trimester of multiple pregnancies and has been associated with stillbirth. So I reported it, they checked my liver function and called me in for immediate induction.”

WHEN THE NEWBORNS ARRIVE

Caring for twins can be made significantly easier by acquiring outside help in the form of family or friends. Even if you’re a super-efficient and patient mom and believe you can cope with anything for an unlimited time, at some point the constant

handling of multiples will wear you down. “Luckily I had a patient partner, and a very supportive mother and sister, but even so, it was very hard,” Sasha says.

“The inability to give all of my attention to both girls at once was very difficult to handle, especially when I spoke to mothers of singletons of the same age, apparently enjoying a relatively romantic early relationship with their newborns.” The secret is to learn to

forgive yourself for just being one person. Also to accept all help that’s offered, with no false pride at all, and to express your feelings, no matter how much you fear they reveal you are somehow not a ‘natural mother’. “Actually, as it turns out, most people will be experiencing something similar, including those ‘romantic’ parents of singletons,” says Sacha, “and babies have no trouble at all putting you at the centre of their universe, regardless of any other emotional and/or practical commitments you may have at the time.”





TEN COMMON MISTAKES NEW MULTIPLES PARENTS MAKE

#1

SPREADING YOURSELF THIN

Your babies need your undivided attention in the early months. This is not the time to finish a project, start a new hobby or spring clean the house. There'll be plenty of time in a few months to concentrate on that.

#2

RUNNING OUT OF ESSENTIALS

Two or more babies go through consumables at an astonishing rate. Keep the cupboard filled with nappies, wet wipes, bottles and formula, if using.

#3

NOT NAPPING

If you want to be useful to your newborn multiples, make sure you find or make the time to sleep.

#4

OVER-EFFICIENCY

Sticking rigidly to a manual won't always work because families have different habits and needs. Rather be flexible in your approach, and try a variety of schedules, techniques and products, one of which is bound to work for you.

#5

KEEPING QUIET ABOUT YOUR FEELINGS

Remember that things are temporary and babies grow up. And soon they will nurse less and sleep more. Put things in perspective and see it all as part of a process. Talk to others about how you feel, including your doctor or paediatrician. This will pass. Enjoy what you can about these early months.

#6

DISORGANISATION

A chart to track feeding times, amounts, nappy changes, medications and other important information is very useful and will give you a sense of being in control. Even distinguishing between your babies with a dab of nail varnish on a toe may prove necessary – and practical.

#7

REJECTING REST AND RELAXATION

In your constant efforts to do the right thing, you as parents can become over-focused on your multiples and neglect yourselves. Put someone responsible in charge while you take a bath, a nap or a walk. You'll be amazed at how you will feel after some time out.

#8

DISORGANISED HELP

Take advantage of, and organise, your help efficiently. Be specific in your instructions and delegate as much as possible so that you can focus on priorities.

#9

DON'T BE A HERMIT

Many parents almost shut themselves off from the world during this time. Ask friends over for coffee and cake – and get them to make and serve it.

#10

NO STROLLER OR BAD STROLLER

Probably this will become your best investment. Don't quibble about price – only the best will do for multiples, and a quality stroller will make your lives significantly easier and more pleasurable.



70%
OF MULTIPLES ARE
BORN PREMATURELY.

STRAIGHT FROM THE MOUTHS OF MOMS WHO KNOW

- Find time to get out of the house, frequently. The fresh air will do wonders for you and your babies. When their eating and sleeping habits become more synchronised, it will be easier to take those precious walks. Prepare the baby bags the night before to be ready to go when they are.
- If your partner is helping to care for your multiples, take turns so that one of you is always refreshed.
- Your house doesn't have to be the model of cleanliness and order, especially when you have multiples. The important thing is to make sure it is functional and meets your baby care needs. Baby equipment in almost every room will make things easier and minimise the time you have to spend away from your babies.
- A daily bath for all your babies isn't necessary. Top and tail or bath them every second day. Your priorities will be milk feeds and a clean nappy.
- Bouncing chairs are very handy if you need a shower and your babies are awake. Take them into the bathroom with you, where you can chat and keep an eye on them at the same time. Use the same method while in the kitchen or in the garden.
- Don't be concerned about germs and having separate things for each baby. They spend so much time in such close proximity that their germs are usually shared!
- Happy and well-fed babies are more important than dinner or housework. Don't feel guilty if you prefer spending time with your babies to dusting the mantelpiece. Delegate these tasks to one of your helpers.



SLEEP AND FEEDING

Experienced parents generally seem to agree that newborn twins (and higher multiples) require a 24-hour sleep and feed schedule. In total, newborns sleep from around 14 to 20 hours per day in the first week and from 12 to 18 hours per day by the time they reach one month. Usually this comprises two to three-hour naps, so planning wisely will allow you to get enough sleep yourself. No matter how much you have to do, sleep when your babies sleep. You can run yourself ragged trying to be productive by catching up on chores while your babies are sleeping. Rather get one of your “helpers” to do the dishes, run errands and clean the bathrooms. Your priority is to feed, nurture them and get some much-needed sleep. Don't be a martyr.

If you're bottle-feeding, have formula and bottles prepared for when your babies wake to feed at night. Keep nappies and other supplies close at hand in order to get your babies (and yourself) back to bed faster. You may receive conflicting advice about when to feed your babies. Feeding on demand, by presenting a bottle or breast when they are hungry, can become a little disruptive. One may sleep while the other feeds, for example. Keep track of each baby's last feed and nappy change by filling in a chart. Sometimes it can be useful and effective to arrange a schedule that allows you to feed them together. Babies of similar weight and metabolism are likely to be hungry at the same time. This will undoubtedly make things easier and less stressful for you. But, depending on individual needs, this may not always be possible, and a chat with your paediatrician should help you to develop the right approach.

FEEDING FOR THREE

If you're one of those lucky mothers who got three for the price of one, and you're dedicated to breastfeeding them, here are your choices:

- Breastfeed one or two of them and bottle-feed the other perhaps on a rota so that over a 24-hour period all get breastfeeds and bottles.
- Breastfeed two and give your expressed milk to the third (if you want them to have only your milk).
- Breastfeed all three at different times, which is very time-consuming and stressful as you'll probably find little time to sleep.

Your health is paramount if you want to successfully breastfeed triplets. Eat lots of healthy food, have plenty to drink, and get sufficient rest. This should do, but weigh your babies frequently – perhaps twice

a week – to ensure they're gaining enough. If you decide to bottle-feed your triplets, you can make up individual bottles or a large amount in a jug for filling bottles as you need.

Here is what you'll need:

- Kitchen paper for drying sterilised equipment.
- Formula.
- At least 20 bottles complete with caps, sealing discs and teats.
- Measuring jugs for water needed.
- A full kettle ready to be boiled.
- Plastic measuring spoon or scoop and plastic knife for levelling powder.

A top tip for mothers of twins? The “kitten hold”. While everyone else insists you pick up your fragile newborn like a delicate piece of porcelain, carefully supporting the body with one hand and the head with the other, moms of twins need to do what moms with just one arm do: with baby A safely on your lap and baby B on his back next to you, grab a handful of babygro and vest on baby B's chest and lift him across to join baby A, keeping his back parallel to the couch, without any risk at all to his head or neck. ●

“NO MATTER
HOW MUCH
YOU HAVE
TO DO, SLEEP
WHEN YOUR
BABIES SLEEP.
DON'T BE
A MARTYR.”

Thrush-a-bye-baby

How to tell if those white patches are thrush – and what to do about it.

Thrush occurs when there is an overgrowth of yeast in your baby's mouth. Candida is the yeast that usually lives in the mouth, intestines and genital area and thrives in warm, moist conditions. This yeast is usually kept in check by the intestinal flora, or healthy bacteria, that abound in our system. Sometimes, though, there is an overgrowth of it, and this is called thrush. White patches are a tell-tale sign. Thrush usually affects babies younger than 2 months but can also affect older babies.

HOW CAN I TELL IF MY BABY HAS THRUSH?

Thrush appears as milky white patches or spots on the inside of your baby's cheeks or lips, on her gums or tongue. Unlike milk residue, this white coating doesn't wipe off easily. It's hard to scrape away and often bleeds slightly when removed. Although it's not dangerous, a yeast infection can make your baby's mouth feel sore and cause a few problems with feeding.

HOW DID MY BABY GET THRUSH?

- Your baby could have contracted thrush from your hands or even a family member's hands.
- If you have vaginal thrush, your baby may become infected during delivery.
- Bottles, teats and dummies that are not completely sterilised may be contaminated.
- Babies born to mothers with diabetes are susceptible to thrush, as are babies born with a cleft lip or palate.
- Antibiotics kill the bacteria that keep the yeast in our bodies in check, thus increasing the risk of your baby contracting thrush.

CAN I PREVENT THRUSH?

- Be sure to clean and sterilise all bottles, teats and dummies and allow them to dry completely before packing them away.
- Allow your nipples to air dry between feedings.
- Don't let family members and visitors put their fingers in your baby's mouth.

HOW DO I TREAT IT?

A mild case of thrush often goes away without treatment, but generally your doctor will prescribe a medicine or ointment containing anti-fungal properties that kills the *Candida albicans* fungus that causes thrush. If you're breastfeeding, you may want to use the ointment on your breasts as well, in order to avoid the infection being passed back and forth.

Giving your baby a good probiotic, and taking one yourself, will also help re-establish the balance of flora and combat the yeast infection. Your doctor or pharmacist can recommend a suitable one. Sterilise all bottles, teats and dummies well. This will kill any yeast that may be living on them. Also, wash the toys that your baby frequently chews on in warm soapy water.

WHAT IF THE THRUSH WON'T GO AWAY?

Sometimes thrush can become very stubborn and resistant to the traditional treatment of anti-fungal medication or ointment. In this case try the following:

- Hang infected clothing in the sun, and use the hot-water cycle when washing. Sunlight kills yeast, cold water doesn't.
- Ditto for the dishwasher – put it on the hot cycle when you're doing the dishes.
- Towels and wash cloths can harbour yeast, so use them once and then wash them in warm water. Hang them up in the sunlight to dry.
- Dump all stored breast milk that was pumped during an active yeast infection.
- Add a bit of white vinegar to the bath water or washing machine, as it helps kill yeast.

GOOD BUY



Vitaderm Tissue Repair Complex with Phyto Actives (R193,66) is a fine-textured face and body treatment containing nourishing and conditioning seed extracts as well as aromatic extracts of mandarin, orange blossom and frankincense. This formulation assists in preventing stretch marks and visibly improves the appearance of recent scarring. It is safe for use during pregnancy. And for baby? Vitaderm Desensitising Cream (R120) is suitable for babies too. It is a hypo-allergenic and 100 percent fragrance-free formulation recommended for sensitive, allergy-prone skin. And for your winter skin? Indulge in Vitaderm Protective Cream with Phyto Actives that contains aromatic extracts of sandalwood, chamomile and lavender to soothe and protect dry skin that tends to be sensitive. Extract of jojoba seed further protects against the elements and restores suppleness. It provides all-day protection for sensitive and dry skin, including eczema-prone complexions. To buy online or to find a stockist near you, visit vitaderm.co.za.



BREAST-FEEDING AND THRUSH

The yeast that is affecting your baby's mouth can start to affect your nipples and the area around them as it is passed back and forth during breastfeeding. This is usually a mild infection, but it can turn into a chronic, painful problem that is quite hard to get rid of. Symptoms include:

- Sore, red or itchy nipples.
- Puffy, dry or flaky nipples.
- Deep, shooting breast pain during or after feedings.

If you are affected by this condition, it is best to treat yourself along with your baby. The doctor will prescribe medicine for the both of you. ●



YOUR TEENY TINY MIRACLE

*What to realistically expect
– or not to expect – from
your premature baby.*



Gina was born at 29 weeks with a birth weight of 980g. She had a long stay in the NICU but is home now. Her parents are very thankful that she survived, but they are concerned that she may not be developing normally. Like most other parents of premature babies, they have questions such as: what is normal development for a preemie, when to be concerned about a delay in development and what to do when you are concerned?

THE CHALLENGES

The birth weight of the pre-term baby is an indication of what challenges may be expected. Low birth weight babies, and therefore all babies born pre-term, are expected to experience some kind of feeding challenge, such as difficulty to start feeding or feeding aversion. Very low birth weight babies are prone to motor developmental problems, such as being late walkers or late talkers. They

may take a bit longer (even after the usual six months corrected age) before rolling over, sitting on their own and starting to crawl. There is a big window for what is “within normal limits” for development of premature babies.

Sensory integration problems may also be evident, since preemies are exposed to so much negative sensory stimulation in the neo-natal intensive care (NICU).

You may observe your little one crying when you turn on the vacuum cleaner or a fluorescent light, or she may even be very irritated by the labels in her clothing and new textures in her food or on her hands and feet, such as sand or grass.

Finally, extremely low birth weight babies may have suffered medical conditions such as brain bleeds and PDA (a little hole in the heart that fails to close after birth) in the NICU. This may be followed by chronic lung problems as well as vision and bonding problems in the first few years.



Did you know?

A baby born before 37 weeks of the pregnancy is regarded as premature. Prematurity can also be defined according to the weight of the baby at birth. Low birth weight is between 1500g and 2500g. Very low birth weight is less than 1500g. An extremely low birth weight is less than 1000g at birth.

A MATTER OF TIME

By 2 or 3 years of age, your preemie should be on the same developmental path as that of her full-term counterparts. However, the latest research has shown that premature babies may struggle with scholastic problems such as dyslexia, ADHD and other learning problems.

Lower birth weight – which indicates a higher degree of immaturity at birth, rather than just prematurity or lower gestational age – may increase the risk for symptoms of ADHD in young children in a stepwise fashion related to the degree of immaturity at birth. All babies that are smaller than expected for their (gestational) age at birth also remain small persons throughout life, but if your preemie was at normal weight for her age, she should catch up in size.

SO, WHAT SHOULD YOU DO?

Try to understand the sensory environment of your pre-term baby, learn how to identify stress cues and use calming techniques (you can read about these on littlестeps.co.za) to successfully handle your baby's unique sensory challenges. It's also a good idea take your preemie to your paediatrician or

premature baby clinic within 10 days after discharge for her first follow-up. Then make an appointment for a complete developmental screening at a multi-disciplinary clinic at 4, 8 and 12 months corrected age.

Make use of therapists and baby clinics that are experienced with pre-term

infants and have training in neuro-developmental supportive care (pre-term infant assessment and care) and sensory integration.

Never compare your pre-term baby with full-term babies of the same age – or even other preemies. Your baby is unique and will develop at her own pace.

If you are at all concerned, trust your parenting instincts and have your little one assessed by well-trained and experienced professionals. Focus on what your preemie can do, rather than what she has not yet mastered.

“
LOW BIRTH
WEIGHT BABIES
MAY EXPERIENCE
FEEDING
CHALLENGE, SUCH
AS DIFFICULTY TO
START FEEDING OR
FEEDING AVERSION,
AND ARE ALSO
PRONE TO MOTOR
DEVELOPMENTAL
PROBLEMS, SUCH
AS BEING LATE
WALKERS OR LATE
TALKERS.
”

HOW OLD IS YOUR PREMIE?

Corrected age is the adjusted chronological

age (age from the day she was born), calculated by subtracting the number of weeks she was premature. So, chronological age - weeks born premature = corrected age.




NUK has special products for special children, as not every child is lucky enough to come into the world at the right time and in the best of health. For children who require help sucking after their birth, NUK has developed special products that are used in 95 percent of all neonatal wards in Germany. MedicPro products have been developed for many years in close collaboration with medical professionals and meet the highest quality standards. Important notice: NUK Premature Soothers are medical devices and suitable for hospital use only. NUK XS premature soothe (for babies under 1.5kg) and NUK S premature soothe (for babies between 1.5kg-2.5kg) R89,99, littlестeps.co.za or send an email to info@artemisbrands.co.za.

**FOR
more
INFO**



littlестeps.co.za

WHEN IS YOUR BABY NOT REGARDED AS 'PREM' ANYMORE?

Premature babies are regarded as prem until 2 or maximum 3 years of age. After this time, they should have caught up with their full-term counterparts. Any problems that they developed due to prematurity are now regarded as part of their unique medical make-up. This includes conditions such as retinopathy of prematurity or visual problems, cerebral palsy and intellectual impairment.

Tip

Wondering when to start with solids? Use the following formula: 16 weeks + ½ of (40 minus your baby's age at birth, in weeks)

QA

Email your question for our experts to:

sharing@ypbmagazine.com

Please note that experts unfortunately cannot respond to each question personally. The answers provided on these pages should not replace the advice of your doctor.

OUR EXPERT



DR SIMON STRACHAN
PAEDIATRICIAN



WHEN IT'S MORE THAN AN OUTIE

Q *My baby's belly button sticks out quite a bit – it almost bulges out. What is this, and how do I fix it?*

A **DR STRACHAN ANSWERS:** This “sticky out” belly button is called an umbilical hernia. The umbilicus is the belly button, and a hernia refers to the piece that sticks out. This appears in the area through which the umbilical cord passed at birth. The cord passes through the strong tendon that runs down the centre of the abdomen, and the muscles of the tummy attach to this strong tendon. The gap you see in the “six pack” of someone with strong tummy muscles is caused by this strong tendon called the linea alba.

When the cord drops off, it leaves a little hole under the skin in the linea alba.

Sometimes this hole takes a long time to close and, depending on the size of the hole, the hernia can take as long as four years to close completely.

As a child's tummy muscles develop, and the linea alba gets more pronounced, the hole closes. The tummy muscles get stronger once a child learns to sit, roll, stand and walk, and this causes the linea alba to tighten and the hole to close.

The bit that sticks out is usually due to increased pressure that transmits through the hole from inside the abdomen. So when the child is calm and not crying, the hernia will be flat but will be pushed right out when the child is crying or moaning. The hernia hardly ever causes any problems

and definitely does not cause colic, cramping and/or any trapping of air.

One common practice is to place a coin over the hernia and wrap a bandage around the tummy to prevent the hernia from forming or sticking out.

This does not make any difference to the hernia at all – it does not push it back in – and is not something that I would suggest.

On rare occasions, the hernia can cause a problem.

This happens if a piece of poo gets stuck through the hole. If this occurs, you will notice that the child will be screaming in pain and vomiting, and that the hernia is very hard, red in colour and does not disappear when you push on it. If this occurs, take your child to the doctor immediately. ●



Feel Like You're There

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#Shopping

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BY ELAINE SCHOEMAN



Inger combo baby camp cot, R1 895, Baby City, babywombworld.co.za and takealot.com.



Chicco Lullaby Playard Orion travel cot R6 999, chicco.co.za.



Maxi-Cosi lora co-sleeper essential in graphite R5 999,99, maxicosisa.co.za.



Cloudsleeper (with integrated pump) R2 529, bornfabulous.co.za.



Shnuggle Air bedside crib R7 500, 4akid.co.za.



2-in-1 camp cot and co-sleeper, R2 395, Baby City, babywombworld.co.za and takealot.com.



Camping cot and co-sleeper, R2 395, Baby City, babywombworld.co.za and takealot.com.



Large baby sleeping tent in blue or pink R349, 4akid.co.za.



BabyBjorn travel crib light, R6 995, Kids Living.



Joie Commuter Change & Snooze, R3 399,99 Baby City and Babies R Us.



Bambino side by side co-sleeper, R1 799,99 Baby City and Babies R Us.



Portable foldable baby bed backpack bag in assorted colours, R599, 4akid.co.za.



Babyhood Uno Porta cot
R5 699, clicks.co.za.



AeroMoov instant travel cot
R4 399, bornfabulous.co.za.



Joie Illusions, R4 599,99
Baby City and Babies R Us.



Ruby Melon Belle camp cot, R2 299
rubymelon.com and takealot.com.



Maxi-Cosi Iris travel cot
R4 999, kidsliving.co.za

R300 OFF
at rubymelon.com
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21 September)
Use promo code
YPAG2023BELLE



Nuna Sena Aire travel cot
R6 499,99, Baby City.



Chelino Amber camp cot in gold or silver
R2 999,99, chelino.co.za and Chelino Baby Store.



Chelino Lilo II camp cot, R999,99
chelino.co.za and Chelino Baby Store.



Chelino Platinum Khloe cot, R7 499,99
chelino.co.za and Chelino Baby Store.



Chelino Platinum Lyly camp cot, R4 499,99
chelino.co.za and Chelino Baby Store.



Chicco pop-up co-sleeper
R6 999, chicco.co.za.



Safety first

Keep your little one safe and sound with answers to those less-talked-about safety questions.

BY KERRYNN MASSYN

Your little bundle of joy grows quickly. Before you know it, she's going to be crawling around and getting into all kinds of mischief. Because her safety is your main concern, you want to protect her from harm through all her milestones from birth to toddlerhood. Some safety precautions are obvious and easy to implement, such as installing safety gates at the top and bottom of stairs. But sometimes, the path to protecting your baby isn't as clear. To help you figure it out, we answer the questions: "Is my baby ready to..."

Tip

Never leave your baby unattended in the bath. Drowning can happen even in just a little bit of water.

...SLEEP WITH COT BUMPERS AND TEDDIES?

Cot sets are adorable, but bear in mind that soft bedding can block your baby's airway while she sleeps. This means that cot bumpers, puffy pillows, duvets and soft toys are out. "The risk of suffocation is highest early on, when the baby cannot remove anything from her face, and decreases during the first year," says occupational therapist Meg Faure, co-author of *Baby Sense* and founder of the Parent Sense app "but I would suggest using a sleeping bag and a single small sleep comfort object, with no blankets, until 1 year of age."

You've probably already bought your baby's cot, but ensure there are no sharp or jagged edges anywhere, and make sure that there are no missing, broken or loose parts. If there are any broken parts, don't try to fix them with tape, wire or rope (all strangulation hazards), or by putting the broken side up against a wall – take the time to fix the cot properly with the correct tools and materials.

...SLEEP ON HER TUMMY?

