

fact sheet

TIPS FOR EXPECTANT AND NEW DADS



Becoming a dad is a life-changing event, but it's also a challenging one too. Babies require round the clock care and dads are involved now more than ever before. The juggle is real as you manage sleep loss and trying to keep focussed on work, as well as being involved as much as you can at home. Financial strains can also add more stress and you may not be able to do the things you used to do to let off steam and manage your stress levels. 1 in 10 dads experience perinatal depression and anxiety, so it is common but needs more open discussion and support options.

The self-care tips below can ease stress and add to your resilience and strength, Give some a go and see if it helps!

BUILD YOUR SUPPORT NETWORK

Relationships can change after a baby and sharing your parenting experience with someone else can lessen isolation and bring you closer. Maybe go and have a drink or go on a walk/run with a friend that you haven't seen for a while. Seek out family and friends who understand and can offer you some practical support too e.g. gardening, shopping, cleaning. This will benefit the whole family.

PRIORITISE 'ME-TIME'

'Me-time' is often perceived as selfish but in fact research shows that it increases; strength, resilience and overall wellbeing, and decreases anxiety, stress and feelings of overwhelm. It is hard to do as a new parent, but maybe in conversation with your partner you can work out how both of you can achieve this, making it regular, enjoyable and realistic. Most of your energy will be going into family and work, so the opportunity to re-charge is minimal but very important to do.

Keep active as men's physical health is known to decline during early parenting years whilst they juggle all the demands. Even a walk around the block at lunchtime can feel good and boost mood and lessen stress levels.

MAINTAIN CONNECTIONS WITH PARTNER/FRIENDS & WORK

The arrival of a baby changes the dynamic of your relationship overnight. As a new dad, it's common

to feel somewhat replaced in your partner's affections. Not only is she totally exhausted, but all her remaining energy is devoted to your child. Be kind to yourself and your partner.

Keep lines of communication open with your workplace and ask before baby is born about any flexibility with work hours, talk to your boss and other work mates about family friendly policies or ways to best to make this time work for you. Be firm about boundaries for yourself in terms of answering emails out of work hours and being around for family. It can also be useful to maintain connection to the workplace and have a catch up with a colleague if you are away on parental leave.

PLAY THE LONG GAME

New mums and dads worry if they don't feel the instant bond towards their baby and this is quite common but hard to talk about. It takes time to build up a bond with anyone if we look at how other relationships form. There is lots to manage in your transition to becoming a dad and you need time to adjust to it all. Talk to your partner about it and know it will happen. It can help to be involved in activities such as bathtime or reading a story, or everyday tasks involved in caring for your new arrival.

REMINDE YOURSELF OF WHAT WORKS FOR YOU

When we are under stress we sometimes forget what works well for us and can't access helpful ideas. Figure out what stabilises you, look at what you can control and be flexible with what you can't. There is so much to learn about your baby, partner and yourself. Practice good sleep enhancing strategies when you can and eat as well as you can too.

At Gidget Foundation Australia we are here to offer support if you need further help.

Please contact us on 1300 851 758. 🌸



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Gidget Foundation Australia exists to support the emotional wellbeing of expectant and new parents to ensure they receive timely, appropriate and specialist care.