

Having a baby is a lovely time to celebrate with family and friends, especially when you feel understood and supported.

**Advice for visitors:**

- Respect new parents as they are the experts on their baby and will ask for your advice if desired.
- Do not be offended if the new family wants some time to get to know baby before visitors come.
- Ask if the family needs anything on your way over.
- Be sure to wash your hands before touching the baby and consider rebooking your visit if you are sick.
- Ensure you are not bringing too many people as you do not want your visit to be overwhelming.
- Parents may be doing skin to skin time with the baby, so do not assume you can cuddle the baby. Please wait until you are offered.
- Do a task around the house, do not make parents wait on you, and make being there to help a top priority.
- Avoid saying, “a healthy mom and baby is all that matters”; birth experience matters too, particularly if it felt traumatic.
- If the baby has older sibling(s) make a fuss over them as well; they need to know they are important.
- Take a meal for the parents to have for later.
- Make sure you do not overstay your welcome; you can always book another visit.
- Remember to ask how the other parent is doing too.

**Advice for friends**

- Friends can often be great listeners. Sometimes new parents are more comfortable talking about parenting and breastfeeding with their friends rather than with family. Try to make the time to have a good chat or be a supportive ear.
- Becoming a parent is wonderful. However, parents may feel like they can't remember what they used to talk about before they had a baby. Friends may be better than anyone else at recalling what life was like before. Having friends to spend time with can do wonders for new parents. Friends can listen to new parents, vent or talk about their worries. It can really help make life feel normal again. Normalizing daily life and chatting about other things other than infant care can be a valuable mental break.
- If possible, it is great when friends can make themselves available to help. Some parents may feel uncomfortable asking for help from family. This can be especially true when family lives far away or perhaps they are concerned about being a burden to older parents. Friends may want to make themselves available to help or offer support where needed. Knowing someone is there during this time of change can make all the difference.

**Advice about grandparents:**

- Grandparents may want to help by offering advice they were given when they were new parents. However, there has been a lot more research in parenting and breastfeeding since then and information may have changed.
- Grandparents may not have breastfed and may have difficulty knowing how to be supportive of breastfeeding goals. It can be hard to hear things like, “you don’t need to breastfeed because formula was fine for us”. Understand this may have been true at the time and they may not have had the support or information available today. Research suggests that babies who are breastfeed have reduced risk of infections and conditions like eczema and asthma.
- Grandparents naturally look forward to spending time with their new grandchild. When a mother and baby are breastfeeding, grandparents may not be immediately involved in feeding or babysitting. Being understanding and patient will help everyone to support each other and avoid disappointment.
- Speak to grandparents about your decision to breastfeed and let them know how much you would appreciate their support and to help looking after older children.
- There are so many ways grandparents can help out; grandparents may want to help by do some cooking, cleaning, or shopping as new parents may not have the time.
- Grandparents can really help by listening without necessarily offering answers. Sometimes parents just want a supportive ear from a family member.
- Grandparents can help change clothes, bathe, and cuddle the new baby.
- Grandparents can take grandchildren for a short walk so parents can shower or have a few moments to themselves.
- Grandparents can bond by taking grandchildren for a walk around the house and show them their new world. Play games, make them giggle, or try a rattle. Rock the baby, hold them close so they hear your heartbeat. This all helps babies develop their senses and feel attached. Talk, sing and swing; babies love sounds and movement and it will help them to get to know their grandparents’ voice.

*In this document, we use terms such as “mother” or “father”. However, parenting takes on many forms and some parents may wish to use other terms. We also use “breastfeeding” while some prefer “chestfeeding”. If this applies to you, please let us know and we will respect the terms you identify with.*