Although tummy time is an important activity that stimulates your baby's development, you should always put her to sleep on her back to reduce the risk of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS), also known as cot death. "Most data seems to put the risk period of SIDS between a month and a year of age, although it does seem to peak at around two to four months of age. There is no question about it, the prone (or tummy) position does increase the risk of SIDS. However, it becomes increasingly difficult to keep a baby off her tummy once she is rolling and mobile. I suggest rolling your baby onto her back if she rolls over while sleeping until 9 months of age. Thereafter, your baby will probably choose her own sleeping position," Meg advises.

...HAVE A HOT BATH?

Bathing your baby takes a little getting used to, and it's sometimes hard to tell whether the water is too hot for her. Her sensitive skin can burn easily, so it's important not to bath her in water that's too hot. "Body temperature is around 37°C, so bath your baby in water that is slightly warmer than this – 37.5°C to 38°C," recommends Burgie Ireland, Joburg-based midwife and nursing sister. "A practical way to test the temperature is to dip your elbow into the water to check if it feels comfortable. You could also use a bath thermometer that will indicate the best temperature."

Photographs: Getty Images/Gallo Images and supplied.

...SLEEP THROUGH THE NIGHT?

As a new parent, you may be worried that something's wrong if your baby starts suddenly sleeping through the night. This is no cause for alarm. In her first few months, your baby will wake up often during the night to be fed, but as her stomach's capacity grows, she'll need less frequent feedings. Sleeping through the night happens at different times for different babies, and Meg says that as long as your baby is gaining weight and is happy when she's awake, she can sleep through the night at any age without cause for worry.

Tip

From a young age, teach your child not to eat berries or plants in the garden to lessen the risk of her ingesting anything poisonous.

...DRINK WATER?

Your baby doesn't need water until she starts solids, as her milk feeds provide all the hydration she needs, says Tammy Wolhüter, a registered dietician based in Sandton. "Breastfed babies don't need to be given water at all until you start them on solids, as they get all the hydration they need from breast milk. Formula-fed babies also don't need any water as long as the formula is prepared correctly. Once your baby is on solids and you've given all her meals and milk feeds for the day, and she's still thirsty, you can give her some water," she explains.

...USE A DUMMY THAT WASN'T STERILISED?

When your baby is born, her immune system is not yet fully developed, so she needs your help to keep her safe from germs. For this reason you sterilise her bottles, dummies, teats and toys (basically anything that goes into her mouth) for the first few months of her life. However, you can't keep this up forever, and at some stage you need to expose her to a few germs to help build up her immune system.

"Once your baby is crawling, she's picking everything up off the floor anyway, so washing your bottles really well without sterilising them is fine," Sister Ireland says.

"For immune-compromised and sick babies this is different, as they would need everything to be sterilised for at least the first year."

...SIT ON MY LAP IN THE CAR?

"The simple answer is never," says Petro Kruger, co-founder of South Africa's Road Safety Foundation.

"If you are sitting in the front passenger seat in a crash, your baby will be squashed between the air bag and your body (even if you are using a seatbelt). If there is no air bag, your baby will become the air bag, absorbing all the impact between your body and the dashboard. If you're sitting in the rear of the car, your baby will be squashed between your body and the seat in front of you," she explains.

Always secure your baby in a car seat when travelling, even when coming home from the hospital for the first time.

...EAT CRACKERS OR BREAD?

Starting your baby on solids is an exciting time of new experiences and tastes, but you need to be careful of choking hazards, because your baby doesn't quite know how to chew and swallow properly yet.

For this reason, you start her on soft, mushy foods like baby cereal and fruit and vegetable purée. As she gets used to the idea of eating solids, you introduce her to lumpier foods and then eventually finger foods like bread and crackers.

"Once your baby has reached the developmental landmark of reaching and grasping for objects with the pincer grasp, you can introduce her to finger foods like toast and crackers," Tammy says.

"This is usually around 9 to 12 months of age. Ideal finger foods are those that your baby can easily mash between her gums. Ensure that your baby can sit upright when eating finger foods to avoid choking."

Bedfordview-based paediatrician Dr Simon Strachan echoes this sentiment, saying the ideal would be to have a 9-month-old able to handle bread, but that the ability of a child to handle rough, crunchy food depends on when she was started on solids and when lumpier foods were introduced.

...USE A WALKING RING?

They may seem like a good idea to entertain a baby and free up your hands for a while, but walking rings are best avoided, says Joburg-based occupational therapist Samantha Toweel-Moore.

"I would seriously advise against the use of a walking ring. They lead to the incorrect alignment of the pelvis and unusual foot positions, such as tiptoe walking. Walking rings don't allow the thigh muscles to develop adequately. It's best to wait until your baby is able to use a walker, which she can push along to help with balance but still allows the correct walking pattern to develop. Walking rings

GOOD BUY



Here's some exciting news! Safeway has just launched its 360° rotate Isofix car seat. The Safeway Phoenix boasts no interference from the top tether belt when you rotate the seat, as the belt is attached to the L-shaped base installed in your vehicle. Nifty! Other details you need to know: Group 0+1/2/3 years (0–36kg), rearward facing from birth to 18kg (Isofix/TT), forward facing 9 to 18kg (Isofix/TT), booster seat 15 to 36kg (belt/Safefix). R4 500 from all leading baby retailers.

are warned against by the Child Accident Prevention Trust in the UK, as they are the cause of many accidents," she says.

...USE BUBBLE BATH?

Little girls are particularly susceptible to urinary tract infections (UTIs), and using bubble bath can aggravate or even cause this. Paediatrician Dr Simon Strachan advises against the use of bubble bath at all ages, even for little boys.

...USE A FORWARD-FACING CAR SEAT?

"Make sure your baby has celebrated her first birthday and weighs at least 10kg before using a forward-facing car seat," Petro advises. "Recent studies have shown that it is safer for a child to ride rear-facing even longer, up to the limits of the seat. The limits have been reached when your child's head is higher than the back of the restraint, or when the seat weight limit has been reached – check the manual, side or back of your rear-facing seat for more information."

While the above measures go a long way to keeping your baby safe, don't forget to take care of the practicalities of baby-proofing your home and environment. Always be practical and thorough. Putting your child at risk is just not worth it. ●

BABY STEPS

Roll, shuffle, crawl, holding your hand... Here's why each milestone is an essential stepping stone on the path to walking.

BY **TORI HOFFMANN**

There's nothing quite so special as watching your baby take his first steps. The pride that you'll feel is indescribable, and it's hard to believe that just the other day, you were cradling a helpless human being. But while it may feel like your baby has learnt to walk overnight, it's a slow and gradual process that begins at birth. Every "step" that your baby takes, and every milestone that he meets – from lifting his head to cruising – is just another step towards his ultimate goal: walking. Each step is vital, preparing and strengthening your baby's body for the next. So when should your baby be meeting these milestones? How do they develop? And why is each one so important?



HEAD CONTROL

According to international bestseller *Baby Sense*, by Megan Faure and Ann Richardson, your 2-month-old is working hard to develop his head control.

When lying on his back, he should be able to hold his head in the midline and look at a mobile.

By three months, not only will he be able to hold his head up at 45° when on his tummy (developing his back muscles), but he will also be able to support his head when placed on your lap – an important step in developing his tummy muscles.

"The gravity-free environment in the womb allows your baby to develop his neck muscles, but that strength and control is only developed once your baby meets the force of gravity," says Dr Melodie de Jager, local author of *Baby Gym and Brain Development: Milestones and Learning*.

What's more is that, "Proportionately, a newborn's head is very large and heavy for his body, which means that before he can begin to control the rest of his body, he must gain control of his head," says trusted parenting expert Dr Miriam Stoppard in her *Complete Baby and Childcare Book*.

"As he becomes stronger, his head control will get steadier, and his spine will gradually take more of the weight of his torso. This is the first stage in his learning to sit, crawl and then walk."

Also, in order to roll (and subsequently sit and crawl), your baby needs to achieve a balance between his back and stomach muscles, something that is developed through head control.

ENCOURAGE THIS

- Place your baby on his back on your lap. Slowly raise him towards you into a sitting position, supporting his neck. Slowly release the pressure and allow Baby to relax back against your lap.
- When your baby is a little stronger, you can raise him from your lap into a sitting position by allowing his little hands to grasp your fingers. Ensure that you have a solid grip to avoid your baby dropping back suddenly.

Remember

"Walking rings or supporting chairs, other than car seats, interrupt development and encourage a baby to skip a milestone. Even though they keep baby safely occupied, rather not use them." – development specialist Dr Melodie de Jager

ROLLING OVER

At about 4 months, your baby will start to push himself up. This will give him the strength that he needs to "flip" himself over and roll, first from his tummy to his back. At about 5 to 6 months, he will have gained the strength through sitting to roll himself from his back onto his tummy. "Rolling over is your baby's natural next step in discovering his body and what it can do and the first movement that allows your baby to be mobile," Melodie says.

She adds that babies will often roll more to the one side than the other, and that it is said that a baby tends to roll away from its dominant brain hemisphere (left or right) and needs to be guided to roll both ways. Either way, Melodie maintains that rolling over is a precursor to crawling and later to reading and writing with ease. "Babies who don't have enough time on their play mats (on their tummies), or are left in prams or chairs or carried around for extended periods of time generally don't roll because they don't have the opportunity to do so."

Not rolling over would mean your baby's back and tummy muscles have not developed sufficiently, which may lead to sitting with a rounded back, poor posture and the need for support to stay upright, she explains.

ENCOURAGE THIS

- Start with lots of rug time. Place your baby on his back and allow him to explore freely.
- After a while, encourage lots of tummy time.
- Hold your baby's favourite toy just out of reach while he's on his back, so that he has to reach over to grab it.



**GOOD
BUY**



Every sound has a unique sound wave form: your favourite song, a special voice note, your baby's heart beat, your dog's bark... SoundLines transform any of them into art. Have a look at the Baby Collection for all the size and colour options, and have your baby's heart beat, laugh or first word captured forever. SoundLines will convert 20 seconds to eight minutes of sound into the art work on paper, paper with black steel or obeche wood frame finish. Prices start from R799 at soundlines.co.za.

**FOR
more
INFO**



soundlines.co.za

SITTING

Your baby might sit early at 5 months, or he might take a little longer and only be comfortable sitting at seven months. Initially, he will sit with his legs wide open and support himself with his hands in front of him, and then he will spend some time falling forwards or backwards when placed on his bum. By 8 months, however, he should be able to sit happily on his own and play with his toys or eat some finger foods. To be able to sit up, your baby needs to have sufficient muscle strength to resist the pull of gravity, a well-developed sense of balance and protective responses in the forward, backward and side-to-side directions.

"It is important that your baby learns to sit, because not only does it develop balance and muscle tone, but the sitting position enables your baby to develop his hand-eye coordination, something that is necessary for playing, drawing, reading and writing later on," Melodie says.

ENCOURAGE THIS

- Encourage your baby to keep his head up and turn it in all directions while his eyes follow a toy in your hands.
- Spread his legs apart to create a stable balance. Place a toy in front of him to encourage him to prop himself up on both hands while leaning forward.
- Bath- and changing times can be used to practise sitting on the changing table.

CRAWLING

Once your baby has mastered the art of sitting, crawling is his next "step". Generally speaking, a 9-month-old should be ready to crawl. By 12 months, he should have mastered the art. "Learning to crawl overlaps with learning to sit, when your baby will reach out for an object and ends up on all fours," Melodie says. "He will then start to rock on all fours, backwards and forwards before collapsing on his tummy. Eventually, his balance will be sufficient, and he'll be able to simultaneously bring an arm and a leg forward without toppling over."

ENCOURAGE THIS

- Place toys (or a treat) just out of reach to encourage your baby to crawl to it.
- Give your baby a ball to play with. When it rolls away, he will be inclined to chase it.
- Buy or make a crawling tunnel with boxes (about two or three metres long). Babies love these!

Not all babies crawl in the conventional manner. Some "bum shuffle" or move backwards instead of forwards. According to *Baby Sense*, crawling is an important milestone, as it lays the foundation for many other skills. The book points out that the weight on your baby's hands will develop stability in his shoulders and also develop the arches in his hands – important for holding a pencil and drawing. By being mobile from a young age, your baby will also start planning how to get to things – essential for learning new skills later on, like bike riding and skipping.

Crawling also teaches your baby about his body size (when he has to get into tricky places) and develops spatial awareness – important for learning to read, write and do maths later on. Finally, *Baby Sense* maintains, "Crawling requires the coordinated use of two sides of the body. It therefore promotes the development of the left and right brain and the connections between them."

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NOT ALL BABIES CRAWL IN THE CONVENTIONAL MANNER. SOME "BUM SHUFFLE" OR MOVE BACKWARDS.

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CRUISING

As your baby approaches his first year, sitting and crawling will not be enough for him and his need to explore his world, and he should have the strength, balance and coordination he needs to pull himself up into a standing position.

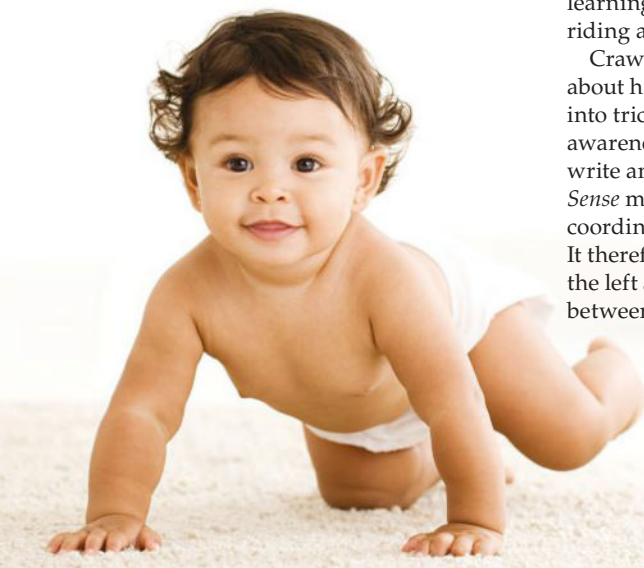
According to *Baby Sense*, "Any person, animal or piece of furniture will be a leaning post, and before long, he will start to rock on his legs while holding onto something.

"Then one day, one of those rockings will become a step and, soon thereafter, he'll be cruising along at a rate of knots, holding onto furniture. Cruising is the vital stage before walking and can continue until after a year of age."

Melodie adds: "Yes, the hips tend to be overextended and the legs stiff, but sheer enthusiasm propels the baby forward. Much repetition and encouragement later, the baby who was at one moment still cruising along the furniture, suddenly develops the necessary neuro-chemical connections and take his first unaided step." While some babies walk at nine months, others take until 17 months to achieve this mammoth task, so be patient.

ENCOURAGE THIS

- If your baby still isn't pulling himself up, place him in a kneeling position in front of a sturdy object. Raise the one knee and put the foot flat down.
- To make pulling himself up easier, provide a low obstacle on which he can kneel and then pull up.
- "Walkers" (push-along toys – not to be confused with walking rings) will encourage your baby to walk, and give him the confidence that he can do it. ●



QA

Email your question for our experts to:
sharing@ypbmagazine.com

Please note that experts unfortunately cannot respond to each question personally. The answers provided on these pages should not replace the advice of your doctor.

OUR EXPERT



ROBYN-LEIGH NAUDE
COUNSELLING PSYCHOLOGIST

WHY SO CLINGY?

Q *My 9-month-old baby has suddenly gone from a happy-go-lucky chap who smiled all the time to a clingy baby who cries a lot. He refuses to go to my husband or anyone but me – I can't even go to the loo! What is happening here?*



A ROBYN-LEIGH ANSWERS: Remember that this period coincides with your baby's increased mobility, as they are starting to crawl around now. Besides the greater exploration and independence mobility allows, the realisation that your baby is a separate person from you can cause feelings of anxiety and fear. Babies at this age do not understand that their caregiver will return when, for example, they leave the room. Time can also seem endless, and moments apart may feel like they will never end. Your baby also has to deal with the realisation that at times they will be left out – in other words, that the people they love have relationships that exclude them, like your relationship with your partner.

Separation anxiety, or the upset response that arises when separated from the primary caregiver (normally the mother), is a normal stage of development and tends to be seen in babies between the ages of 6 and 15 months. It usually goes away on its own.

As much as a nine-month-old baby has to battle with having to be alone or

separate from their moms, parents also battle to manage this – both in terms of their own separation from their baby as well as having to hold the pain of separation on behalf of their baby. It may bring up feelings of unbearable loss that parents have experienced, rejections or traumatic separations. Moms may also not want to give up the exclusive relationship they have with their baby or allow their co-parents to take on a greater role.

Never forget that just like any relationship, the one between you and your baby will have its ups and downs. Sometimes you will understand what is going on with your baby, but other times you will feel quite lost and may feel like you are getting it all wrong. As so nicely put by Sophie Boswell in her book *Understanding Your Baby*, when things go wrong, it does not mean things will be “broken beyond repair: recovering from difficulties and

“SEPARATION ANXIETY, WHICH ARISES WHEN SEPARATED FROM THE PRIMARY CAREGIVER, IS A NORMAL STAGE OF DEVELOPMENT AND TENDS TO BE SEEN IN BABIES BETWEEN THE AGES OF 6 AND 15 MONTHS.”

misunderstandings, for both baby and parents, is an essential part of getting to know and love each other.” So understand that this too shall pass, as it's a normal phase of babyhood. ●

Let them go, to let them grow!

As parents, we are programmed to guide and protect, but we also need to give our kids the freedom to explore, learn, discover and make mistakes on their own.

GOOD BUY



You want to keep your baby's environment safe and non-toxic. One way to do this is to be kind to the wood in your home, as it also needs some winter care! Apply Woodoc Deep Penetrating Furniture Wax as a maintenance and nourishing treatment. This liquid wax not only cleans and beautifies but also penetrates varnish, sealers and polish effectively to feed and protect the wood below. It is economical and perfect for maintenance of all indoor furniture and woodwork, including your baby's furniture, as it is safe and non-toxic when dry. See <https://mysealer.store> for prices and to order.

Helicopter parenting is exactly what it sounds like – parents who hover over their children, trying to solve all their problems for them and do everything they can to protect them from getting hurt. While our children need love and care to thrive, there's such a thing as too much love, and this has serious consequences, no matter how well intentioned.

Joburg-based occupational therapist and counsellor Samantha Toweel-Moore explains that coddling your baby and engaging in helicopter parenting leads to increased general anxiety and reduced ability of your child to grow himself on every level – sensory, motor, cognitive, emotional and social. “He needs to ‘do’ to be all he is born to be,” Samantha says. “Love, affirm and encourage your toddler, but be hands-off.”

Tip

Try to get your baby used to as many different people as possible to encourage confidence.

THE FREEDOM TO EXPLORE

For a toddler to develop his body, he needs to physically engage with his environment. This helps his development on a number of levels, Samantha says:

- To improve agility, your toddler needs the opportunity to move and handle objects of various shapes and sizes so he gains smooth and accurate movement.
- To build his muscle strength, he needs opportunities to work with objects of increasing resistance and weight, such as water and sand.
- He needs to improve control of his posture, so he can hold himself upright when working at a desk and keep his balance when he runs and kicks a ball.
- The senses of touch, sight, sound, taste, balance, smell and understanding of the position the body assumes in space are developed by moving and exploring the objects in his environment.

AND EMOTIONALLY?

Your toddler's physical prowess isn't the only sphere positively affected by having the freedom to engage in his world. His psychological and emotional development also has major benefits:

- To explore allows a freedom of self-expression that is empowering to your child. It creates a sense of being valuable, which can foster a healthy self-confidence.
- By you holding back on your instinct to fix everything for him and allowing your child to explore for himself, he gets the message that you believe he can do this – and he's likely to rise to this. It will help him develop trust in himself.
- By exploring, your child tries out things without a fear of failure, which reduces the development of anxiety.

HOW DOES THIS HAPPEN?

Samantha explains that children's brains are activity-centred, and parents who hover over their children get in the way of them experiencing these activities and reaping their full benefits. “Experiences change the physiological development of their brains in terms of both the quality and quantity of the electrical wiring between cells,” she says. “Performing an activity, such as dancing or painting, lays down a pathway for coordinated movement skills. Each time a child does this, it excites the same pathway in the brain, reinforcing it and improving its quality. Areas where experiences are neglected or seldom occur are pruned. Streamlining brain function helps your child adapt to the needs of his environment. If he doesn't perform, his brain cannot lay down these performance pathways.”

“Your toddler needs the opportunity to create what he can see in his mind. Once he has tried this out several times in several ways, he will be able to advance his play to a level where he can play or behave in a more advanced way. “Young children use trial and error to make decisions or solve problems. They use the experiences to guide future problem solving and decision making. Thus, the more personal experiences they have, the more equipped they are to derive workable and positive solutions as they grow. Give them the freedom to learn.”

SO HOW DO I LET GO?

"See yourself – the parent – as a gardener tending your child – a seed," Samantha advises. "He's born pre-programmed to develop his milestones. All he needs is the opportunity to grow himself, with your encouragement, which adds the warmth of sunlight and environments that provide different experiences like the nutrients of a top soil. Trust in his innate ability to flourish. Of course, if your child has special needs, he may need your physical assistance to learn better, but even then only provide the absolute minimal required assistance so anything he can try for himself he does, as soon as possible." ●

“

CODDLING YOUR BABY AND ENGAGING IN HELICOPTER PARENTING LEADS TO INCREASED GENERAL ANXIETY AND REDUCED ABILITY OF YOUR CHILD TO GROW HIMSELF ON EVERY LEVEL.

”



LEARN TO LET GO

It may be tough at first, but a bit of freedom is important. Here's how you can encourage your toddler's learning while still being an active part of it.

■ If you believe a certain amount of useful, guided learning is appropriate during the play session, play with the same objects as your child, separately but alongside him. Don't comment if he tries to imitate you; his sense of achievement is more satisfying than the external reward of your acknowledgement of this. However, provide some sort of positive comment or response if it appears that he

is inviting it. For example, "You seem to be enjoying building bricks. I like the way you try new things."

■ The focus for your toddler is on the process, the discovery, and not the end result. It's a journey. Allow him to travel and try new routes.

■ Frustration is an inevitable part of your child's growing self-assertion. He sees what things will and won't do through a process of repeated attempts. He is learning. Describe his feelings and actions in words. When frustration reduces efficiency, then step in. Work

with him on the parts where adult assistance is required, such as where he needs adult strength or safety from heat. Otherwise break the task down into smaller manageable steps.

