A field guide for new dads

The First 90 Days

A calm, practical guide to what comes next, from the last weeks of pregnancy to your baby's three-month birthday.



For first-time dads and partners

Checklists | scripts | warning signs

A note before you begin

Congratulations. Whether the baby is weeks away or already here, you're in the right place.

Most baby books are written for the person giving birth. This one is written for you: the partner who wants to be genuinely useful, not just the person holding the diaper bag.

The next 90 days will be some of the hardest and best of your life. You'll be tired in ways you didn't know were possible. You'll also be needed in ways that matter enormously, both by your baby and by your partner, who is recovering from giving birth while caring for a newborn.

This guide is organized as a timeline. Each phase is short, practical, and built around what you'll actually face that week. You can read any section in about ten minutes, which is roughly the length of a 3 a.m. feed.

You don't need to be perfect. Show up, pay attention, and keep learning. Read one phase ahead when you can; if the baby is already here, jump to the phase you're in.

Welcome to the team. You've got this.



How to use this guide

1. **Read one phase ahead.**
   Read Phase one now. Read each next phase a few days before you reach it.

2. **Do the missions.**
   Each phase opens with a short list. Tick them off as you go.

3. **Keep the back pages handy.**
   The warning signs and support numbers are there for the moments you can't think straight.

What the notes mean

Pro move
Small things that make a big difference.

Good to know
Context that helps you understand what's happening.

Don't
Common mistakes, so you can skip them.

Call now
Signs that need a doctor, today.

Baby already here?
Start with the phase you are in. You do not need to catch up before this guide becomes useful.

A note on medical care
This guide is general information. Your baby's pediatrician and your partner's care team are your first call for anything that worries you. In an emergency, call 911 or your local emergency number.

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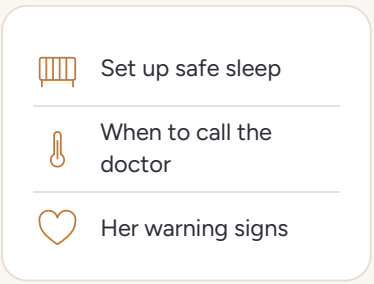
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Warning signs, support lines, logs

If you only read three pages



Then read one phase ahead as you go.

Phase two · 5-min read

Before you leave

Questions to ask

- [ ] When should the baby's first checkup be?
- [ ] How many wet and dirty diapers should we expect each day?
- [ ] What's the feeding plan, and what if feeding isn't going well?
- [ ] Was jaundice checked, and what should we watch for?
- [ ] What's her pain management and recovery plan?
- [ ] When is her follow-up appointment?
- [ ] Who do we call with questions at night?

Before the drive home

- [ ] Car seat installed and harness adjusted for the baby
- [ ] Weather-appropriate layers, no bulky coat under the straps
- [ ] Discharge paperwork in one folder
- [ ] Prescriptions filled or ordered
- [ ] A pillow for her, especially after a cesarean

Drive like you've never driven before

You will. Everyone does. Take the calm route and leave extra time.

The first night home

Expect	What to do
The baby may be more awake and want to feed often	That's normal. Many babies cluster feed in the evenings. Take turns and keep the lights low.
You'll check their breathing constantly	Also normal. Follow the safe sleep setup and trust it.
Nobody will sleep much	Start the shift system from night one, even if it feels premature.

Phase three | 5-min read

What's normal: feeds and diapers

Diapers tell you whether the baby is getting enough. That's why everyone keeps asking about them.

Day	Wet diapers	Dirty diapers	What stools look like
Day 1	At least 1	At least 1	Black and sticky
Day 2	At least 2	At least 1	Black to dark green
Day 3	At least 3	At least 2	Greenish, getting lighter
Day 4	At least 4	At least 2	Greenish yellow
Day 5 and on	At least 6	Varies, often several	Yellow, soft, and seedy if breastfed; tan and firmer if formula-fed

A common guide for the first days. Your hospital or pediatrician may give you their own, so follow theirs.

8 to 12
feeds in 24 hours is common in the first weeks

About 2 weeks
is when most babies are back to their birth weight after an early dip

Call the pediatrician if

Your baby has fewer wet diapers than expected, isn't feeding well, seems unusually sleepy or hard to wake, or you're worried for any reason. See the full list at the back of this guide.