■ Frustration with others can arise when he feels "bullied". Give him choices. Use humour, and manage your own frustration. He's limited in that he can't see things from another perspective, so he will need your assistance when others frustrate him. Allowing too much frustration will damage self-esteem and hinder learning.

nom, nom, nom, yum!

Worried about starting solids? Here are ideas that will get even the fussiest of eaters chomping down with a smile.

This is such a momentous time in your baby's life that it's bound to present a few hiccups along the way. After all, before now, your baby's diet consisted purely of milk feeds, and now he suddenly has to get used to a whole new variety of tastes and textures, and he has to learn how to swallow them! Because of the possible pitfalls of starting solids, we all find ourselves struggling with something. Here we go through the most common worries surrounding solids and clear them up for you.

Did you know?

Bottled water can be unsuitable for babies because of the high mineral levels. Check that sodium (salt) content is less than 200mg per litre.



WORRY #1**MY BABY JUST WON'T DRINK MILK**

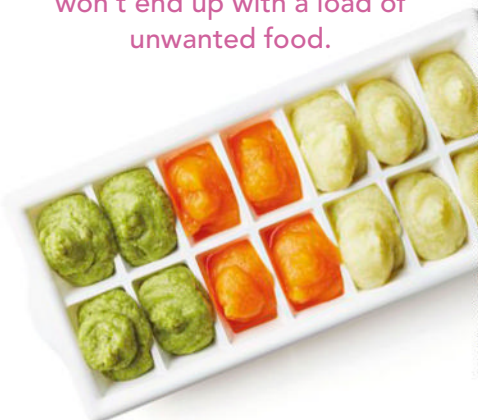
Cow's milk can be used in cooking for babies over 6 months, but not as a drink until 10 months, as it has too much salt and not enough iron. If your baby's over 6 months, continue to give him breast milk or formula milk until 12 months. If your baby's over 6 months and you're moving from breastfeeding to bottle-feeding but he doesn't want to take formula in a bottle, try using a cup or beaker instead. Breakfast cereal will soak up milk if you leave it for a few minutes, so sneak in milk in this way. Cook dishes that have milk in them, such as mashed potato, macaroni cheese and fish in white sauce. Give your baby full-fat dairy products every day, including yoghurt for breakfast or as a pudding, and cubes of cheese as a snack.

WORRY #2**MY BABY REFUSES TO EAT HIS VEGGIES**

Give veggies at the start of a meal when your baby's hungrier and more likely to eat them. Try cooking vegetables in different ways. If he doesn't like boiled veggies, then try roasting them, which gives a sweeter flavour. Try doing a fun "cheers!" with your broccoli spear against your baby's, before eating yours up with a big smile. Add puréed vegetables to foods your baby likes, such as pasta or mash. Some babies are naturally more cautious, so offer veggies as finger food so he can get used to them by feeling and sucking on them first.

Try this

Make a batch of purée and then swap some with a friend. Your baby can try a new taste, and if he doesn't like it, you won't end up with a load of unwanted food.

**WORRY #3****MY BABY WON'T EAT ANY MEAT**

Pieces of meat can be hard to chew, so try minced meat in dishes like cottage pie or spaghetti Bolognese. Make a meat pâté by puréeing leftover meat dishes and spreading it on toast. Try meat as finger food. A chicken drumstick is easy to hold, and your baby can suck and chew the meat slowly. Give your baby fish, especially oily fish such as salmon and mackerel, which is packed with brain-boosting omega-3 fatty acids. Chickpeas, beans and lentils have many of the same nutrients as meat, so offer these instead.

WORRY #4**MY BABY HATES FRUIT**

If your baby likes cereal or porridge, get creative and try mixing mashed banana or apple purée in with it. Use fruit purée as a dip. Your little one can pop bread sticks, scone fingers or bits of toast in it. If your tot's not keen on the fresh stuff, try dried fruit like raisins, apricots or prunes. Offer them as a snack or add to scones or porridge. Add a little bit of fruit to savoury dishes, such as chopped dried apricots in a chicken casserole. If your baby's teething, very cold fruit can help relieve sore gums. Freeze half a peeled banana or put fruit purée in a mould to make ice lollies.

WORRY #5**MY BABY DISLIKES WATER**

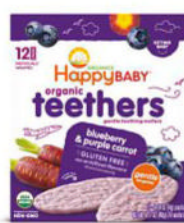
Offer him water on a spoon or from an open cup to get him used to the lack of flavour. Put the water in a cup rather than a bottle. If your baby's used to having warm milk in a bottle, he might not like finding cold water there instead. Give him foods that contain plenty of water, such as pears, melon, cucumber and tomatoes. If your little one likes milk, then try adding a bit of water to his bottle of milk. Keep trying. Don't be tempted to give up and offer fruit juice instead, as it'll be very hard to switch to plain water later.

WORRY #6**MY BABY HAS FOOD ALLERGIES**

If there's a history of allergies, introduce tricky foods one at a time and watch for reactions. Don't try to diagnose an allergy yourself by restricting your baby's diet, speak to your doctor first. If you're breastfeeding, try to continue while starting solids, as it may reduce the risk of allergies developing as new foods are introduced. If your baby has cow's milk protein allergy, try using a hypo-allergenic formula for cooking instead. Read food labels carefully. As well as looking out for a particular food, you'll need to know about its alternative names. ●

“CHICKPEAS, BEANS AND LENTILS HAVE MANY OF THE SAME NUTRIENTS AS MEAT, SO OFFER THESE INSTEAD.”

GOOD BUY



Happy Baby Teethers (R157,40 for 12 x 2-packs per box) are easily dissolving teethers: a tasty organic baby snack, perfect for your sitting baby. They're gluten-free, kosher, always certified organic with no genetically modified ingredients, no high fructose corn syrup, no artificial food colourants nor flavourants and BPA-free. Available in a variety of interesting flavours.

Happy Baby also makes Teether Crackers (R157,40 for 12 x 2-packs per box): easily dissolving crackers, perfect for your crawling baby. Made with ancient grains and organic fruits and veggies, this tasty snack is easy on the gums and encourages self-feeding. They support self-feeding and dissolve easily, leaving no mess! Available in great flavours. Happy Family is available online at Baby City, Babies R Us or from takealot.com or Medhealth Supplies.

SIP HAPPENS:

Make the change

Follow these easy steps to help your child make the move from bottle to sippy cup.

Sippy cups come in all shapes, sizes and designs, so choosing one is really much of a personal thing – and largely depends on your baby's preference. There is a choice between soft and hard spouts, non-drip, no-leak, weighted bottoms, two handles, one handle, removable handles – the list is endless. A non-drip cup with easy grip handles is a good option to start with, but in terms of shape, size and feel of the spout, you'll most likely be at the mercy of your little one.

INTRODUCING A CUP

Babies can be weaned onto a sippy cup from 5 months, but some parents only feel comfortable introducing the cup when the baby is able to sit and hold it on their own, which would be from about 8 months. Remember that this is a totally new experience for your baby, and she will be exploring new textures, so it will take a little time and patience.

Put just a little liquid in the cup to start with – until your baby gets used to the new texture of the cup and the new method of drinking. To encourage your baby to drink from the cup, try giving her a taste she is already familiar with so you're not introducing her to too many new experiences at once.

WHAT TO GIVE

- Diluted apple or grape juice. Mix the juice by at least one part juice to two or three parts water as it's best your baby does not acquire a taste for very sweet liquids and she doesn't need all the extra sugar these drinks contain.
- Baby's milk feed
- Cow's milk (only after 1 year)
- Water

WHAT NOT TO GIVE

- Fizzy drinks, such as Coke
- Diet drinks such as Coke Light, Diet Sprite, Coke Zero, Tab or anything similar
- Flavoured water
- Undiluted juice
- Energade or other energy drinks
- Drinks with high sugar content or highly coloured drinks.

Offer your baby water before you offer anything else. It is important that your baby acquires a taste for it.

Did you know?

Drinking from a cup instead of a bottle helps your baby's jaw to develop, and so aids their speech development. This is because the cup needs to be balanced on the bottom lip, and your baby needs to suck and swallow from the spout. This is a different way of swallowing to that used during bottle feeding, and it encourages oral motor skills.

TIPS FOR SUCCESS

- Remember that this is a completely new experience for your baby, and she'll need time to get used to drinking from a cup instead of a bottle. Don't force the issue. If your baby isn't ready, drop it and try again a week or two later.
- Start outdoors, as it makes it easy to clean up any spills when your baby first starts drinking from a cup. It's also a good idea to first introduce the cup in the summer, so that if there are any spills your baby doesn't get cold.
- Allow your baby small sips at first, and wait until she has swallowed before giving another sip.
- Make sure your baby is always sitting or standing upright when drinking to avoid choking.
- Make it fun by inventing a game or a song about drinking from a cup, and sing it with your baby. ●

Tip

Once your baby starts to reach out for things, let her play with an empty cup, so that she familiarises herself with it.



SIP SIP HOORAY!

Sippy cups let your child hold, sip, carry and play, so eventually they'll be a drinking pro. Good for 6 months and up.



Vital Baby Hydrate Easy Sipper Cup with handles, R158, helps your baby move from bottle to big-person drinking from a cup.



Vital Baby Hydrate 360° Edge Cup, R169,99, is ideal as a starter for children 6+ months old. Its pressure-activated silicone rim makes for easy drinking.



Vital Baby Hydrate Incredibly Cool Insulated Cup, R192,20, keeps liquids warm or cold, and its durable silicone straw is gentle on gums and teeth.



Vital Baby Hydrate Sippy Straw Cup, R142,90, for on-the-go toddlers (and their parents) features a non-spill, easy-clean, 100 percent silicone valve and straw with hygienic cover.



Vital Baby Hydrate Big Sipper Cup, R142,60, is for those hot and thirsty days – it has a capacity of 340ml! With 100 percent silicone valve and spout with hygienic cover.



The Vital Baby Hydrate Perfectly Simple Silicone Sipper, R149,50, is your essential no-fuss learn-to-drink cup.

Vital Baby has a full range of training cups that match each stage of your growing child's development, all available at Baby City, Clicks, Dis-Chem, takealot.com and vitalbabyshop.co.za.

**SHOP
NOW**

vitalbabyshop.co.za



Nuby Flip it Bolt Cup and Nuby Tritan Flip it Cup (R249,99 each) both have a flip-to-close lid for no leaks and to keep the straw hygienically clean. Available at Baby City, Babies R Us, Dis-Chem, Checkers and Makro.



Pigeon's Mag Straw Cup holds a thirst-quenching 200ml and comes in three creative designs: llama, bear and tiger. The angled handles make it easy for your 8+ month old to master the art of independent drinking. R159,99 from baby stores, Dis-Chem and online.

#Shopping



With their soft, bite-resistant training straws, Chicco's advanced range are a great option for older toddlers learning to suck. Chicco Advanced Training Cup (12+ months), Chicco Active Cup (14+ months), and Chicco Sport Cup (14+ months) all 100 percent spill-proof and 0 percent BPA, R179,99 each from Clicks Baby Stores and chicco.co.za.



The SuperStar Insulated Cup is the Rolls-Royce of the Tommee Tippee range. The two-way valve makes it 100 percent leak- and shake-proof. Plus it has antibacterial technology, super soft silicone for sensitive gums, and double walls insulate Baby's drink. Available in Sipper, Straw & Sportee for R179,99 from Dis-Chem, Baby City, Babies R Us, takealot.com and tommeetippee.co.za.



From Spider-Man and Bluey to Barbie and Peppa Pig – Checkers and Checkers Hyper's fun collection of sippy cups and bottles let your child slurp away along with their favourite cartoon character. Straws, spouts and even a spray or two, ranging in price from R59,99 to R89,99.



The Paw Patrol and Peppa Pig Toddler Sippy Training Tumblers help your young child move from bottle to cup in a fun and easy way. They're also BPA-free, spill-proof, with easy grip handles and a special anti-drip drinking spout. R120 each from Babies R Us, ToyZone and Crazy Plastics.



The name says it all: NUK's Kiddy Cup Chameleon changes colours depending on the temperature of the liquid inside – genius! Get yours from Baby City, Dis-Chem, Babies R Us, takealot.com, nuk.co.za and leading retailers for R284,99.



The Sipper Snacker Cup by Little Weasel is a three-in-one sippy, snack and open drink cup, made with travel in mind – the sippy and snack cup lids are specially designed to reduce spills for families on the move or in the car. R299 for cup, drinking lid, straw and snack lid. Available from takealot.com, Makro and littleweasel.co.za.



The Nuby 360 Wonder Cup's 360° edge means your little sipper can drink from any place on the rim without spilling. R179,99 at Baby City, Babies R Us, Dis-Chem, Checkers and Makro.



Non-spill pink crabs, blue zebras, vikings and mermaids? Of course! NUK Evolution Trainer Cup and NUK Magic Cup, both R189,99; NUK Evolution Action Cup, R206,99; and the NUK Sports Cup, R269,99 make it child's play. All available at Baby City, Dis-chem, Clicks, Checkers, Babies R Us, takealot.com and nuk.co.za.



Pigeon's range of bottles have soft silicone straws that are the perfect for Baby's sensitive mouth, plus the retractable handles make it super easy to hold. Pigeon Petite Straw Bottle (150ml) comes in pink, blue and orange for R109,99; and the Pigeon Tall Straw Bottle (300ml) comes in pink and blue for R199,99. Both available from baby stores, Dis-Chem and online.



These trainer cups have a clever two-piece valve to allow liquid through when your little one wants to sip, but keeps the cup fully spill-proof when they aren't drinking (no matter how often they tip it over!). Tommee Tippee Weaning Sippy Cup, R149,90 (comes in yellow and green) and Tommee Tippee Sippee Training Cup (comes in pink and blue), R159,90. Available from Babies R Us.

Ideal for babies 6+ months old, Chicco's Training Cup has a shaped, decentralised spout for correct lip positioning and neck posture while drinking. 100 percent spill-proof, 0 percent BPA. R169 from Clicks Baby Stores and chicco.co.za.



The Munchkin Click Lock Weighted Flip Straw Cup is loaded with fancy features and a no-leak promise. With its weighted straw, your toddler can hold it like a bottle but drink from a straw, and the liquid will come out regardless of the position it's held in. They come in green and pink and are R129 each, available at Game.

SHOP NOW
clicks.co.za



Made 4 Baby's 360 Degree Sipper Cup (R119) automatically seals once your baby stops sipping, is easy for little hands to hold and is also super easy to clean. Made 4 Baby Insulated Cup with Swivel Lid (R65,99) is ideal for warm drinks with its insulating outer layer to protect your little one's hands. Available from Clicks.

Turn BAD HAIR DAYS

“
A FACECLOTH
THAT HE HOLDS
OVER HIS FACE
HIMSELF CAN HELP WITH
SHAMPOO STINGING,
OR BUY A SHAMPOO
VISOR AT THE
CHEMIST.
”

Does your toddler *into good*
throw a scene when it's
time to wash his locks?
Here's how to deal.

By now you're well aware that your toddler isn't always a logical, deeply thoughtful being. Once that little noggin' becomes unhinged, none of your arguments and negotiations will help even one little bit. It takes just one bad shampoo (like just a tiny little drop of water in his eye) to make him as stubborn as a donkey. And then you'll be with your own head in your hands about the child that's usually so fond of splashing in the pool but gives the shampoo and the shower head a wide berth.

STEP 1 STAY CALM AND BE FIRM

You're the parent, and your child is very finely attuned to your emotions. If it looks like you're going to hesitate, you've already lost the battle. Stick to your guns, and don't allow him to manipulate you. Hair washday should not become a power struggle. Speak calmly and firmly but still lovingly and with respect for your child. Your consistency about the matter is very important – if you stand strong, it will be easier for your child to accept that washing hair is non-negotiable.

**GOOD
BUY**




Tiggles Coconut Oil Baby range is made without any chemicals or heat. Only pure, natural, organic coconut and jojoba oils are used, especially selected for baby skincare. This is also why the range is fragrance free. The whole range contains ingredients that nourish the skin; nothing is added or stripped during manufacture. The oils are not refined, bleached or fragranced. Your baby's skin will be silky soft thanks to the light, pure oil that is absorbed very quickly. From left: Tiggles Baby Oil (R131), Baby Lotion, Baby Shampoo & Conditioner, Baby Wash (R115 each) and Pillow Mist (R67,99). Tiggles is available at Clicks and online at tiggles.co.za.

STEP 2 SHOW EMPATHY

Remember, all the drama is also no fun for your little one. He's not busy being naughty or doing it on purpose. In his world, clean hair is just not as important as him being comfortable in the bath. It's difficult for adults to understand their children's fears, but it doesn't mean their emotions about the matter are invalid. So don't be rough and simply pin your child down in the bath – it will only make matters worse.

STEP 3 LOWER YOUR STANDARDS

You really don't have to wash his hair every second day. Once a week is fine, and in winter, when your child sweats less, you can even stretch it to once every 10 days. Inspect his head and scalp, and if it's clean, leave him be.



“
YOU REALLY
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”

STEP 4 IDENTIFY THE PROBLEM

What part of the washing process is the problem? Is it the initial wetting of the hair, applying shampoo, or the rinsing? Chat to your little one about it – maybe when you're in the car and calm about it – so that you can come to understand what it is that's bugging him. Some kids fear the feeling of water on their face or drowning, while for others it's

the stinging of the eyes, and others fear the shower head like a cobra. At what point does your child start protesting? It will give you an idea of where the problem lies, so that you can think of an alternative. If your child doesn't like the shower head or a jug, he might prefer lying back in shallow water. A facecloth that he holds over his face himself can help with shampoo stinging, or buy a shampoo visor at the chemist.

Tips

1.

Use the mildest shampoo you can find, and remember that even this product stings the eyes.

2.

Work gently with your fingertips. Children's heads are sensitive.

3.

Fix a mirror next to the bath, because it can help him feel more in control if he can see what's going on.

4.

Add some toys, and make bathtime fun with you, other parents and siblings.

STEP 5 HAVE A STRATEGY

MAKE IT A COMPETITION If your little one has a competitive streak, it can help. See how fast you can complete the process, for instance. Set a stopwatch, and see if you can beat it. Or set a challenge, like that he's only allowed to moan or protest six times, and then you can count down.

BATH OR SHOWER TOGETHER Most toddlers love having their ma in the tub with them. The more relaxed atmosphere and the fact that you're in there with him and not towering over him can make it easier to do the deed. You can also take turns and give him the chance to wash your hair, so that he can see how it works. You can also try taking him into the shower with you – for some kids, this works better, especially if you sell it as a big treat or adventure.

FANTASY Bring a doll into the bath, and first demonstrate exactly how you'll be washing. Take turns with the doll. You can also play swimming games, or make funny hairstyles with the shampoo foam.

REWARD CHART Once you've made progress, you can start with a reward chart. For every drama-free wash, your child gets a sticker, and if he gets five stickers, you go out for ice cream. ●

Playdate POLITICS

Here's how to avoid playdate pandemonium, toddler takeovers and adorable anarchy, so that even you can have fun!

BY **TORI HOFFMAN**

What exactly is the point of playdates? Newborns definitely don't play together, babies under 9 months take no notice of each other and, by the time they turn 1, they prefer to "parallel" play, barely acknowledging each another. And then, just when you think they're ready at 2 to gain something from the playdate experience, all they want to do with their "friends" is fight and compete for toys and attention.

MORE FOR THE MOMS

Occupational therapist Meg Faure – author of *Baby Sense*, *Sleep Sense*, *Your Sensory Baby* and co-author of *Toddler Sense* – believes that there is great value in the playdate from very early on – not so much for the babies, but for the parents. Having a support structure and finding out how each other's babies are doing is paramount, she says. In those first weeks, even if you can't get out with your baby, it's important to see other parents and take it from there.



Photographs: Getty Images/Gallo Images and supplied.

GOOD BUY

Thule Yepp 2 Bike Seats make it so easy to go on a family adventure. You'll be safe and comfortable while you enjoy the freedom of the open air. Thule Yepp 2 Bike Seat (R3799) is mounted at the back and is suitable for children weighing up to 22kg. There is also a front mounted option (R2999), which is the better choice for little ones up to 15kg. The seats have shock absorbers, adjustable foot rests and safety clips that open and close in a flash to make them really easy to swap between bikes. Of course there is a five-point safety harness too. Just remember your helmets! Find out more at thulestore.co.za.



PARALLEL PLAY

Prior to 9 months of age, any form of playdate (including moms and tots groups) is still largely for your benefit and is vital. Once your tot gets to 1 though, things start to change, and a playdate is now beneficial to her as well as to you – not necessarily from a play skills point of view, but because she is developing so rapidly at this stage, and learning from everything and everyone around her.

“One-year-olds start to notice each other, so it's nice to encourage the social aspect of being a human being. Even when they are parallel playing, while it might not seem like it, they are actually quite interested in each other from time to time. If one cries, the other will notice it, take in the parent's response and learn from that,” Meg says.

TERRIBLE TWOS

Once you've established the foundations of the playdate, it's time to engage your toddler in some real playdate experiences. Remember that 2-year-olds are busy little people, and most of them crave attention and interaction and get bored playing by themselves all day. The trick, then, is to supervise the playdate and keep it short before there is time for a meltdown.

“The principle I have worked on for many years is that babies can socialise for as many hours as the number of years they are in age,” Meg says.

“In other words, a 1-year-old can handle an hour, a 2-year-old two. Usually, once they have played for too long, they hit a wall, and the temper tantrums erupt as your toddler has reached her capacity for interaction,” she says.

Keep a close eye on the playdate, stopping it before the wheels fall off. If you can see a situation is getting heated, and your kids have been playing for two hours, then going home really is your only option – even if it means missing out on that second cup of tea!

DAMAGE CONTROL

There really is nothing worse than another child hitting or biting your child, and as parents, we instinctively want to jump to our child's defence and lash out at whoever's hurt our baby.

Meg advises, however, that if your child is the victim, you need to defend her and give her all the attention. As soon the other child gets attention, the perpetrator feels like she is getting something back from her behaviour. A good tactic, Meg says, would be to explain to the child that has been hurt how bad such behaviour is, telling him that, “What Susan did was naughty.” The message will quickly be relayed to the other child and, that way, you don't have to reprimand your friend's child and can avoid that awkwardness.

If you have noticed that the fighting starts within the first 15 minutes of play and is consistent with the same child, then you need to assess the situation, and consider cancelling the playdate for good.

“It might be that one of the toddlers is a sensitive baby and the other is a sensory seeker and a lot more boisterous, busy and loud in her play. That alone is enough to push one or the other over the edge. If this is the case, then the parent of the sensitive child needs to find another gentler child to play with and cancel the playdates with the boisterous baby. There really is no point to a negative playdate, as you are on edge, and one child is constantly being reprimanded,” Meg says.

Unfortunately, what this means is that your own friendships are going to take strain because your kids aren't able to hang out together. The best thing to do then, says Meg, is to make a time when you can see your friends on your own and without the kids. And while this might not necessarily seem like the best option (we all know how hard it is to find time alone), time away from your kids is very important too, and their “conflict” might even be a blessing in disguise – an uninterrupted lunch or dinner date. ●

FIVE PLAYDATE TIPS

1.

If those mini chocolate cupcakes send your little one into a sugar spin, ask whoever's coming over not to bring them.

2.

Ask your child to pack away her three favourite toys before the friend arrives.

This limits conflict and encourages your child to share the rest of her toys.

3.

If the playdate is always at your house, and your house is the one getting trashed every time, ask if you can rotate houses.

4.

Meet on common ground. Kids love parks, and sitting at the side of a sandpit with someone else is a lot less lonely.


5.

If your child can't swim, keep away from houses with open pools or nets that are permanently off. Otherwise, if there is a net, ask that it goes on. Even if you think you'll be watching constantly, accidents happen – especially if you have a newborn to look after at the same time.

Yukky, yuk, yuk!

Every tot becomes the tiniest food critic at some point. Here's how to handle your picky toddler's five-star appetite.

BY THUMESHNI MUDELIAR




GOOD BUY

Stokke Tripp Trapp high chair grows with your child, making it a furniture piece for life. It brings your baby to the dining table and closer to the family during shared mealtimes. The seat and footplate are depth- and height adjustable. This Scandinavian classic is available with many optional accessories to make feeding time even more comfortable and convenient, and in a range of beautiful colours. R4 999, see stokke.com for retailers.

VIEW THE RANGE

stokke.com



Your toddler's picky eating can be really frustrating – to the point where you wish you could skip mealtimes altogether! You worry endlessly about what he is eating, what he is not eating and, of course, whether or not he gets a balanced diet when he does indeed decide to eat.

Picky eating can surface anywhere from 1 to 6 years old and, according to Johannesburg-based dietician Tammy Wolhüter, can arise out of boredom with the usual foods offered, or occurs as a means of your child asserting his independence.

He suddenly realises that he can make decisions regarding what he wants to eat, when and how.

Whether it's only wanting to eat cheese and noodles every day or refusing to eat anything at all, Tammy explains that your tot's picky eating is all part and parcel of normal development and (thankfully) temporary.

"Trying to control your child's eating situation is fruitless, as no child can be forced to eat.

"You as a parent still retain control over what food is offered to your child, and therefore you have the opportunity to set limits on inappropriate behaviour," Tammy explains.

Understanding the reason behind your tot's picky eating can make all the difference in handling him better at mealtimes.

PINK PLEASE!

Kara, mom to three-year-old Leigh, says her little girl insists on eating food of only one colour. "Leigh has a fixation on the colour pink and loves it so much she wants to eat pink food too," Kara says. Besides having a bottle of food colouring handy to indulge her tot's fancy, she says there is only so much pink food you can cook each day.

If you're able and willing to provide for your picky eater's special requests, then you can oblige, says psychologist Sheryl Cohen. But you can't cook pink food everyday. "Perhaps reflect the child's wish. 'You love pink and want me to know that you even want food to be pink,' and then assert the reality: 'not all foods are pink, and sometimes I'll be able to give you some pink food and sometimes not.'" Coming to terms with the loss of control over you and the food colouring is part of the process of growing up. But be prepared to deal with your child's unhappiness when he doesn't get his way, and remember to acknowledge his difficult feelings with support and love.

Tammy's advice is to continue to offer a variety of foods, including your child's favourites, but don't always offer a favourite food if your child won't eat the other food offered. Likewise, your tot's weekly food aversions are simply a phase.

The one week he will only eat pasta and the next will baulk at the mere sight of it.

"Roll with it"

Tammy says. "Offer an appropriate substitute, and know which food groups (protein, starch, vegetables, fruit or fat) to substitute in order to keep the meal nutritionally balanced."

“THE PROGRESS TOWARDS ATTAINING AND MAINTAINING A BALANCED DIET MAY SEEM SLOW AT TIMES, BUT BE CONSISTENT.”

I HATE VEGGIES

Children commonly refuse to eat their

veggies. If you fill them up on foods with little nutritional value like chips, chocolates or fast foods, don't expect them to relish asparagus or broccoli!

There are certain vegetables that might understandably need some getting used to, but there are other veggies that the child may eat instead.

"Brussels sprouts may be refused, but a carrot salad may be welcomed," Tammy says. From the very outset, include a large variety of fruits and vegetables when you introduce solids. Remember that you are your toddler's role model – be sure to set the example, and make eating your veggies a priority at each meal.



Photographs: Getty Images/Gallo Images and supplied.

“

IT MAY TAKE UP TO 20 TRIES BEFORE YOUR TODDLER WILL ACCEPT A NEW FOOD.

”

DINNER SQUABBLES

After a busy day, you often rush to ensure dinner is on the table on time, only to find your tot won't eat anything, throwing tantrums and chucking his food on the floor. Yet he happily eats his meals during the day with the nanny or at day care. Don't be too harsh on your little one. As Tammy explains, your toddler spends most of his day with the nanny or at day care, and as a result he is more accustomed to sharing meals with her or with his friends. The trick here is to encourage family meals so your child is accustomed to sitting down with you and the rest of the family.

■ Create a positive calm around meals. Avoid arguments and stress at the table.

■ Don't have unrealistic expectations regarding your tot's table manners. He still has much to learn, and it will take time for him to get used to etiquette.

■ Don't eat in front of the TV.

■ Get your child involved in food shopping and in the cooking process. It's a great way to encourage healthy food choices.

■ Offer appropriate portion sizes so your child is not overwhelmed by the food on his plate. Keep in mind he won't always eat the same amount of food every day.

■ Serve a food your toddler might not like with one that he does to encourage him to eat. Add a few peas to his mash, stir a creamy cauliflower purée into your cottage pie, or toss broccoli florets into the macaroni and cheese.

“Strive to develop a positive feeding relationship between yourself and your child. You should provide safe, nutritious foods at regular meals and snacks, and your child will decide how much of that food he will eat. It is important that you recognise that the progress towards attaining and maintaining a balanced diet may seem slow at times, but be consistent: you and your child will eventually reap the rewards,” Tammy says.

SPITTING

If you think back to when you started your little one on solids, you may remember lots of spitting up. This is because it took time for him to adjust to a new taste and texture. Toddlers too, in trying new foods for the first time, may refuse them because they are unfamiliar. It could also be that the food is too hot or cold, or that your child is simply not hungry. According to Tammy, do not give your child any snack or drink within one-and-a-half hours before a meal, as this may result in poor eating. Offer juice or milk with food and water between meals and snacks. Also:

■ Your child should not be filling up on excessive calories in the form of juice, as this will reduce his appetite.

■ It may take up to 20 tries before your toddler will accept a new food. Rather than trying to convince him how good it tastes, chat about the food's aroma, colour, shape and texture to encourage him to try it. Apply the “one bite rule”, as in he can't hate it until he tries it.

■ Don't make a fuss of eating and mealtimes. They should be fun – serve veggies with a favourite sauce, use cookie cutters to cut interesting shapes into food, and make meals as colourful as possible. Offer a choice of menu if you can.

Although periods of fussy eating are a battle that all of us go through, maintaining a balanced diet is key. Take a look at what your picky eater does eat in a day or over a few days. Aim to supply him with necessary protein sourced from dairy or meats, calcium in dairy, and vitamin C found in fruits and veggies. Make sure to get in different colours, whole grain pasta and bread, iron-rich foods and cereal plus healthy fats. Remember that this is a phase and will pass soon enough.



NO THANKS!

When your child simply refuses to take a bite of food, forcing the issue can turn things ugly very quickly. First, rule out any illness that may be causing your child's lack of appetite. Tammy points out that a lack of appetite could be due to anaemia. Your doctor or dietician can help assess this.

Sheryl says your child may just not have much interest in food, or it could be he senses your anxiety about food and feeding him and so clams up. “If you are overly anxious about his eating or loss of weight, you can get someone else to feed him for a bit. Or if he has no interest in food, you might need to distract him with a game while eating. For some children, eating is more about sitting tolerance than it is about food,” Sheryl suggests. If your child is showing signs of over-tiredness, don't attempt to feed him. It might be he needs a quiet activity or a rest first before having his meal.

If your picky eater won't sit down for his meals but does snack, make sure you give him healthy choices. Instead of salty chips or sugary cookies, provide whole grain crackers, bran muffins or carrot sticks with a hummus dip. Also go for rice crackers, peanut butter and healthy fruits like banana. ●



WHICH SCHOOL?

Q *My little one is ready to start at play school. I've gone for a tour of a Montessori school that's not far away, but I'm also looking at a school closer to home that follows the Reggio Emilia method or philosophy. What is this? I have a fair idea of Montessori, but I've never heard of this other Italian approach. What can I expect?*

Email your question for our experts to:
sharing@ypbmagazine.com

Please note that experts unfortunately cannot respond to each question personally. The answers provided on these pages should not replace the advice of your doctor.

OUR EXPERT



SUE PILKINGTON-WILLIAMS
HEAD OF REDHILL EARLY
LEARNING CENTRE

A SUE ANSWERS: The Reggio Emilia approach to early child education was founded in the town of Reggio Emilia, Northern Italy, by Loris Malaguzzi. Post World War II, this inspiring approach was developed based on children's rights, focusing on the image of the child as a curious co-constructor of their experiential learning while driving their interests to understand and make sense of the world. It is here that the child's thinking and learning is respected, honoured and valued. This learning journey evolves through relationships with others, collaborating within a social context, while creating connections between ideas. Children encounter, explore, interact and express their learning in multiple ways known as the "hundred languages of learning", a Reggio Emilia term that describes the many ways to communicate and create meaningful interpretation in their explorations of seeing, doing and being.

There are many similarities between the Montessori and Reggio Emilia. Both are seen as self-guided by the child. However, the Montessori teacher directs the learning through structured individual levels, fulfilling a set curriculum. One finds more individualistic learning and specific Montessori resources based on the curriculum to structure the learning.

Reggio Emilia develops imagination and creativity by focusing on open-ended learning and problem-solving.

This leads to a child naturally developing a meaningful understanding of a concept and is not teacher-directed or instructed. The Reggio Emilia philosophy encourages the teacher to collaborate with the child as a partner in the learning process. The focus is an emergent curriculum based on provocations to reveal child-led interests that are integrated into projects.

With this philosophy, the adults support children's

understanding of their experience through documentation of their thinking and continuous teacher-child dialogue. The classroom setting in the Reggio Emilia approach is designed to reflect the community of the children. In this approach, the aim is to stimulate a sense of wonder and amazement that provokes further ideas and connections for learning, always in collaboration with other children, the teacher and the materials. The planning of materials and spaces is intentional to ensure the generation of ideas, possibilities to investigate questions and offer experiences and thoughts that can be represented and expressed.

A key aspect of Reggio Emilia is that of community. In order to thrive, the belief is that a child must feel connected to others, with a strong sense of belonging. This includes one or more supportive caregivers and a community outside of the home. As positive role models, adults help develop social responsibility, which links to our South African concept of ubuntu. Reggio Emilia is focused on care, kindness, conflict resolution, compassion and empathy. It scaffolds learning, establishing a strong base. This is a child's right!

Parent partnership and community is emphasised more in Reggio Emilia than in Montessori. The aim is to work together, with the child in the centre, while building respectful relationships and a rich learning environment. The piazza, the centre of a Reggio Emilia school, is the space for community gatherings. The belief is that in the piazza a *we* is born, displaying the power of collective community. Children are part of the world, to be seen in the world, to explore the world and be given opportunities to reflect their learning of the world.

Redhill has embarked on a project to design and build a new early learning centre that's set to open in 2024. Here, the school will share its own emergent and developing journey involving the what, why and how of the dynamic relationship between teaching and learning inspired by the Reggio Emilia Philosophy. ●



AFTER-SCHOOL **RESTRAINT** COLLAPSE

Why does your star-student child turn into a screaming banshee at the ring of the home-time bell?

BY CAMILLA RANKIN

Alarm bells started ringing for mom-of-two Kirsty Asad, when her daughter Ameena (then 6 years old) fell apart after school. Every. Day.

"She would cry, scream, shout, hit out aggressively or just completely ignore me and run to her bedroom – she just couldn't handle anymore instructions or expectations," Kirsty recalls. "This behaviour would last for two to three hours every single school-day afternoon. I was concerned that she might be behaving like this at school too."

But, says Kirsty, when she talked to her teacher, she was surprised to learn that Ameena was a "star" pupil.

"The teachers said she was always helping, always caring for others and always working really hard. No signs of any behaviour problems at all. So, I just blamed myself – maybe I had somehow raised her differently to her sibling or she was picking up on my own stress," she says. Sound familiar? After-school meltdowns are more common than you think, and no, it is not your fault. It is a real phenomenon with a real name – after-school restraint collapse.

These almost never happen during school hours. They only surface when your child gets into the car or walks around the corner from daycare. Some children become weepy, others start to yell angrily, throw bags, books and toys around, pick fights or become unbearably rude and unreasonable.

Homework? Soccer practice? Playdates? Ha! Not a chance.

“
LAUGHTER IS AS
EFFECTIVE AS TEARS
TO BLOW OFF STEAM.
”



Photograph: Getty Images/Gallo Images.

A CASE OF UNMET NEEDS

Lizzie Sartain is a UK-based educator with a special focus on special needs and disabilities and explains that all meltdowns are an “inability to express feelings in a socially acceptable way”.

“They are your child’s way of saying ‘please help me’ – and those after-school tantrums are no different.

“There is an unmet need there; something during their school day is too difficult,” she explains. And, she adds, the key is to work out what that need is – physical, emotional, neurological or educational – and meet it before it surfaces. “It is too late during the tantrum,” she adds.

For many children, falling apart after school is simply a case of hunger or tiredness. This is especially true at the beginning of the school year, for children starting school or moving into “big school” for the first time, or for those starting at new schools – your child needs time to adjust to the new environment, expectations and longer schedules. Lizzie says she was able to ward off after-school tantrums in her own girls by simply having a sandwich and drink ready for them when she collected them.

“For the first couple of weeks or months of big school, try cutting out all extra-murals and playdates for at least the first term, to give your child a chance to adjust to the demands of ‘big (or new) school,’” she says.

Also make sure that your child is getting enough quality sleep by instigating a regular bedtime and cutting out any screen time for at least an hour before lights out.

She says it should take a couple of weeks to settle into the new routine, and then the tantrums usually subside.

In true after-school restraint collapse, however, the unmet need can be either emotional, neurological or educational (or a mixture), and these can be trickier to work out.

EMOTIONALLY SPEAKING

After physical needs, an unmet emotional need is the most common cause of these meltdowns.

“Children work very hard to manage all that is expected of them at school. Their day is full of excitement, disappointments and challenges (social, sensory and academic), and they negotiate all these experiences without your help nearby – it can be overwhelming,” explains Canadian psychologist and parenting educator Vanessa LaPointe. She says the feeling of anger that bubbles up in your child is called “defensive detachment”.

“Your child really needed you, and you weren’t there, and when, at the end of

school, you are there, they let you have it!

“The initial flood of relief that you are now there is quickly taken over by a surge of defensive detaching – they’re angry and push you away,” Vanessa explains. “It’s like when a parent and child reunite after the child has gone missing in the supermarket. The parent will have a few seconds of clutching relief before the anger takes over and the parent scolds their found-again child.”

MAKE A CONNECTION

Helping your child manage these conflicting feelings starts by making a real connection with them as soon as you greet them.

Put your phone away, and try avoiding being in conversation with the other parents at that moment.

Use eye contact, a smile, a deep hug or a kiss on the cheek.

You could also say something positive: “I am so happy to see you”, or if your child is already in meltdown mode, say something like: “It’s all going to be okay.” Then give your child the time and space to reset by walking or riding home, having a tickle fight, wrestling, a jump on the trampoline, telling jokes, listening to music or simply doing nothing – without bombarding them with “How was your day?” questions. Using laughter to blow off steam is as effective as tears are.

Avoid the temptation to use screentime as a way of decompressing. Research has shown that for most children, gaming and TV have the opposite effect: it heightens agitation and pent-up emotions.

For Kirsty, giving Ameena a snack and a cuddle when she came home, and then time to play alone before asking her to do anything like homework or chores really made a difference. “We also eventually sought the help of a counsellor, who helped Ameena learn to express herself and to give us coping strategies at home,” Kirsty says.

Another great tip is to include little notes in your child’s lunchbox, leaving a photo of the two of you in the school bag, or to wake up a little earlier in the morning and spend the extra 15 minutes cuddling, or reading a book together. This way your child will feel more connected to you during the school day.

NEUROLOGICAL OR EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

Some children are more prone to after-school restraint collapse than others, and in some cases, these tantrums can be a sign that something more complicated is going on for your child at school.

For some it could be a sign of a latent educational need, such as a learning disorder, dyslexia or processing issue. For others it can be a symptom of an

autism spectrum condition or a sensory processing disorder – or even bullying. The feelings of frustration and fear from trying to cope and retain self-control build throughout the school day and are then released in a blowout when they feel safe

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again, with you, at home.

Lizzie says: “It is really important to talk to the school early, and often – make them believe you when you say your child is acting up at home, so that you can begin to understand what your child’s specific needs are and work with the school to meet them.”

LOOKING AT IT A LITTLE DIFFERENTLY

The Canadian-based counsellor Andrea Loewen Nair, who came up with the name “after-school restraint collapse”, explains that children experiencing these tantrums are like little pressure cookers holding it together all day at school and only release their true emotions when they get to a safe place: home with you.

“After they’ve done that all day, they get to the point where they just don’t have the energy to keep this restraint, and it feels like a big bubble that needs to burst,” she explains.

As hard as it is to be facing these flames, Lizzie explains that these children are actually paying you a huge compliment – they are completely secure in their relationship with you, and “Often, the most disturbed children don’t behave this way,” she says. “Remember, you are not a bad parent. Your child is not a bad child. We are all individuals, and we all deal with and express things differently – there is no right or wrong. Get some help to find what works for you and your child.” ●

HELP!**MY CHILD
DROPPED THE****F-BOMB!**

Every child will swear at some point, but gone are the days of washing their mouths out with soap or making them swallow Tabasco. So what should you do when your child's language turns nasty?

BY COLETTE DU PLESSIS

Believe it or not, it's completely normal for children to swear. More often than not, when a young child swears, they are just repeating a word they have heard somewhere else (note to self: mind my own manners!). When an older child swears, they are usually testing the boundaries and looking for a reaction. The key is knowing when to step in, and when to ignore it.

Your family values and tolerance for swearing will determine where, when and how you draw the line around swear words, but experts do agree that all children should know that it is unacceptable to speak rudely, and especially to curse, at other people. Here are some expert tips to help you nip your little angel's potty mouth in the bud – but remember, as with any form of discipline, a one-size-fits-all approach rarely works.

Did you know?

Children often curse to fit in or show off, but they don't necessarily understand why the words are so loaded.

WHY DO CHILDREN SWEAR?

It's a completely different situation when a five-year-old simply repeats a word they heard on the playground, to when a 13-year-old drops the f-bomb when they lose their temper. The teen may be lacking an important life skill such as anger management. In other cases, children may think that cursing can make them appear "older" than they actually are. Like adults, children sometimes curse as a way to release pent-up emotions.

Swearing is also a fantastic way to get attention – it works from the toddler years through to the teenage years. Children cuss because they have heard the swear word somewhere, they like the sound of it, and it drew a lot of attention when someone else used it, explains Dr Truida Botha, a child psychologist from Centurion. "Some television programs and computer games contain profanity. Children simply repeat what they have heard or seen there," she explains, "and because bodily functions are such fascinating subjects for toddlers, they love making jokes about them, so it's completely normal and age-appropriate for your toddler to enjoy 'toilet talk' – until about the age of 5."

WHAT TO DO IF YOUR CHILD SWEARS

- Don't panic. And don't shout at them.
- Ignore it. Children enjoy repeating behaviour that gets attention. If you laugh or make a fuss over their swearing, they will definitely say them again. Selective deafness may work with young children, but as they get older, you will need to try other strategies, especially if your young child keeps saying the word or words.
- Explain to your child that you know that some other children and even some adults (possibly even Mom and Dad) sometimes use ugly words, but that your family should not speak that way. Many children take pride in their family values.
- Have regular conversations about family values such as respect and love – for example, when we love someone, we don't speak to them that way.
- If the swear word was directed at another child, explain to your child very carefully that words can hurt just as much as a physical blow. Children often don't realise this.
- Also explain to your child that people don't like children who swear. Even if a child doesn't know they are speaking rudely, others will start labelling them as a "bad person".

■ Some households create a swear jar where children have to put some of their pocket money each time they swear or use a word that they know is taboo. Parents who swear are not exempt from this – they also need to add to the jar when they swear. Decide in advance what the money will ultimately be used for, and how much the payment is – as long as it's not something that will encourage children to swear more, like paying the water or electricity bill.

■ Provide alternatives to swear words. Children often think it is hilarious to shout "pineapple!" or "gosh darn it!" instead.

■ If your own use of foul language is the reason for your child's cursing, pay attention to how you speak. If it's television programs or computer games, limit their exposure to those.

■ Lastly, remember to praise your child when you see them genuinely trying not to swear. The opposite is also important: start by taking away a privilege if they continue with the foul language. ●

“
EXPERTS
AGREE THAT
ALL CHILDREN
SHOULD
KNOW THAT IT
IS UNACCEPT-
ABLE TO SPEAK
RUDELY.
”



SO HOW DID YOU HANDLE IT?

We asked some parents what they do when their children swear... They all wanted to remain anonymous!

ALET FROM CAPE TOWN says, "Don't react too strongly. Instead, chat to them about what is acceptable language and what is not. I also tell my children that it's not nice to be called a 'poop', so they shouldn't do the same to others. Children think in graphic terms, so I ask them to imagine how they would feel if they were called a few of those words!"

ANDILE FROM ROSEBANK says, "We try to be mindful of what we say in front of our children. It also helps to provide them with alternatives to swear words. We found that when most children realise that the word is ugly, they choose not to use it themselves."

ADRIAN FROM BLOEMFONTEIN asks, "Is cursing so bad? Isn't it a necessary phase for many people? It's a way of expressing things rather than bottling them up, right? I believe that an occasional ugly word isn't harmful when used in general. I also don't believe that only bad people swear, or that good people don't. However, I will draw the line when a child swears directly at another person, or if God's name is used as a swear word."

#Feeding



PARTY-LICIOUS!

Food for celebrations does not need to be dripping with sugar or e-numbers to be yum! You can keep the treats healthy but popular.



Photographs: Getty Images/Gallo Images and YPB library.

PLEASANTLY PINK

All the sweet, juicy splendour that toddlers want with none of the cavity-causing consequences, watermelon is a perfect party snack. It's affordable (just one feeds scores of tiny guests), easy to prepare (no baking required) and easy to clean (a few wet wipes are all you need). Simply chop the watermelon up into hand-sized wedges – remember to cut the bitter rind off – and arrange on a platter. You could also chop watermelon and melon into chunks and thread the blocks onto ice cream sticks for a fresh fruit lolly.

UNDER WRAPS

Take party sandwiches to the next level by combining two great loves of toddlers – peanut butter and strawberries – with a whole-wheat wrap. Does it sound like we're trying to pull the wool over your eyes? We aren't! Sweet wraps are all the rage at the moment, and this one is guaranteed to be a hit. All you need are a few whole-wheat wraps, available at supermarkets or delicatessens, spread with a generous layer of peanut butter. Go for the sugarless kind for a super health kick. Cut a punnet of strawberries into slices and arrange these in a layer on the peanut butter wrap and roll into a hand-sized tube. Cut this into smaller sized tubes so the children's small hands can handle them.

TIME TO POP

Popcorn is a great party food, and all toddlers love it. And because you can make it in big batches, it works out to be quite affordable.

You can prepare it well in advance at home on your stove, so it really isn't a time-consuming mission. Better yet, if you air-pop it, it is a super healthy snack packed with fibre. If you don't have a popcorn machine, ask around if you can hire one for novelty value. But if not, you can pop corn on the stove using a bit of vegetable oil.

Avoid microwave popcorn – it's not the healthiest option, and it's going to end up costing you loads more.

Go easy on the salt and other flavourings though especially if any of your guests have allergies.

Use sheets of brightly coloured paper rolled into wedges and secured with some sticky tape to make popcorn horns, so that each child gets their own little serving.

AN APPLE A DAY

No party is complete without a few crunchy treats, and apples make the tastiest sweet crisps around. The great thing is that you can make them a couple of days before the party to save time and stress as they stay crisp for up to two days. Simply core a few apples (any type of apple: one apple makes about a cup of apple crisps), and slice them thinly. Sprinkle them with cinnamon and, if you really want to, a bit of sugar. Then lay the apple pieces on wax paper on a baking tray, and bake in the oven at 95°C for two hours. Allow to cool completely before storing them in airtight bags.

THE BIG CHEESE

Skip the crisps completely, and turn to cheese to satisfy savoury hankerings. We've yet to meet a toddler who doesn't love this dairy product in some form, so you really can go wild with it. The simplest solution is to serve blocks of cheese as a finger food among other savoury treats like mini sweetcorn and cold meats. You can also make cheesy mini pizzas with vegetable toppings (buy the dough at the supermarket, and roll it out) or go the extra mile to make cheesy bread sticks or cheese scones.

TUTTI FRUITY

Milkshakes are the stuff of kids' dreams, but they're packed with sugary flavourants and colourants that aren't all that friendly. Steer clear of this by serving fruit smoothies instead. Use fresh seasonal fruit such as berries, bananas or mango, milk or plain yoghurt with some honey (only for over-1s) or nut butter to make delicious creamy smoothies that beat any milkshake. Experiment a little to come up with interesting combinations.

You may even choose to stick to ingredients that complement the theme; strawberry yoghurt smoothies for a princess party, for instance. The fresh fruit will provide the toddlers with fibre and, combined with the other ingredients, will pack an energetic punch to keep young party-goers on their feet.



Tip
Be sure to check if any of your little party people have a nut allergy before serving peanut or other nut butters.

IT'S A STICK-UP!

You really want to avoid messy dishes that have to be served up individually, so finger foods are the way to go. Lightly steam some veggies – carrots, baby marrows, broccoli stems and peppers – and thread them onto blunted sosatie sticks for a colourful kebab. Serve with a yummy dip such as hummus. To make hummus, blend a can of drained and rinsed chickpeas with one tablespoon of olive oil and lemon juice to taste in a food processor until smooth. Other great ideas are a peanut butter dip or smooth bean dip.

MINI ME

Tiny fingers and mouths need tiny snacks. Make mini sandwiches using crackers and tasty fillings. All you need is a packet of savoury crackers, sliced cold meat and cottage cheese. Cut the meat into the same size as the crackers – a cookie cutter could work well here. Simply spread the crackers with a layer of cheese, and add a slice of meat. Top with another cracker, and voilà – you have a mini sandwich that any toddler will love. Use other nutritious fillings to make a variety of tiny sandwiches for your party table, think of cheese, cucumber, avocado, tomato, tuna and more. ●

QA

Email your question for our experts to: sharing@ypbmagazine.com
Please note that experts unfortunately cannot respond to each question personally. The answers provided on these pages should not replace the advice of your doctor.



OUR EXPERT

DR CHIZGANI NYASULU-EGBUNIKE
PAEDIATRICIAN AT
NETCARE LINKWOOD HOSPITAL

SPRING IS COMING

Q *This year I want to be prepared for allergy season, as our whole family suffers a lot. I think often my little ones' colds start off as allergic reactions. Please give me preventative advice. But also advice about antihistamines, as I'm not sure they are so good for children. My daughters are 18 months old and nearly 3 years old.*

A DR NYASULU-EGBUNIKE ANSWERS: Firstly, because you mention that there is a family history of allergies, I suggest you take the girls to a specialist paediatrician or paediatric pulmonologist for a diagnosis to ensure that they will be managed properly.

An allergic reaction is when the body's immune system overreacts to a substance that is usually harmless, a protein like pollen, or dog hair or certain foods. We call these substances allergens.

Allergies can cause a lot of discomfort and disturbed sleep in the little ones. However, once we know the root cause of the allergies, we can manage the environment as far as possible.

Upper respiratory tract infections are very common in children under the age of 5 years, and more so once they go to play groups and school, due to their developing immune system. Infection means that there is a bug, usually a virus, causing the symptoms.

Preventative measures for colds and flu include:

- healthy diet
- exercise
- a good multivitamin and zinc supplement daily
- keeping scheduled vaccines up to date
- a yearly flu vaccine for all adults around babies younger than 6 months old, and older kids can also get the flu vaccine.

When prescribed by your doctor, antihistamines can safely be used in a baby older than six months.

Even though antihistamines are available over the counter, it is advisable to get a prescription and management plan for your baby's specific needs. ●

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1 The competition opening date was 23 September 2022. No late entries will be accepted. See pages 6 & 7 for closing dates for the different categories.

2 By entering the competition, you agree to be bound by these terms and conditions. **3** Participants must be either the parent or legal guardian of the child. The magazines reserve the right to request proof of such relation. If it is proven that there is no relation between the child and the person who sent the photo, that person will indemnify the magazines against any claim from any third party should the child be chosen as a winner. **4** You are automatically entered into both competitions: *Your Pregnancy & Baby* and *Baba & Kleuter*. **5** Only email entries will be accepted. Entries per fax, registered post, regular post or over social media or any other method other than email to the specific inbox mentioned below will be disqualified. **6** To enter the competition, a parent/guardian has to email coverstar@ypbmagazine.com and include a picture of their child. The photo may not be larger than 4MB – only JPGs or GIF formats accepted. Also include your child's full name, date of birth and where you are from, as well as your full contact details. **7** Photos submitted must be recent, preferably not more than two months old, although older images will not be disqualified. **8** By entering, you agree that the images may be published in these magazines and on all our social media platforms. **9** Twins and triplets or other multiples or siblings must be entered separately. **10** The child may not be older than 48 months on the day of entry. **11** The competition is open to all qualifying participants within the Republic of South Africa, Botswana, Namibia, Lesotho, Swaziland and Zambia. **12** You are not eligible to participate in this competition if you are a director, member, partner, employee, agent or consultant of Media24 or an immediate family member of these persons specified. **13** A panel of judges will select three winners for *Your Pregnancy & Baby* and three winners for *Baba & Kleuter* over the competition period, so in total 6 winners. **WINNER 1** appeared on the cover of *Your Pregnancy & Baby* February & March 2023. **WINNER 2** appeared on the cover of *Baba & Kleuter* February-May 2023. **WINNER 3** appeared on the cover of *Your Pregnancy & Baby* June & July 2023. **WINNER 4** appeared on the cover of *Baba & Kleuter* June-September 2023. **WINNER 5** appears on the cover of *Your Pregnancy & Baby* October & November 2023. **WINNER 6** appears on the cover of *Baba & Kleuter* October-January 2024. **14** The judges' decision is final, and no correspondence will be entered into. **15** Potential winners will be contacted shortly before the cover shoot to make arrangements for the shoot. If after three attempts at contact the organisers cannot reach the entrant, another child will be chosen. **16** The candidate will be expected to attend the cover shoot at a time and place stipulated by the editor. If the candidate is unable to come to the shoot, due to illness or being unavailable due to any other reason, the entry will be disqualified and another will be chosen. The prizes will go to the winner who appears on the cover. **17** The winners' parents or guardians will be required to sign a confidentiality agreement to keep the shoot and all details about the shoot confidential until an agreed-upon date, which will be when the magazine goes on sale. Breach of this will result in the prizes being forfeited, and legal action may be implemented. **18** All images resulting from the cover shoot remain the property of Media24, although the images will be made available to the winners' parents or guardians for private use after the issue featuring the winner has appeared on shelf. **19** The judges might elect to use the photograph with which the child entered if the image is suitable. Photographers will be fully credited. **20** Details of competition prizes are on page 7. Use the hashtag #coverstarsearch to stay up to date with competition news. **21 GROUNDS FOR DISQUALIFICATION:** Entrants will be immediately disqualified without notice to the parent or guardian if the following occurs: **a** False information about the entrant is submitted. **b** Photo of the entrant supplied is not a true reflection of the entrant. **c** Photo of the entrant displays nudity or inappropriate behaviour not in keeping with the Media24 company values. **22** Media24 and their delivery agent does not accept responsibility or liability for any loss or damage and will also not be responsible or liable for any further expenses or fees required for purpose of using, applying or enjoying the prize won in this competition. **23** Media24 reserves the right to vary, suspend, postpone or terminate the competition and any prizes, or any aspect thereof, for any reasons whatsoever and without notice. 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A PERFECT BIRTH IN PORTLAND

On the Peanut app (Tinder for moms!), Hevette Ates matched with a woman whose baby girl was born on the same day as Valentine. They've become great companions and get together as often as they can.

My husband, Mustafa, and I left for Portland Oregon in the States in January 2021 – in the middle of the pandemic and only three weeks before the US closed its borders. I had just resigned and didn't even get a chance to say all my goodbyes because of lockdown restrictions. It was still exciting when that plane took off.

Mustafa is Turkish. He is an independent filmmaker.

I was in a happy bubble for the first couple of months here, even though I never knew how hard it would be looking after my baby full time with no help (and in my forties!)

How it happened:

I'd been off birth control since we left SA, so we were delighted when I tested positive on a home pregnancy kit. From an ad I saw and putting all our options on the table, we chose Kaiser, a medical insurance provider that has its own hospitals, so it's not a case of going to any private hospital and claiming from insurance afterwards. So my "care team" at Kaiser became part of a life-altering journey of us becoming parents.

It's a sacred story for another day, but our first baby was named Wolfie (Wolfgang), and though he never lived in this world, he is part of us. Forever. So we were delighted when we soon learnt that I was pregnant again. (I was 43 and Mustafa 37.) Besides stressful ultrasounds and waiting for lab test results, I had the easiest pregnancy. I still jogged and did gentle Pilates up until week 36. I was glad to hear that vaginal births are the norm in Oregon, unless medically unsafe for the mom or baby.

However – as I was older than 35 and about to give birth for the first time – the perinatologist recommended induction at week 38, which I dreaded. Thankfully, our little girl pushed the eject button herself a few days prior to the scheduled induction and was born on 24 July 2022.

I had the birth I wanted, with an epidural. Valentine (Val-en-teen) arrived 23 hours after my waters broke. The only hiccup was a two-hour delay, when she had to be nudged out by her chin, because she entered the world with her signature Wonder Woman salute (a gesture she stopped doing around 8 months, but which we have many photos of). We considered including a doula to support us emotionally. One of the questions she asked me was to visualise what I wanted from the labour room. The one thing

I thought of was a room with a view of a forest. I've visualised many things that never materialised, so I was stunned when an actual view of an actual forest (not unusual in Oregon) greeted me as we entered the labour room.

At that point I just knew everything was going to be fine.

Interesting practices here are that the staff who are on duty that day will handle your labour and delivery. Also, midwives are well respected and part of your care team at the hospital. They perform ultrasounds and handle low risk labours themselves or accompany the gynae if there is a high-risk labour like mine.

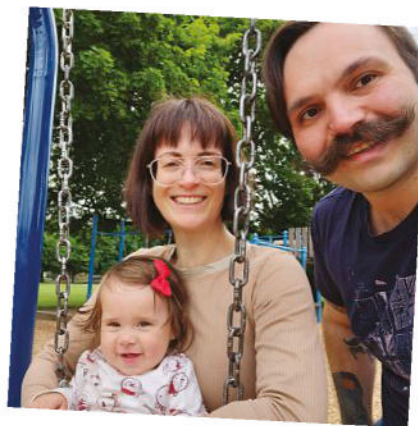
I had a labour and delivery nurse, a midwife and a gynae. In the corner of the room, a paediatrician and paediatric nurse



Valentine showing her signature Wonder Woman gesture.



The Ates family



Hevette, Mustafa and Valentine Ates, Portland Oregon.

sat waiting patiently and immediately took over as Valentine was born.

After delivery, my baby was put onto my chest (because we were both fine), and delayed cord clamping is the norm. The nurse did her Apgar tests in the labour room. Birth doulas are a rapidly evolving profession, and many hospitals are starting doula groups. At the moment though, it's still an out-of-pocket expense.

Fast forward to today. Baby Valentine (the only American in the family) has currently got me, Mom, for daycare. Childcare is very expensive in the States. A nanny costs "an entire pay check", to quote a mommy friend. Daycare is a little more affordable, but the waiting lists are long, and you pay to be added to a waiting list.

So I have to rely on these lifelines: the beautiful and safe parks in our neighbourhood, free weekly sessions at our local library – and technology!

On the Peanut app (Tinder for moms!) I matched with a woman whose baby girl was born on the same day as Valentine. We've become great companions and get together as often as we can. The Portland Moms Over 35 Facebook group is great for meeting new people, and to donate and receive baby clothes and other items. Through the Nextdoor app I was gifted a brand new Medela breast pump! ●

CARE TO SHARE?

Are you raising a family somewhere outside SA's borders? We'd love to hear from you. For a chance to be featured in this column, send your story to sharing@ypbmagazine.com



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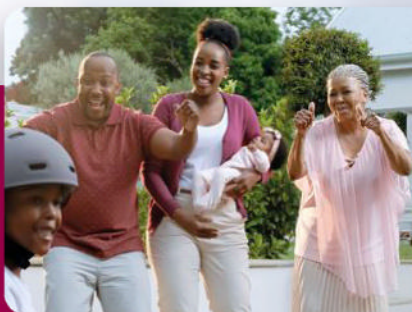
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Austell
Medicine with a Conscience

PUT PLAY *in its place*

Play is a child's work! Einstein called play the highest form of research. This guide is packed with ideas and inspiration.



What a delight it is to witness your child reach a milestone, especially the cute ones like the first smile, grabbing a rattle, waving 'tata' or a wobbly step on chubby feet. All these developmental progress markers assure us that Baby is on track, and that Mom and Dad are doing something right. So take lots of pictures and video and by all means brag on social media if that's your thing! But please be aware of the flip side of all the sharing ... the inevitable comparing, that can really rob you of your joy.

Not all babies are the same, just as all adults aren't the same either. The milestones you will find in this guide represent an average. It is not better or worse for a child to reach a milestone earlier or later. The window period is quite wide. What is more important is that they *are* reached, more or less in order, and not skipped over.

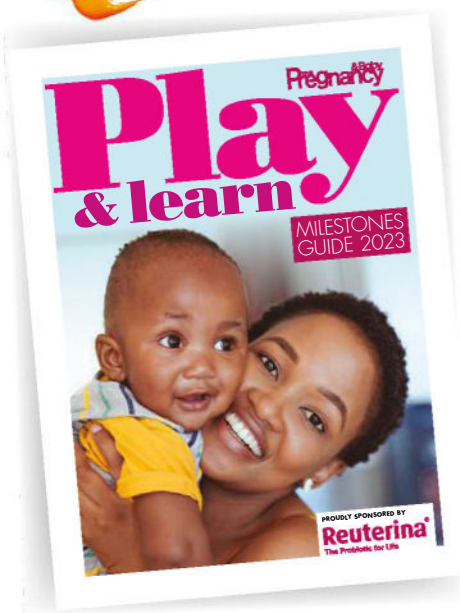
While we all want our children to do well and have a good start on the path to success, the early childhood years are not the time to push for specific goals. These years are the time for play! Play is how your precious little one learns. Children are born curious and their curiosity will lead them to explore and discover their world. This is how development is stimulated. As parents, our job is to feed their curiosity and give play the rightful place it deserves in our family life.

Go on, have some fun!

Helen

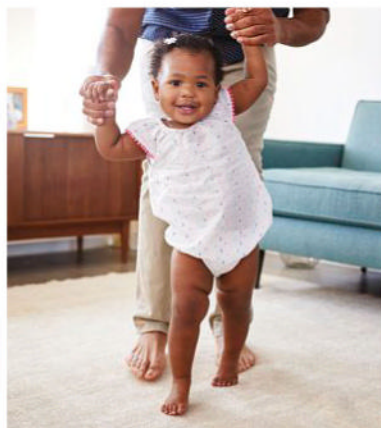


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TICK OFF THOSE milestones

*Your child's little body learns
so much between the ages of
six months and three years.
Enjoy this busy time!*

6 MONTHS

Your baby is starting to sit on his own. He can lift his head, chest and shoulders off the floor and is starting to look like he wants to crawl. He actively rolls around. He can move an object from one hand to the other and is even trying to feed himself. When you're feeding him, he'll probably start grabbing at the jar or spoon.

7 MONTHS

At month seven, your baby is busy moving his one knee ever closer to his tummy – a precursor to crawling. He can roll like a boss and can bring his foot to his mouth. He's beginning to play with his toys more intentionally by shaking them or banging them together. He can pull toys and he's dropping them less and less regularly. When he tries to feed himself finger foods, he succeeds more often than not. He is beginning to practise his pincer grip using his thumb and forefinger.

8 MONTHS

This is usually the time when babies begin crawling. They'll also experiment with pulling themselves up against couches or coffee tables. By the end of this month, your baby can probably crawl forwards as well as backwards. He can open and close his hands deliberately and his pincer grip is becoming more accurate by the day.

9 MONTHS

If your baby is already crawling, chances are he will start turning over at this stage. He'll attempt stairs and can make walking movements while you hold his hands or arms. He can feed himself foods such as peas and can build a tower all of two blocks high.

10 MONTHS

Crawling and climbing are his current obsession, but he'll probably only make it to the first step and down again. He can move easily between sitting and pulling himself up to cruise along the furniture. He'll try to pick up two blocks in one hand and loves unpacking your drawers. He can clap hands!



11 MONTHS

He can bend down to pick something up off the floor while holding on to a surface with one hand. He can open lids and boxes and he has refined his coordination between thumb and forefinger. He starts turning the pages of boardbooks and can stack differently sized containers inside one another.

1 YEAR

Any day from now you can expect the pitter-patter of tiny feet – actually walking! But don't worry if your little one only achieves this feat in three months' time – everyone at their own pace. His confidence is increasing on the stairs, and he can push a wagon or pram. He loves pouring water to and from containers.

He can feed himself with a little help and not too much mess, and from 13 months some children can drink out of a normal cup with handles. He can hold (more like clutch) a crayon or pencil and draw lines with it.

By 16 months he can turn pages in a book and will attempt to undress himself.

By 18 months he will start enjoying push-and-pull toys.

Did you know?

Your baby loves rough play. Hold him tightly and swing him through the air.



2 YEARS

This past year your baby has transformed into a confident walker and by two he should be able to run, walk backwards and climb stairs (with both feet on one step). He's falling way less than at the beginning of his walking journey. Don't stress if he struggles to run around corners – this is normal.

Your toddler is developing a sense of rhythm and likes to dance. By two-and-a-half years he should be able to jump with both feet off the ground. He can stand on one leg. He can kick and sometimes catch balls and from about two he can start riding a tricycle or push bike. Give him plenty of chances to clamber on jungle gyms.

By two-and-a-half years old your toddler has good hand-eye coordination. He can brush his own teeth and use a pencil more accurately. He can open and close twist lids and he can build a tower about eight blocks high.

3 YEARS

By three years of age, your youngster can wash and dry his own hands. He can stand on tippy toe, kick a ball surprisingly accurately, he can sit on his haunches and even walk a few steps on a balance beam.

He can thread beads onto a piece of string and his movements keep becoming more coordinated. For example, he can walk a short distance carrying a cup of milk without spilling, he can handle a teaspoon and can start dressing himself (he'll start with items that are easy to put on). By the end of his third year he might be able to build a four-piece puzzle. His drawings are becoming more sophisticated and soon you'll start seeing the beginnings of a stick figure taking shape on the page. The head will be as big as the rest of the body and the body will be drawn as lines only – a stick figure. ●

FIRST

emotions

Children's ability to access and communicate their feelings changes as they grow.

How to handle his emotional world as he grows, is a skill your child learns from you.

0 TO 2 YEARS

Your tiny baby first expresses emotion by crying and later by smiling and laughing. By the age of three months, he has already mastered a range of facial expressions and he will start demanding your attention and making use of his communication skills. Your reactions to your baby's feelings are the foundation to his later capacity for empathy and building relationships. Be sure to make plenty of eye contact with your baby and respond to him warmly. Acknowledge his attempts to develop new skills, spend time together and have fun.

From the age of about six months, focus on echoing and validating your baby's feelings to help furnish him with an emotional vocabulary. Say, "Are you tired?" and, "I think that made you sad." Name his emotions even though he can't yet understand the words you are using.

Your child is busy acquiring an understanding of basic emotions like sadness or happiness. Offer security and routine, and praise his efforts.

This is also the stage where separation anxiety raises its head. Try to be extra patient and loving when you're suddenly confronted with a clingy, tearful baby – this stage, too, shall pass.

2 TO 3 YEARS

Your little terror (er, treasure) is starting to be able to express emotions and reflect on his feelings. But it's early days yet: he is still likely to express frustration by crying and becoming enraged if he's corrected.

Allow your child the illusion of control by presenting him with a range of options (all of which are acceptable to you), such as which shoes to choose.

Validate his feelings. It is important to manage your own emotions, too, as it is difficult to manage a situation appropriately when you're out of control. Always ask yourself, "What do I want to achieve, and what do I want my child to have learned from this interaction?"

3 YEARS PLUS

Your child experiences all the same emotions you do, and expresses them freely, by laughing from his belly or indeed by succumbing to an uncontrollable rage. Providing guidelines for acceptable behaviour is important at this stage.

Your child's "inner dialogue" is also developing and this influences his cognitive control. He is starting to internalise attitudes about what is right or wrong. Fears are typical of this age, such as a fear of the dark. Validate his feelings and reassure him. Believe in your child's abilities and encourage him. ●

SMALL, but smart

Watching your child's intellect develop is incredible. Be on the lookout for these milestones.

6 TO 8 MONTHS

As your baby's memory and attention span develop, you'll see more and more signs that he's not only absorbing information, but also applying this newfound knowledge. His greater mobility allows him to experience more things. He starts actively manipulating objects around him. He realises that he can transfer an object from one hand to another and is starting to form a sense of events and displacement (items being moved). He is starting to understand patterns of behaviour and he can add up individual occurrences into a coherent series of events, over which he even has some measure of control! By endlessly experimenting with this exciting new concept, he starts to develop a sense of self that is separate from you, and that the external world is not simply an extension of himself.

Your clever baby is starting to grasp the important concept of cause and effect. He will probably discover it accidentally one day, perhaps by bumping a toy, and then hearing it make a sound. As soon as he begins to glimpse that he was responsible for

causing the sound, he will start testing the fascinating theory that his actions have consequences. He'll test your reactions by for instance dropping a toy and waiting for you to pick it up. By responding (picking the toy up and giving it to him), you are encouraging him to test his theories.

Your tot is curious and is interested in new toys, sounds, places, people and discoveries. He recognises familiar sounds and places and is starting to understand routines, by anticipating what comes next. He develops the beginnings of a sense of sequence – “before” and “after” are beginning to be understood.

Your baby will also experiment with altering his movements to test how the results differ. In this way he learns new ways of doing things. He discovers that he can pull an object closer by a string, or that he can turn an object in order to fit it through the bars in his cot, for instance.

8 TO 12 MONTHS

Your baby's greater mobility affords him ample opportunity for new discoveries. Through a process of trial and error he slowly begins to form behaviour patterns. He is starting to imitate behaviours intentionally and you can see him acting deliberately, with a goal in mind. He is beginning to demonstrate independence by wanting to feed himself.

At around 8 months, he develops object permanence – the knowledge that an object continues to exist even if he can't see it. A younger baby will

lose interest if a toy is covered or hidden, but your 8-month-old will start looking for it.

At around 8 months, too, your baby starts understanding words, and he knows the meaning of “no”. By 9 months he recognises familiar songs and rhymes and turns his head if you call him by name. He is becoming familiar with routine behaviours, such as waving bye-bye. He searches for hidden objects.

By 11 months your little one can point at objects in a book, but his attention span is still very short.

12 TO 18 MONTHS

At about a year old, toddlers show a cognitive leap forward as their thinking becomes more complex. They use objects as tools, such as for example “raking” a toy closer with a stick. Your child starts to experiment with objects to see what they can do.

He is intensely interested in books and enjoys being shown things in them. He can repeat his name

and shake his head “no”. He starts understanding simple questions and loves jokes and silliness.

By 15 months he knows some body parts and can correctly identify some objects in a book. He can make animal sounds and can complete simple instructions. He understands the concept of “dog”, whether in a book or

in real life. By 18 months he can complete a task that requires thinking and memory, such as “go fetch your cup”.

18 TO 24 MONTHS

Your toddler is starting to use even unfamiliar items without having any previous experience of them. He can recognise qualities such

as colour, size and form. He begins to see himself as an entity more and more. He is however still very egocentric because at this age toddlers are only able to focus on their own point of view and they ignore others’ perspectives. From 21 months he will ask for things he needs or wants.



2 TO 3 YEARS

Your child still learns primarily through his senses, but the process of learning becomes more cognitive and involves thinking, too. His verbal understanding is good and he starts to have mental images in his brain of items, actions and concepts. He is able to solve problems in his head without always having to test the theory in practice. His memory is developing well and he is starting to understand the concept of time. He will understand if you tell him, "When you've finished eating, we are going to play".

He is beginning to understand relationships between things. He can figure out which shape goes where in the shape sorter or puzzle frame without having to test it first. Your two-year-old is also starting to understand the point of counting, and the number two now has particular significance for him.

Negotiation and argumentation is difficult if not impossible with a two-year-old. He sees everything in simple, concrete terms and can easily confuse fantasy and reality. Choose your words carefully. You might tease him with, "If you eat any more, you'll explode!", only to find your poor child has taken you quite seriously.

A two-year-old's thirst for knowledge is insatiable and he can identify and describe familiar objects. He loves paging through books and discussing the pictures. He can follow more complicated instructions and will be able to go and look for – and find – a toy he was playing with earlier. He knows one or two nursery rhymes and will sing along with you to a song.

3 TO 4 YEARS

Welcome to the world of "Why?" A three-year-old wants to know, and will listen attentively to your answer as long as it's short and simple. But his abstract questions are often difficult and you'll sometimes be stumped for an answer! Your little one might struggle to understand why there can't be a simple answer for everything and become frustrated – don't shy away from admitting that you don't know something, but do take his enquiries seriously, as this will broaden his mind and field of enquiry, his knowledge and his curiosity, and help him think more clearly.

Your child still argues one-sidedly. He cannot see another perspective easily and cannot solve problems that require bearing two factors in mind.

His understanding of time improves. He knows his daily routine and will begin to understand yours, too. He understands that some important events, such as birthdays or Christmas, only happen once a year, but he can't understand how long a year is.

His short-term memory has developed to the extent that he can remember information for a short time and accurately repeat it. But he may confuse cause and effect and coincidence and therefore connect two unrelated events. Your three-year-old understands numeric values and is able to count the first few numbers in order, but may soon miscount.

He is starting to understand gender roles and he likes fantasy play. ●

LOVE & learning

There is a very important thing your child needs for healthy development, and it is completely free. Hugs!

Becoming a parent means that you have access to an unlimited number of hugs every day. You get to cradle your newborn gently in your arms or grab your busy toddler for a big bear hug. Have you ever wondered about the impact this has on your little one?

The benefits of human contact have been well researched and the effects of regular, caring touch are not just physical; they are psychological too. Touch can even help build a good immune system, decrease the risk of heart disease, and decrease levels of stress, for parents and babies. Without nurturing touch, a baby's brain will not develop optimally. Children need to feel safe and experience trust. So cuddle and bond, and build a loving foundation for learning.

Did you know?

Of our five senses, touch is the first to develop. It is crucial to a newborn's development.



FACTS ABOUT HUGGING

- A full-body hug stimulates the whole nervous system.
- Children who aren't hugged have delays in walking, talking and reading.
- A quick hug has a near-immediate impact on health – lowering your heart rate and inducing a calming effect.
- A full-body hug not only stimulates the nervous system, it also decreases feelings of loneliness.
- Touch is described as a universal language that communicates emotions.
- Touch alone can reveal emotions including anger, fear, disgust, love, gratitude and sympathy.

Next time you hug your little one, enjoy the moment and know that you are giving them so much more than just a bit of love. ●

LET'S socialise

You want your child to be able to form good relationships. So be aware of the following social milestones from early on.

YEAR 1

TALK AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE

Your six-month-old baby enjoys playing with you, but can become anxious with strangers. By seven months old, she's also figured out what your tone of voice means and she knows whether you're angry or happy. She's capable of getting quite annoyed with you if you interfere in a game or insist on doing something she doesn't want to do, but she adores praise.

By eight months she rediscovers her friendly side and she could even initiate contact with other adults. But be warned – this friendliness may evaporate when someone tries to pick her up.

Babies enjoy playing alongside other babies, not with them. She'll stare intently at babies and take her cue from their reactions, which she might imitate, but there is no real interaction.

By nine months, a baby can work hard to gain your attention and praise. By ten months, she wants to play with you. Simple hide-and-seek or peekaboo are always winners, but she'll also want to play alone sometimes.

At 11 months you may notice signs of a temper, but a bad mood can equally evaporate as soon as it started.

HOW YOU CAN HELP Talk to your baby as much as possible, make eye contact, attempt a conversation, and sing to your baby – and remember plenty of cuddles. Bonding with at least one adult is necessary for healthy social development, so include your baby in family life. Place her where she can observe your interactions, like at the dining table. React when she communicates with you.

Expose your older baby to interactions with peers by perhaps joining a moms-and-babies group. Even though she won't play with the other children, they'll all observe and learn from each other.

YEAR 2

GIVE POSITIVE ATTENTION

Your tot is increasingly independent and she'll be looking further than immediate family for social stimulation. Children still engage in parallel play at this stage, playing alongside instead of with each other. She'll be a little shy of strangers and can be anxious around new kids her age, too. Temper tantrums are common.

HOW YOU CAN HELP Praise her kindness and gentleness when she demonstrates these – she loves positive feedback. Create an environment where she occasionally comes into contact with other children. Socialise with your own friends and family so that she can experience a wider social circle. Start teaching basic manners such as greeting visitors.

Tip

Sharing is difficult for children under four. Just keep setting a good example and be patient.

**YEAR 3****ENCOURAGE SHARING**

Your little one is becoming aware of others' feelings, but in the main she's still pretty self-centred (which is normal at this age). She'll imitate social behaviour she's seen in play. She still plays her own games next to her friends (who are doing the same). But she is interested in other children and she'll imitate their play.

HOW YOU CAN HELP Let your child spend short periods of time in the company of other children her age, such as in a playgroup. While there might be a bit of tugging and pulling and arguing over favourite toys, this also provides an opportunity for children to learn important social skills such as conflict resolution strategies. Don't intervene immediately, just encourage sharing.

YEAR 4**MAKING FRIENDS**

Your child is starting to make the transition from parallel play to playing interactively with friends. As her vocabulary grows, communication becomes much easier. Through fantasy play with other children, she's learning about cooperation and sharing. By four, your youngster is starting to show empathy if someone is upset and she'll console a sad playmate.

HOW YOU CAN HELP Keep creating opportunities where your child can play with her peer group. When there's an argument about turns, suggest a five-minute turn for each child, and set an example to your child by also demonstrating generosity in your daily life. Praise her for playing well with her friends. ●

Gateway TO THE WORLD

Your child makes sense of the world via her five senses. Try these games to sharpen sensory development.

The human body's five senses are the tools your child uses to investigate, handle and understand the world and, closer to home, his immediate surroundings. You can help your little one develop his senses to their fullest potential and have fun while doing it.

HEARING

The ability to listen closely is a skill that will make going to school one day a whole lot easier for your child, since much of the information he needs to learn is transmitted verbally, especially in the early years. Because it's so closely linked with communication, hearing plays an important role in the development of your child's personality as well as his behaviour.

Did you know?

Humans can distinguish between 10 000 different sounds.

ACTIVITY 1

Play different sounds, like animal sounds, or noises from around the house. Provide picture cut-outs of the corresponding animals or objects and see if your tot can connect the sound to the image. Ask him to tell you which sound was loud and which was soft.

ACTIVITY 2

Expose your little one to a wide range of musical styles and practise clapping or dancing along to the beat.

ACTIVITY 3

Read a storybook where some of the characters are animals – now see who can imitate the animals best. Take turns making animal sounds and see if the other person can identify the animal.

ACTIVITY 4

Clap your hands three or four times in a particular rhythm and challenge your little musical genius to imitate you. Once he's got it, you can add other sounds, such as ringing a bell.



SIGHT

Stimulating the visual centre is very important to let the brain develop in such a way that your child interprets what he sees correctly. If this ability is lacking he might struggle with reading and spelling at school.

ACTIVITY 1

Help your child develop his sight and memory by placing four or five objects on a tray. Give him a minute to observe the objects, then remove them and challenge him to remember them.

ACTIVITY 2

To make your child aware of colour, you can point out colour in his daily life: blue skies, green grass and brown soil. Name the colours of just about any object you like: houses, cars, and toys. Compare colours: ask him if orange looks like yellow. You can experiment together by taking a tub of white paint and gradually adding red paint to it – show him how it turns to pink. Mix blue and yellow to make green. Let him loose on the paints so he can create his own shades and mixes, and develop favourites.

ACTIVITY 3

At night, play with a torch. Give your child one too and see if his light can “catch” yours.

ACTIVITY 4

Take a magnifying glass outside. You can closely observe a blade of grass – show your child how it appears bigger and bigger, and how much detail he can see on it. Now look around for bugs, leaves, flowers and tree bark – anything you like, really – and look at it under the magnifying glass.

TOUCH

Touch is important for the total development of your child's central nervous system. Your child's skin enables him to distinguish between pain, heat, cold and pressure, which is important for keeping safe.

Lots of loving touch is crucial for babies' and toddlers' sensory and motor development, physical growth, emotional wellbeing and cognitive development. So hug away!

ACTIVITY 1

Be warned: this is going to get messy! Place a plastic tablecloth on the floor to make cleaning up afterwards easier. Display gelatine, rice kernels, sand, playdough, clay, water and syrup on the table cloth and let your child go wild touching all the items and experiencing each one's different texture. Explain what the words rough, smooth or sticky mean in terms of touch.

ACTIVITY 2

Put everyday objects inside an empty pillow slip, like a stone, sponge or small ball. Let your child stick his hand in and discover what the object is, using only his sense of touch. Ask him to take out a rough, soft, slippery or smooth object for you too.

ACTIVITY 3

Massage is not just for babies! Your toddler will love it too.

ACTIVITY 4

Allow your child to walk barefoot over different surfaces. Is it smooth or rough? Is it uncomfortable or ticklish? Let him walk over ticklish grass, then

over rough pebbles. Explain how your whole body can experience touch. Even if you cut your hair or nails, you can feel it even though it doesn't hurt. But if you were to break a bone in your body or get a cut or a sore, it hurts and the sensation is completely different.

SMELL

The sense of smell is already well developed at birth. It is also important for your child's emotional development. Toddlers' sense of smell plays an important role in social interactions, appetite regulation and emotions. A keen sense of smell helps your child orientate himself, warns him of danger, helps him distinguish between things and helps him remember events. His emotional experience of the world will be deepened if he can smell well.

ACTIVITY 1

Chat to your child about smells so that he develops a vocabulary around odours, such as stinky, sweet, yummy or sharp.

ACTIVITY 2

Make a "smell board" by pasting, for instance, ginger, basil leaves or oregano onto a sheet of cardboard, followed by softer fragrances like soap or flowers.

ACTIVITY 3

Gather together a range of objects, cover your child's eyes and let him identify what he's smelling. Use flowers, soap, grass, garlic, lemon, and even herbs.

ACTIVITY 4

Stroll through your garden and home and ask your little one to identify things that have a distinctive smell.

TASTE

Our sense of taste is not just about delicious food and drink. The mouth is a primary tool of investigation for a baby. When you encourage him to recognise different tastes, you help your baby's brain distinguish between tastes, textures and temperatures.

ACTIVITY 1

Encourage your child from his baby days onwards to explore a variety of foods. Describe them to him. Is it sweet or sour or salty or bitter? Do you like it? Is it rough or smooth? In this way, he'll develop a taste vocabulary.

ACTIVITY 2

Prepare a few different flavours of jelly or instant pudding. Dot a lined baking tray with the results and allow your child to touch and taste each one. Offer pieces of pineapple, apple or banana and let your child make an "artwork" on the baking tray. Naturally, he may taste a few bits in the process, or lick his fingers...

ACTIVITY 3

Read a story in which different foods are mentioned. Now cut small pieces of cheese, apple, orange or whatever was mentioned in the book (or foods that weren't) and feed your child pieces with his eyes closed. Ask him to identify the food by taste, and whether it appeared in the story.

ACTIVITY 4

Ask your child to help when you prepare food. ●

Exercising LARGE MUSCLE GROUPS

*Developing your child's gross motor capabilities
is the key to letting him explore his world.*

A child's gross motor skills development entails learning to use the muscles that control the head, shoulders, arms, back and legs in such a way that he can execute movements accurately and with exact timing. When your child is acquiring these skills, his muscles learn to cooperate with his brain and nervous system to make his body do what he wants it to do. Gross motor skills include balance, eye-hand and eye-foot coordination, integrating his left and right side, strong muscles that can resist pressure, and an awareness of where his body parts are in relation to himself (and space) even when he can't see them. These key skills are what help your baby make sense of his world and how to move around in it. And as much as we were all born to move, he learns how to do this gradually. Support your child in his natural need for movement.

8 TO 12 MONTHS

Your baby is suddenly mobile. He moves from sitting to crawling and cruising – soon he will walk.

TO AID HIS DEVELOPMENT

- Hold him under his arms and gently swing him from side to side.
- Softly bounce baby on your knee or a large yoga ball.
- Carry him with his tummy draped over your arms.
- Bicycle his legs.
- Use out-of-reach toys as temptations to roll over regularly.
- Similarly, use just-out-of-reach toys to encourage reaching and crawling.
- Place furniture close enough together so that he can cruise (walk while holding on) from one piece to the next. Gradually widen the space as his confidence grows. Soon he will take a step unassisted!
- Hold his hands and walk together (take care of your lower back).
- Give your baby as much floor time as possible.

12 TO 18 MONTHS

You can look forward to those first steps, and once that milestone has been reached, watch out, because he will rapidly improve and refine his walking. Pretty soon your little explorer will be wanting to climb steps and he can also learn to throw a ball (in a standing position) and try to kick it.

TO AID HIS DEVELOPMENT

- Help your baby get down stairs by teaching him the bum-first technique: turn him over onto his tummy and place his feet on the step below him.
- Become a jungle gym. Make a bridge with your body and let your baby crawl through the gap and over your back to sit on top of you.
- Play horsey with him on your back.
- Place his feet on yours and walk together while you hold his hands.
- Let your little one admire himself in a mirror while practising moves.
- Put your child on a big towel on the floor. You and another adult each grab two corners and gently swing him from side to side.
- Let your baby sit or lie on a towel while you gently pull him along the floor. He'll love it!

Tip

While playing, let your child shift position. For instance, let him try to catch a ball in sitting, standing and kneeling positions. This will challenge his body in new ways.

Did you know?

Try not to be overprotective but do help your tot out with particularly challenging tasks for his safety.

2 TO 3 YEARS

Your little one is becoming quite the acrobat. He can hop twice on one leg, and stairs no longer present a challenge. He can even walk backwards and stand on one leg for some seconds. He can catch a ball that's rolled towards him and can also throw a ball accurately at a target about half a metre away. He will start learning to pedal a tricycle and can walk along a straight line for about three metres. He can jump with both feet in the air.

TO AID HIS DEVELOPMENT

- Encourage your tot to try a forward roll on a soft mat. Provide support and make sure his chin is tucked into his chest when he rolls.
- Let him hang from a jungle gym horizontal bar or monkey bars, but remain close in case he slips.
- Provide a miniature pram, trolley or wheelbarrow to push.
- Get your kiddie a push bike. It strengthens his leg muscles and helps with left-right coordination.
- Let him ride a rocking horse – it's good for his upper body strength.
- Rock him to and fro in a large blanket.

3 TO 4 YEARS

Your clever kid can catch a ball thrown from 1.5m away, bounce it and throw it back with bent elbows. He can climb a jungle gym, slide and swing – all of which is excellent exercise for his large muscle groups. He can get up from crouching without assistance. He gallops, runs, walks, twists and turns and can walk on tippy-toe. He is able to jump up and down on one leg five times and balance on one leg for five seconds. He can jump forward with both feet and ride short distances on his tricycle.

Allow your child ample opportunity to balance, hang, pull, swing, bounce, hop, hit, stretch, bend, run, crawl, jump (up and forwards), roll, turn, climb, kick, slide, roll up into a ball, shake, tumble, catch, lift, jump rope, throw, gallop, skip, lift, push and walk.

TO AID HIS DEVELOPMENT

- Make your child imitate different animals: gallop like a horse, twist like a worm, jump like a bunny, run like a baboon.
- Build an obstacle course with hoops for him to squeeze through, chairs under which he must crawl, pillows to roll over, a rope to jump over, a balance beam to walk on, and so on.
- Play Simon Says, giving your child physical challenges to carry out, such as, “Simon says do a cartwheel” or “Simon says stand on one leg”.
- Let your child jump on a trampoline.
- With your child's hands on the ground, lift his legs and play “wheelbarrow”.
- Install a balance beam a few centimetres above ground and let your child walk

on it. When he masters one height, adjust the beam a little higher on one side so that he practises balancing up- and downhill. He can also try walking backwards and sideways (crab-walking) on the beam.

- Trace a meandering path with chalk on paved or tiled areas in your home and challenge your child to crawl along the route.
- Let him jump one-legged around boxes or trees, first on one leg, then the other.
- Hang sweets or treats on a tree, just out of reach, and make him jump to retrieve the reward.
- Place low hurdles on a path and let your child jump over them like a horse – or even use a hobby horse.
- Use balls of different sizes to play with. Encourage your little one to kick with both feet and to practise throwing and catching in a variety of ways.
- Play tug-of-war!
- Help your little one do forward rolls.
- Put on music and skip rope to the beat.
- Play Twister; it's a great way to learn left and right, too.
- Encourage your child to walk, march, hop or jog to the rhythm of some of your favourite tunes.
- Place a rope on the ground. The challenge? Your tot must walk on it without falling off.
- Lay sheets of paper out on the floor and get your child to try to walk across the floor by stepping from one piece of paper to the next. For added points, cut out giant footprints and play with those instead.
- Encourage your child to ride his bike often. Choose a push bike, trike, or bike (with or without support wheels) depending on his level of ability. ●



Red light

If a child's gross motor skills are inadequately developed, a vicious cycle can occur: Because he feels he's not good at a skill required for a certain activity, he may avoid that activity specifically because it requires use of that skill. But the more he refuses to use, say, the jungle gym, the more his gross motor skills in this field remain underdeveloped.

This affects his fine motor skills too, which may mean that he could struggle at school with writing, and could lead to his being isolated on the playing field.

Take note of what activities your child avoids and which he likes; this can yield valuable information about his motor skills.

LOOK & TOUCH

go together

Hand-eye coordination may look simple, but your child's brain and muscles have to work together in harmony to make these movements work.

Picking up a toy or bringing a piece of banana to the mouth may look simple to an observer, but it's actually a complicated task for your little one. He needs his eyes to see, his brain to process, interpret and understand what he's seen, and using that information, he must plan his next action. And on top of that his muscles must then work smoothly enough to be able to execute elegantly coordinated motor activities. Just think how many times a day your eyes and hands have to work together and you'll understand why you'd want your child to master this skill as well as possible.

Hand-eye coordination is linked to fine motor control. This refers to the body's ability to control the tiny muscles in the hands, fingers and eyes. Children's gross motor skills develop first – these are all the movements for which the large muscle groups are needed. It's important to provide plenty of opportunities for your child to practise her large muscle groups by

letting her run, climb, jump and crawl, as this is how she develops body awareness. This ability refines over time so that the smaller muscles of the body also soon fall into line under your child's total control.

WHAT DO THE EYES DO?

Our eyes need to see, to follow moving objects, to be able to focus near and far, to estimate distance, to observe detail and to then guide the movement of the hands.

Help your toddler

- Crawling and clambering games improve coordination.
- Any and all ball games: catch, throw, roll and kick.
- Playdough to stretch, press, form, shape and roll.
- Encourage your toddler to hop, jump and run.
- Do artistic activities such as colouring, drawing and painting.

WHAT DO THE HANDS DO?

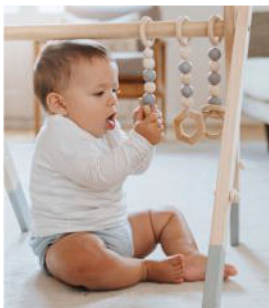
Our hands must feel texture, form, temperature and weight. Hands hold and manipulate an object, pull, replace, catch, throw, clap, rub, press or point. But without the guidance provided by the eyes, these actions would be useless.

HOW DOES IT DEVELOP?

At birth, your baby's eyesight is weak. It is only with exercise and repetition over a few months that he learns to track an object with his eyes. Initially the object has to be close by and moving slowly. Later, he'll start reaching for the object.

If he can grab hold of it, he'll put it straight in his mouth. These behaviours are all precursors to adult hand-eye coordination.

With toddlers, you'll notice that good hand-eye coordination and fine motor skills play a role in how a child learns to look after himself. Think of the skills and movements required for dressing, brushing teeth, and feeding yourself. Allow your little one plenty of time to practise and perfect his technique, though. It's not a race. And don't be tempted always to take over if you're in a hurry. Why? Because by schoolgoing



Help your baby

- Encourage your baby to track people and objects around him with his eyes.
- Provide opportunities for your baby to reach for and grab at objects. Encourage him to use both hands when he's holding an object.
- Play hand-clapping and block-bashing games together. He'll just love making noise with you.
- Give your baby a range of objects to hold so that he can practise holding different shapes, and talk to him about what makes them different. Watch out for the day when he can transfer an object between hands. Crossing the midline is a very important ability.
- Your baby will play with his own hands and be fascinated by them. This is a wonderful way for him to discover himself. Ensure he has plenty of time for this.
- Let your baby mouth things – it's an important skill and he is learning loads through oral exploration.
- Allow your baby the opportunity to investigate and explore things with his eyes. Hang a mobile from the roof and let your baby enjoy gazing at it.

age, hand-eye coordination and fine motor skills are the key to better performance in the classroom as these skills are used to learn to write, cut, copy off the board, and read. ●

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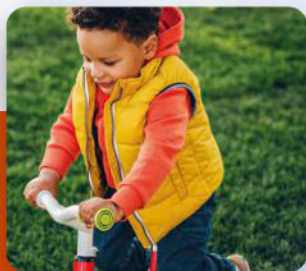
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FINE *tuning*

Right from birth your baby is learning how to use her smaller muscles. Help her with this task, in these ways.

Without fine motor skills, you wouldn't be able to write, use a knife and fork, or play the piano. And that's just the tip of the iceberg. Every day you successfully execute hundreds of movements using the smallest muscles in your body.

The way the muscles in your hands, fingers, wrists, toes, eyes and even your tongue work together to allow you to complete fine tasks accurately is known as your fine motor skills.

Children need this ability. They use their fine motor skills to manipulate objects and tools and to explore their world. Their fine motor skills eventually influence even their intelligence.

Gross motor skills, which are developed by climbing, crawling, running, jumping and hanging, form the basis for the development of fine motor skills. These skills are developed in conjunction with one another, so it's no use stimulating your child's fine motor capabilities if her gross motor skills are neglected.

For drawing, your child needs the small muscles in her hand so she



can grip the pencil correctly. But even if her small muscles are well developed, she needs strong arm and even back muscles so she can sit upright. Without this ability she'll struggle to keep her hand stable enough to draw accurately.

Did you know?

A child's skills develop from the top of her body to the bottom, and from the inside outwards. This is why tummy time is so important. It develops her rump, shoulder and hip muscles, and stability in the shoulders and upper arms is a necessary precursor to developing skills such as writing and cutting.



THE FIRST YEAR

Your newborn's hands are balled up into fists and only occasionally enter her field of vision. When she does see her hands, she has no idea as yet what they are! As her grasping reflex fades, her fists will begin to relax. Soon she'll be able to move her hands to her mouth, and so starts a new voyage of discovery.

By the age of three months, a baby's brain will be able to connect what she touches with what she sees, and she will start deliberately trying to touch interesting things. As she does not yet have enough control over her body to succeed, she'll look like she's wildly flailing her arms and will only randomly touch the object.

Between four and six months old, she develops the ability to grasp and grab an object intentionally, and in the following two months she'll focus on exploring everything around her with her eyes, hands and mouth. She can hold objects in two hands and bang them together, or move an item from one hand into the other.

She'll also start intentionally letting go of and dropping objects. By ten months old this ability will be well established. Now look forward to the

fun game of "Mom retrieves everything I drop, over and over and over again". It's a hoot.

Objects are now studied intensely. The pincer grip starts developing and soon your clever baby can pick up small objects between thumb and forefinger instead of using her whole hand to rake it closer.

By one year of age your little one should be able to pick up even the smallest breadcrumb from the floor using her pincer grip.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

- Give your baby plenty of opportunity to practise reaching for objects, first while she's lying on her back, and later during tummy time and finally while sitting.
- Hold an item your baby wants near the middle of her body so that she can reach for it with both hands, move it from hand to hand, and bang objects together.
- Provide containers into which your baby can drop the things she's holding.
- Provide smaller objects which she can hold using her fingertips.
- Offer finger foods.
- Invest in a musical toy with a pull-string mechanism.
- Good toys are entertaining as well as educational. Invest in: rattles, wooden building blocks in different sizes, a sandpit, toys to push and pull, bean-filled glass jars for making music, bath toys, your entire kitchen collection of plastic containers and lids, wooden and metal spoons, musical instruments such as a drum, and all sorts of balls.

THE SECOND YEAR

Your mini-genius can now hold a crayon (using the entire hand) and will start trying to draw a straight horizontal line. She enjoys watching moving objects, especially circular motions, and she practises her pincer grip all the time. She can use the shape sorter well, and can stack a few blocks on top of one another.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

- Offer your toddler plenty of opportunity to scribble, against horizontal and vertical surfaces.
- Let your child empty and repack drawers and open and close containers.
- Build block towers together.
- Play ball games.
- Challenge your toddler to trace lines you've drawn on paper.
- Playdough, playdough, playdough (See the recipe on page 50).
- Build four- or five-piece puzzles.
- Recite finger rhymes like Tom Thumb.
- Encourage your child to help getting herself dressed by attempting buttons or zips herself.

Clever toys to invest in include: push-and-pull toys, hoops, a tea set, a toy phone, construction toys (Duplo), wooden blocks, simple puzzles (the kind with knobs that sit in a recessed board), musical instruments, toy tools such as a hammer for hitting, crayons and paper, clipboard with large clips, shape sorters, threading toys.

THE THIRD YEAR

Your child is so advanced by now she can feed herself and drink from her own cup (at least without spilling all of the water). She can build easy puzzles and can form playdough into shapes. She can thread plastic beads onto string, and she can build a bridge using two parallel blocks with a third laid over them. She is starting to cut with scissors, although she may hold them with two hands for now. She can draw a circle and her pencil grip keeps improving.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

- Let her colour in large shapes.
- Let her try to cut different textures with scissors, such as newspaper, toilet paper and foil.
- Let her build towers and lines on the floor with her building blocks.
- Let her thread macaroni or large baubles on to knitting wool or string.
- Paste large sheets of paper onto a wall and allow her to draw or paint.
- Make sand art in the sandpit using sticks, feathers and straws.
- Allow her to wind an alarm clock or wind-up toy.
- Give her a large sheet of paper for fingerpainting.

If your child is struggling with sitting still long enough to complete these fine motor activities, chop and change them up regularly. As your child gets older her concentration span will improve.

Playing footsie

We walk without thinking twice about it, but it's actually a complex process. Our feet are full of tiny muscles which can benefit from fine muscle exercises. These ideas are fun:

- Pick up bean bags by pinching them between your toes and try to throw them to each other.
- See if you can pick up and pass a stick or twig to each other by foot.
- See how far you can walk while clutching a pebble with your toes.
- Try to pick up marbles with your toes.

THE FOURTH YEAR

Your child is able to draw faces and by four years old she can draw a human form. She's constantly improving with getting dressed and she can do up bigger buttons all by herself. Her cutting-out is improving, likewise her pencil grip, and she can trace simple line drawings.

Cutting-out and writing needn't be the main focus areas for this age group. Rather concentrate on activities your child enjoys, but which also require the finger and hand muscles that will later be used for cutting and writing.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

- Provide loads of opportunities for drawing.
- Practise colouring-in, and don't stress about going over the lines for now.
- Provide simple drawings of shapes to trace. First your toddler will be able to trace a circle, then a cross, then an X, followed by other common forms – triangles, squares and rectangles.
- Allow her to pick up objects with braai tongs or pliers.

■ Together, make a collage where she has to tear, cut and paste.

■ Encourage your toddler to build three-dimensional constructions out of her building blocks, such as bridges.

■ For playdough time, sometimes use tools such as rollers or cutters, and sometimes not.

■ When practising cutting, snip paper of different thicknesses and textures, as well as playdough, string and plastic drinking straws.

■ Can you resist popping bubble wrap? Neither will your son or daughter, once you show them how! Ensure your child is sitting properly when at her fine-motor work. Her feet should be square on the ground. (Place an old phone book or similar on the ground in front of her if the chair is too high.) Her hips, knees and ankles should all be at 90 degrees to each other, and her upper body should lean slightly forwards. The work surface should be at a height of 5cm above her elbows (measure with her arms hanging at her sides). ●

STRONG CORE

= strong body

When your baby is lying on her tummy, she has a chance to exercise the muscles she'll soon need for crawling, rolling over and walking. Here's how to help.

While tummy time helps stretch, strengthen and tone all your baby's muscles from head to toe, it is especially important for the development and exercise of the neck, back and trunk muscles. These muscle groups play a crucial role in your baby's healthy development.

In the long term, time spent lying prone lays the foundations for strong muscles that can work in a coordinated manner, so that your little baby may one day be able to hold a pencil well at school, have good balance and be able to jump, run and track objects with her eyes – which are all necessary for developing reading and concentration.

WHEN SHOULD I START?

Experts say you should let your baby spend short periods of time on her tummy right from birth. Lie her on your chest as you watch TV, for instance, or let her spend the short while it takes you to get her bath ready on her tummy.

As soon as she's a little older, she can move from your chest or bed onto the floor for short periods of tummy time to give her maximum freedom of movement. Even if she can't yet lift her head, tummy time will still work at strengthening those muscles. At about one month old your baby should already be able to turn her head from side to side while she's lying face down.



Tip

Try holding her in your arms and rocking her from side to side, with her tummy down.

HOW MUCH DOES SHE NEED?

Ideally, babies could be placed on their tummies after each nap, nappy change and feed – aim for a minute or two at a time, for starters.

As she grows, you can extend the time gradually, and by three months, your baby should be spending about an hour cumulatively a day on her tummy (divided into shorter sessions, of course).

BUT BABY HATES HER TUMMY TIME!

Many babies who are not used to regular tummy time protest against it – sometimes quite vocally! And even babies who are given regular tummy time may not enjoy it. But don't stop doing it just because your little princess is unhappy about it. Her long-term development is just too important. Rather keep tummy time sessions short – even if it's just a few seconds at a time – but repeat them regularly throughout the day as part of baby's routine, until she gets used to it. Tummy time sessions on your lap or chest are an excellent start.

DO THIS

TUM TO TUM Lie flat on the bed or a sofa and place your baby across your chest or stomach so that you can make eye contact with each other. Keep your hands near as supports in case she rolls off you.

LAP COMFORT Sit on a comfortable couch or chair and lie your baby face down in your lap, stretched out with her face at your knees. Rock her gently in this position by swaying your legs slightly. Keep your hand on her bum so she feels (and is) safe.

LOOK AT ME Roll a towel up and drape your baby's arms and chest over it. Now join your baby on the floor. Lie down flat, nose to nose with your baby, while you gaze and whisper sweet nothings to each other. Move your face from side to side to encourage her to track you.

CARRIER BAG Carry your baby with your arm between her legs and her tummy draped over your forearm. Prop her head and shoulders with your other hand, and keep her close to your chest, not extended out.

DOWN TO EARTH Let your baby lie flat on the ground (on a playmat). Provide interesting toys as a distraction, and choose a playmat with exciting pictures or textures to motivate her to lift her head. ●

Tummy time is only for play

Don't let your baby sleep on her tummy, as this increases the risk of SIDS (sudden infant death syndrome). Let your baby have tummy time while she's awake and with you.

CRAWL

like a champ!

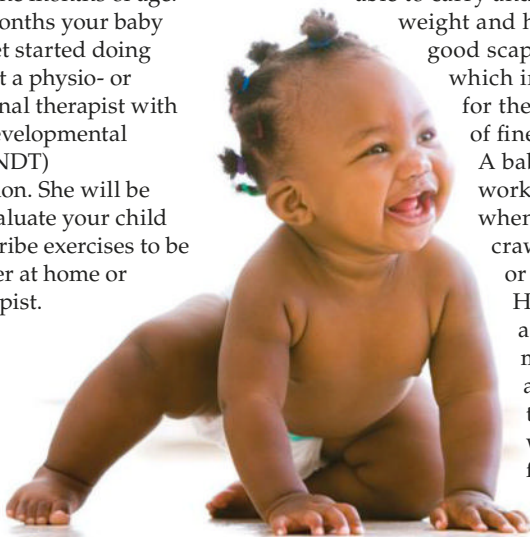
If your baby masters the art of crawling, it improves her chances of next mastering walking, reading, learning and writing. Read on to discover why this milestone is so important, as well as what you can do to encourage your baby.

BY WHAT AGE SHOULD MY BABY BE CRAWLING?

Every baby is unique and develops at his or her own pace. Genes and personality play a role and that's why it is important to avoid comparisons. Having said that, babies are generally expected to start to crawl between six and nine months of age. If by 10 months your baby has not yet started doing so, consult a physio- or occupational therapist with a neurodevelopmental therapy (NDT) qualification. She will be able to evaluate your child and prescribe exercises to be done either at home or by a therapist.

WHY IS CRAWLING SO IMPORTANT?

- Each developmental stage through which a baby passes lays foundations for the next one. Crawling is the precursor of standing up while holding onto furniture, cruising, and later, walking.
- Crawling signals that your baby is able to carry and shift his own body weight and helps him develop good scapular stability, which in turn is important for the development of fine motor skills. A baby also learns to work against gravity when he moves into crawling from a lying or sitting position. He lifts his head and strengthens the muscles in his neck and back. He learns to rotate his body, which is important for balance, and to control his hip movements.



■ His sense of touch is stimulated as he crawls across and gets to know and understand different textures and surfaces.

■ By crawling on, over, under or through furniture and objects, he begins to understand his body's dimensions in space. He also begins to understand spaces from the point of view of his body. This is important for learning reading and writing later.

■ He practises depth perception and distance estimation.

■ He gets to know his own body and how it relates to his surroundings.

■ Crawling supports the development of hand-eye coordination, coordination between arms and legs, and rhythm. A baby begins to realise that his body consists of a right and left side – a precursor to learning direction.

WHAT IF MY BABY DOESN'T CRAWL?

Experts warn that a baby's stomach, neck and back muscles will stay weakened if he doesn't learn to crawl. He will also tire faster and could struggle with acquiring writing skills later. He may have poor posture when seated at a table and he may find it difficult to sit still.

A child who never crawled may experience spatial difficulties and he may struggle with differentiating letters such as "d" and "b" at a later age.

There is also a greater risk of becoming tactile defensive in non-crawlers. Without enough exposure to varied textures a baby could develop

an aversion to touch and may not enjoy being touched by other children or dirty hands, or refuse to participate in activities where there is a danger of getting dirty, like playing with playdough. He may struggle with hand-eye coordination and crossing the midline, which will have a knock-on effect on developing the ability to ride a bike, skip using a skipping rope, or doing star jumps.

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

Give your baby plenty of tummy time as it encourages babies to press themselves up on their arms. Place tempting toys just outside of reach on either side of him. This will give your baby an incentive to turn his body and shift his body weight – both skills that are necessary to crawling.

Start with short periods of time, gradually building up to longer stretches. This will develop all sorts of muscles that are used in crawling. Remember that babies need to practise new movements and abilities over and over again to concretise and integrate these skills. Vary the textures: Let your baby lie on a carpet or on grass, even if he gets dirty.

WHAT NOT TO DO

Babies learn through first-hand experience. If your baby is constantly carried or spends long chunks of time in a car seat, baby seat or walking ring, he is likely to miss important opportunities for developing crawling. ●

Time to get **MOBILE**

Some do it at 10 months, others wait until their sixteenth month. What is the normal range for learning to walk? And when should you seek help?

CHILDREN WHO WALK EARLY

Early walkers are those who learn this skill before their first birthday. Some even walk as early as nine months, probably for inherited or genetic reasons.

The part of the brain that controls walking matures faster in early walkers than in other children. Early walkers are usually also fearless and determined. Interestingly enough, girls usually start walking earlier than boys, although nobody really knows why.

Remember that it's not necessarily an advantage to walk very early. If a child is already walking at nine months, it's likely he spent only a short time crawling. This can become a problem if your baby did not get a chance to develop good shoulder stability. By the age of six years you could see the knock-on effect in his fine motor skills, which may be lacking. However, children do reach milestones at different times, and early walking does not have to indicate any problems. It is more important that your baby's milestones are achieved in order (from the head down).

CHILDREN WHO WALK LATE

Late walkers are children who start walking between 15 months and two years. This child probably also learned to sit and crawl a little later than the norm. Late walkers often need their gross motor skills looked at and you can also expect a late walker's fine motor skills development to be a little behind. There is a chance that there could be fine and gross motor skills issues such as being clumsy or struggling with balance. A late walker may also complete tasks a little slower.

DOES IT MATTER WHEN MY CHILD LEARNS TO WALK?

In the end there is no difference between the skills and abilities of a child who walked at 12 months and one who waited until the 15-month mark.

Walking early does not guarantee you'll have a star athlete on your hands, nor does walking late condemn your child to a lifetime of two left feet and a position on the spectator seats of every sporting

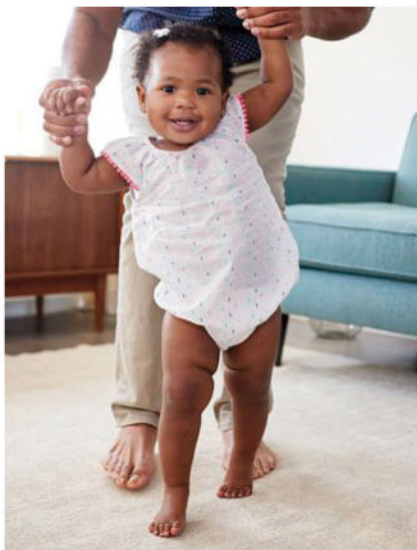
team from now on.

There is no connection between cognitive ability and when your child started walking.

Having said that, if your child is waiting to walk and you are worried, you could have her assessed.

A physiotherapist will be able to spot any physical issues that are impeding walking, or alternatively, if the delayed walking has had any other effects on other physical developments. She'll be able to assess how strong your child's back and tummy muscles are, as good trunk strength, control and rotation are important for walking. A child undergoing physiotherapy at this age will probably spend lots of time on the physio ball and balance beam and do lots of swinging activities. Balance apparatus is also used, where the child is treated while in sitting, kneeling and standing positions.

If a six-month-old baby is not showing any interest in sitting, best take him for an evaluation as it is likely walking will also be delayed later.



HOW YOU CAN HELP

- Play wheelbarrow with your tot.
- Encourage him to crawl as much as possible.
- Let him kneel and squat.
- Let him practise walking while holding onto moving objects such as a little wagon, pram or wheelbarrow.
- Let him sit on a swing and kick against a surface to get moving. ●

What not to do

Beware of walking rings as they interfere with normal gross motor skill development. While they do strengthen lower limbs, the thigh and hip muscles are not exercised, and those are precisely the muscle groups needed to learn walking. Rather let your baby spend time on the playmat and allow him to pass through his developmental stages in the usual way.

OWNSOME

isn't lonesome

With lots of love and patience, your little one can learn to love his own company for little stretches of time.

Being your baby's best friend can get really old, really quickly when you're desperate for a cup of tea or a shower. If only he could learn to play independently for a bit, it would be good for you, for him, and for your relationship. But it's easier said than done, because a tot under two can easily suck up all mom and dad's energy and attention – and then some. It's totally normal that he prefers your company above anyone else's, and his interactions with you remain the key to a world of learning and development. But as your toddler nears his second birthday, you can start guiding him to play by himself once in a while. Solitary play develops his self-confidence, independence, creativity and language abilities. To learn more about his environment, he must be able to separate from you occasionally. The ability to play alone also signals the beginnings of self-discipline.

Be realistic though. A bout of alone time does not mean hours in his own room at this stage. You have to pop

your head in at regular intervals and check that he's still okay. He also won't want to sit still and play with just one toy – that's simply not possible at this developmental stage. Take his temperament into account, too. Some children are calm by nature, others need more stimulation. You being involved in most of his games is still important to your toddler as he's still learning so much from you.

How much time you spend with your tot during the day will also influence how much time he'll spend playing independently. If he's in daycare all day, it stands to reason he'll need more of your attention once he's home.

Avoid pushing your child away just because it suits you. Your child needs to be ready for time alone, so take your cue from him. You can't force it. The safer your toddler feels, the more likely he'll enjoy bouts of solitude. Stay close and don't pressurise him to achieve independence he's not ready for. That will do more harm than good. ●

Top tips:

- Completely child-proof the play area.
- Give one toy at a time – too many can be overwhelming.
- Make a little alone time a part of your normal daily routine, perhaps during a quiet part of the day.
- Encourage him with loads of positive feedback. Tell him how you enjoyed seeing him play.
- Don't rush to the rescue the minute you see him struggling with something. Step back and give him a chance to figure out his own solution. If he succeeds, praise him.
- Remember that a sick, tired or otherwise distressed or unhappy toddler won't be able to play alone.
- Choose interesting toys that spark his curiosity. Toddlers enjoy sensory toys and toys with an element of discovery to them, because they are by nature little explorers. Toys that stimulate the senses are great: choose ones with interesting textures, scents, sounds, shapes, colours and so on, to keep him busy for ages. A toddler will only start using a toy functionally by about 15 months of age. Every playroom should ideally contain: blocks of different sizes, all sorts of balls, push and pull toys, sensory toys such as playdough and sand, a plastic box,

large inflatable toys and toys that make sounds.

- Show him how a game works – or how a toy fits together – and sit with him until you can see that his attention is absorbed. Then leave him to play by himself.
- Stay in the room for now but occupy yourself with something else. What you are doing shouldn't be so interesting as to distract your child from his game. Fold laundry and put it in his cupboard, for instance. If he tries to involve you, remain friendly, reacting briefly, but then continuing with your task. See if he can manage 15 seconds on his own, then join him again, then leave again to do something else, return, and so on. Gradually stretch his time alone but never leave for so long that he becomes anxious.
- If he quickly loses interest in a toy, try to refocus his attention. Ask a question about it or make a suggestion: "That's looking good! Can you add even more blocks?"
- Once your child is able to play in your presence for a period of time, you can start leaving the room. Always do it so that your child can see you leaving. Don't sneak out, as this can cause anxiety – and keep the separations short.

TOYS

that work

Here is our guide to simple and practical toys to stimulate your child and help her learn vital developmental skills.

6 TO 12 MONTHS

Your little baby has transformed into an explorer with an intense interest in the world around her. She loves playing with toys that can open and close, with buttons to press and bits to pull – and that have a reaction for her every action. She is refining her hand motor skills now too. Invest in toys that encourage her to make different movements.

- Floating bath toys. Perceptual ability, fine motor skills, problem solving.
- Shape sorters. Perceptual ability, fine motor skills, problem solving, object permanence.
- Stacking bowls. Hand-eye coordination, colour recognition.
- Stuffed toys and dolls. Touch, emotional security.
- Wooden building blocks. Fine motor skills.
- Shatterproof mirror. Self-awareness and social development.
- Cloth, cardboard or plastic books. Social and language development, visual stimulation.
- Finger puppets and jack-in-the-box. Object permanence, cause and effect.

1 TO 2 YEARS

Your toddler is a great mimic and constantly copies you. She's becoming more and more mobile and loves things that go, toys she can push, pull, drag and that help her move faster.

- Toy telephone, broom, ironing board, plastic toolkit (all to copy you). Social development, as well as gross and fine motor skills.
- Large soft ball. Hand-eye coordination, foot-eye coordination, gross motor skills.
- Sand and water toys. Perceptual ability, fine motor skills, problem solving, object permanence.
- A stable pushwagon. Balance, gross motor skills, encourages walking.
- Simple musical instruments such as rattles and a drum (made for infants). Auditory stimulation.
- Sit-and-ride toys. Gross motor skills, balance.
- Large toy cars and dolls and other pretend play toys. Fantasy play.
- Picture books with one picture per page. Language and social development.
- Jungle gym with swing and slide. Gross motor development.
- Wooden blocks. Fine motor skills, planning.
- Simple wooden jigsaw puzzles with pull buttons. Fine motor skills, motor planning, spatial awareness.

2 YEARS

Your tot is becoming ever more social, but still enjoys imitating you.

- Push bike. Balance, gross motor development.
- Soft toys and dolls in pram. Gross motor skills, imagination.
- Thick crayons & finger paint. Fine motor skills, touch, sensory stimulation.
- Simple books. Language development.
- Puzzles (four to six pieces). Fine motor skills, planning, spatial awareness.
- Outdoor wendyhouse. Imagination.
- Tea sets, cooking sets, toolkit. Imagination, imitation.
- Miniature farm and animals. Imaginative play.

3 YEARS

Fantasy play is at fever pitch. But your child also enjoys playing alongside – and sometimes even with – playmates.

- Superhero or fairy outfit. Imagination, social development.
- Playdough. Fine motor skills.
- Dress-up sets such as doctor or builder. Imagination, creativity.
- Puzzles (10 to 20 pieces). Planning, spatial awareness.
- Construction toys and mid-sized Lego pieces. Fine motor skills, planning.
- Plastic animals. Imaginative play.
- Paint sets, crayons, paper. Fine motor skills, creativity.
- Cars and dolls. Fantasy play.
- Tricycle. Coordination, balance.
- Balls. Gross motor skills, midline crossing, timing. ●

Make it fun!

Choose toys that are age appropriate, awaken your child's curiosity, encourage her to use her imagination and that are just simply lots of fun to play with!

Top tips

- Toys should be age appropriate. A toy that's too advanced will frustrate and discourage your child and she'll lose interest.
- Toys should be 100 percent safe. Watch out for small pieces that might come loose and pose a choking hazard.
- Toys must be fun, otherwise what's the point? You might think it's terribly stimulating, but if your little one disagrees, she's not going to touch it. End of story.
- You don't need a whole cupboard crammed with toys. Most kids can find hours of joy in a simple, empty cardboard box or other items lying around the house.
- Children can be overwhelmed by too many toys. Take a few out at a time and store the rest. Rotate them regularly so that she doesn't get bored with her playthings.

PLAY IT SAFE

at home

Babies and toddlers just love exploring, but busy hands and a home that's not been babyproofed are not a good combination! Here's how to make safety a priority.



IN AND AROUND THE HOUSE

- Cover exposed wall plugs so that baby's fingers don't end up in the small holes.
- Install baby gates at the top of stairs or at balconies where a baby might fall. Ensure the bars are not so wide apart that baby might squeeze through.
- Keep dustbins out of baby's reach and invest in tightly fitting dustbin lids.
- For now, take tall lamps out of your

lounge. It's not worth baby pulling the stand over and injuring himself, or breaking a window.

- Remember that many common South African plants are poisonous when ingested, and others pose a choking hazard. Screen your potplants.
- Keep all electrical cords and cables (from your landline, computer, lamps, stereos and other devices) well out of baby's reach.

■ Don't leave plastic carrier bags lying around. Your baby could chew on them or pull them over his head and choke.

■ Tablecloths are a risk! If your baby pulls himself up by grabbing onto a corner of the cloth, he could upend everything on the table on himself.

■ Gym equipment can be hazardous – a baby can easily hurt fingers in the spokes of an exercise bike or become jammed in an exercise machine's moving part, or pull weights onto himself.

■ Glass-panelled coffee tables are a no-no. It could shatter under baby's weight and injure him. Remove the furniture for now or replace the glass in it with an unbreakable material.

IN THE KITCHEN

■ Don't store toxic materials under the sink, where you always have done! Place your drain cleaners and bleaches in a high cupboard out of reach.

■ Consider baby locks on all drawers and cupboard doors to avoid baby opening them and possibly hurting himself.

■ When cooking, always move saucepans' handles towards the wall and use the back two cooking plates on your stove instead of the front, if you can.

■ If your baby can reach the oven's switches, inactivate them (perhaps by switching the oven off at the wall).

■ Wash empty cleansing agent bottles and containers out thoroughly before you place them in the rubbish or recycle bin. Even a drop could spell danger for a little baby.

Hint:

The best way to spot hazards to baby in your home is to crawl around each room on your hands and knees, observing from your baby's perspective.

IN THE BATHROOM

■ Keep medicine locked away on a high shelf where baby can't reach it.

■ Remove razors, soap and shampoo from the edge of the bath.

■ Cover your bath's taps with rubber protective sleeves to guard against burns or bumps while bathing.

■ Affix lockable clips to the toilet's lid so you can stop baby investigating the toilet bowl.

■ Never leave baby alone in the bath.

■ Keep the bathroom keys on the outside of the door so your child can't accidentally lock herself in.

IN THE NURSERY

■ Attach crib toys to the side of the cot that's against a wall. If baby pulls herself up on these toys, she won't fall out of the cot.

■ Don't hang pictures or wall decorations right over the baby's bed. If she pulls them down, they could strangle her.

■ Don't leave baby alone on the compactum or changing mat.

■ Use fire-resistant bedding.

■ Don't place heaters near the cot.

■ Babies under the age of one should not sleep with pillows in the cot. ●

MESS, what a glorious mess!

Messy play exposes your child to different textures and sensations. Here are our top four mess-making games.

MIGHTILY MUNCHY MESSY PLAY

The more of their senses children use at messy play, the better.

MAKE EDIBLE TOYS

Prepare a bowl of cooked spaghetti, instant pudding or jelly and place it outside on a paper-covered surface. If you use 15 to 20 packets of jelly or three to four packets of spaghetti you'll end up with an amount big enough to allow your tot to climb in and through the food, and be covered top to toe for a full-body sensory experience. Cook the spaghetti for longer than indicated on the packet so that it's soft, sticky and squishy. You can make different flavours of jelly or scent your spaghetti with essences, or toss it all into a plastic shell for your little one to wriggle into.

Provide large sheets of paper on which she can draw with the jelly, or paste the spaghetti into patterns. Encourage her to tie the noodles into knots or repurpose some into necklaces and bangles.

DRAWING WITH A DIFFERENCE

MAKE SAND ART

Mix white sand with different shades of food colouring. Stir until the sand has changed colour and let it dry. Pour the sand onto a flat container, such as a baking sheet with edges. Now make patterns in the sand, or trace it with fingers, hands and other utensils.

PAINT WITH SOAP

Mix soap flakes with warm water and beat until the mixture is thick and foamy. Place toddler and soap paint on a plastic sheet and delight in her glee as she covers the plastic with her art.

PAINT WITH FOOD

On a plastic sheet, place honey, ice cream, instant pudding mix or other food items and let your child make food pictures. You can even place a bowl of the mixture near an upright mirror or low window and let her paint there. Encourage her to taste her paint.



SLIPPERY SLIME

Kids love playing with slime! You can get it from toy shops, but it's cheap and easy to make at home as well.

DIY SLIME

Dissolve one cup of soap shavings (if you can't get soap shavings, use a cheese grater on a normal bar of soap) into two litres of warm water. Add food colouring if you like. Let the mixture congeal until it's thick and slimy. Beat it with an egg beater until it foams and pour into a bowl. Keep away from eyes. For a different recipe, add a cup of cold water slowly to two cups flour. Stir until the water is absorbed and add food colouring if desired. You can reuse your slime after it's dried – crumble it into a powder and gradually add water again. Let your little one loose with funnels, sponges, sieves, egg beaters and spoons from your kitchen for maximum fun!

PIGGY IN THE MUD

There's just no substitute for mud when it comes to good, clean messy play. If you don't have mud at home, get some from a nursery and keep it in a giant plastic clamshell at home.

BAKE MUD PIES

Stones, twigs and other items from the garden can double as your cupcake sprinkles and decorations. Your tot can use tools such as old yoghurt or margarine tubs and plastic spades. But best of all is if she uses her bare hands to dig and form a couple of sticky mud confections.

MUD FACE PAINT

Put on your oldest swimwear and get painting! Make war paint on each other's bodies and faces.

ENJOY A MUD BATH

Provide suitably wet, slippery mud and let your tot loose in just her panties! ●

Your little CREATIVE creature

Playing creative games with your tot helps her mental development. Use these 20 inspiring ideas for super fun.

1 Make a blanket fort. Simply throw a blanket or two over a couple of chairs or tables. Your child will love her “house”.

2 Fill a bucket with water and add bubble bath and plastic toys. Just add your toddler – but it’s a good idea to dress him in his swimming costume because he’ll be soaked by the time he’s done. Never leave your child near water unattended as this is a drowning risk.

3 Punch or cut differently-sized holes in an old shoe box. Now let your little one throw or squeeze a variety of small objects through the holes.

4 Make a collage for your child’s playroom. Use different textures such as sandpaper, rice kernels, sponges, smooth paper, sweet wrappers and crinkle paper. Your child can even help in the construction of the texture board by sticking bits on, painting some parts, ripping paper and passing items to you.

5 Let your toddler help you with chores – invest in a child-sized broom and let her help you sweep.

6 Children love plastic containers. Give her bowls and lids of different sizes to investigate and test out.

7 Fill a muffin pan with items such as dry pasta, unpopped popcorn kernels, and flour, and watch her experiment with textures, feelings and transferring bits in and out of containers.

8 Let your little one dig in the garden with a small spade.

9 Cover a child-size plastic table in newspaper. Squirt a small ball of shaving foam directly onto the surface and use your fingers to draw pictures, or simply squelch, smell and smooch it up.

10 Instead of throwing away bottle tops, collect them and let your little one play with them in a bowl – making sure all the while that she doesn’t put one in her mouth, as this is a choking hazard.

11 On a hot day, turn the sprinkler on in your garden and watch with joy as your toddler crows with delight. Remember the sunscreen!



12 Take a sheet of contact paper (such as you would use for covering school books) and attach it to a wall, sticky side out. Let your child stick all sorts of things onto the sticky surface, experimenting with different textures. Soon she'll have made her own piece of wall art!

13 Instead of finger painting, you could try foot painting. Take sheets of blank printing paper onto your patio. On the one side, place a shallow bowl of prepared watercolour paint – perhaps with a large bath sponge in the centre as a non-slip stepping surface. On the other side of the paper, place a shallow plastic bowl of lukewarm soapy water to wash feet with at the end. Let your kiddie enjoy walking across the paper and making footprints.

14 Slightly open your garden hose and let your child help you water the plants.

15 Crank up some of your favourite tunes and dance to the beat together! You could even dress up.

16 Widen her horizons: give your child the biggest paintbrush you've got and a bucket of water and allow her to go wild on the patio or an outside wall. The sun will soon dry off the evidence ...

17 Loosely wrap some of her toys in gift wrap and allow her to unwrap them. Bonus: she'll rediscover some old toys and treat them as new.

18 Older toddlers can start to enjoy playing dress-up – but keep it simple. A blouse or two, perhaps an old hat and a pair of grown-up shoes will be perfect.

19 If you keep a bottle filled with coins, let your curious little explorer have a good look and shake (make sure it's tightly closed). She might like the look of the light reflecting off the currency, or the sound of the “music” she can make with it.

20 Make a texture book. Use substances that look and feel different, such as cotton wool balls, loose pieces of velvet, foil, sandpaper and dry leaves. Allow your tot to pick up the things that catch her eye in the home or garden and incorporate them into your book. To the extent that it's safe to do so, let her explore everything by touch, smell, and taste. When you've completed the book, keep it on the shelf and take it down regularly to read – and add pages to! ●

Wash & PLAY

Bathtime is the perfect time to bond with your tot while having a good time and getting clean too. Try these tips and games.

Tip #1

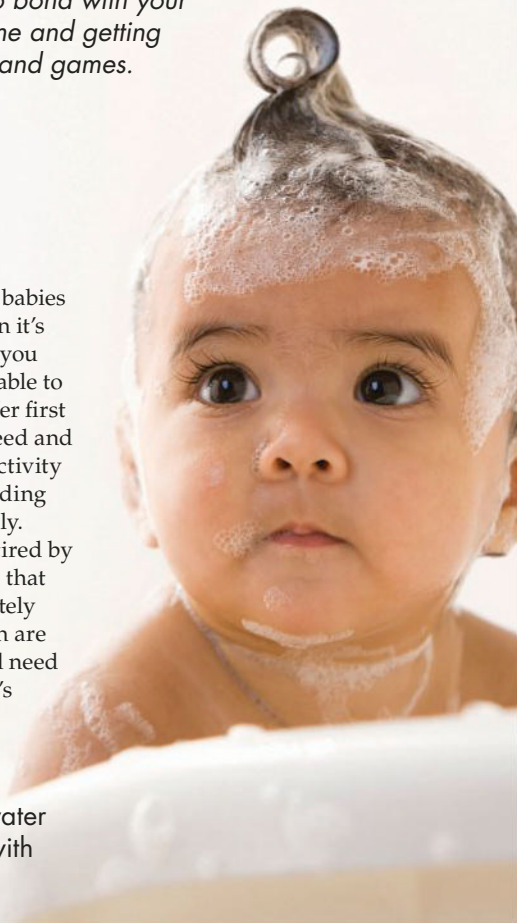
Never leave your baby alone in the bath!

CHOOSE THE RIGHT TIME

Some parents prefer to bath their babies in the late afternoon, because then it's ticked off the to-do list early and you have the rest of the evening available to do other stuff. Other parents prefer first to complete the day's chore list, feed and then bath their precious. Fit the activity into your day as you wish, depending on the unique needs of your family. Some babies and toddlers are so tired by the time they've had their supper that they need to go to sleep immediately afterwards – and hungry children are also not happy children! So you'll need to fit bathing in to suit your child's supper time and schedule.

Tip #2

Always first put the cold water into the bath and top up with hot water to minimise the chances of burning.



NOW THE FUN STARTS

Fill the bath with enough water to reach your toddler's belly button. The bath should be cooler than you would prefer for yourself, but not too cold – and remember to add baby bubble bath. Here are a couple of fun activities:

- Give your bub some cups and lids of different sizes and allow her to interact and experiment with different sizes, how much water each can hold, and how to pour water over into other containers. Kids love this.
- Place a mirror where your child can see herself. Put some foam on her face to make a “beard” – and don't forget to form a funny-shaped horn on the top of her head! Cue giggles.
- Give her a few differently-sized balls to bob along with in the bath.
- Use rubber duckies to illustrate buoyancy: dunk them under the water and show her how they come up again all by themselves. Let your tot try it herself, too.
- Use plastic books to read in the bath.
- Sing songs and make up silly rhymes.
- You can use bath time as an opportunity for learning body parts. Point to her toes as you wash them and say, “Here are your toes!” Depending on her age, your baby won't understand everything yet, but she'll soon be able to show you her nose, tummy or knees all by herself.
- Hold your child under her tummy and swoosh her through the bath from one end to the other to simulate the feeling of swimming.
- Show her how to splash (yes,

really!). Just place a few towels strategically around the bath, and bat away concerns about getting a few drops on yourself. You will – but the fun will be worth it.

- Use bath crayons to draw on the side of the bath.
- Lather her up with soap and give her a lovely massage while you are washing her. It's wonderfully relaxing.
- Buy fish and other plastic sea creatures and allow them to join you on your nightly bath. While you are playing with them, you could even make up stories about the underwater world they inhabit.
- Give your little one plenty of plastic bottles to fill up and empty while bathing. Most kids love the plug-glug sound as the bottle fills and empties.
- Sponges and loofahs are classic toys – just make sure it's a robust, harder type of sponge which won't disintegrate easily, else she might be able to chew a piece off and that poses a choking hazard.

DOUBLE THE FUN

Occasionally bathing together is a delight for both parents and children. It creates a sense of safety and intimacy if you spend time playing and bathing together. Every now and then, take it up a notch by investing in a water pistol and taking aim at each other. Some babies and toddlers are less keen on water than others – which is precisely why it is a good idea to bath with your child if she's not a natural water baby. ●

Let's make it! PLAYDOUGH

*Playdough is great for your child's development.
Follow this easy recipe to make your own.*

YOU'LL NEED

- 2 cups flour
- 1 cup salt
- 2 teaspoons oil
- $\frac{3}{4}$ to 1 cup water

INSTRUCTIONS

Mix the flour and salt together. Next add the oil and gradually pour in the water until you have the desired consistency. If you want different colours, divide the dough and add food colouring of different shades to each dough segment. When your little artist has perfected her creation, you can bake it in the oven for one hour at 250°C to harden it.



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