

INFORMATION FOR NEW FATHERS

With the arrival of a new baby in your home, it is inevitable that some adjustment must be made to the amount of time you spend at home versus how much time you spend at work. There is no 'perfect' balance; every family is different. It is up to you and your partner to decide the type of parents you want to be and to work out a balance that suits your particular family and work situation.

Your chances of finding a good balance are greater when you work together:

- If possible, take time off when your baby is born to help your partner and get to know your baby.
- Help care for your child, such as getting up in the night, feeding, dressing, washing nappies, as well as playing and reading. Practice builds confidence as well as skill.
- Find out more about child behaviour and child development.
- Talk to your employer about your family needs. Tell them how important your role as a father is to you and that at times you may need some flexibility.
- Explore the family-friendly policies your work offers. What will suit you and your family?
- Look at the hours you work. Is there room for change?
- Talk to your friends and find out what they do to balance work and family.

Dealing with postnatal depression

- Talk openly with your partner, especially if you suspect postnatal depression (PND).
- Listen to and accept your partner's feelings, try to understand and anticipate her needs.
- Be supportive and reassure your partner that you will be there for her and that she will get well.
- Look after your baby when you can. Your baby will continue to need a lot of love and attention at this time.
- Encourage your partner to join a support group or speak to another woman who has experienced PND.
- Your help around the home and with your baby is important. Remember that there is a difference between being helpful and taking over.
- Family and friends are often able to give you practical support.
- Seek assistance from a professional who you both trust such as your General Practitioner, child and family health nurse, community health centre or parenting line.

Based on information developed by Good Beginnings Australia.

http://raisingchildren.net.au/articles/work_and_family_dads_finding_a_balance.html
(accessed 25 November 2008)

http://www.goodbeginnings.net.au/files/Fathering_Dads_can_make_a_difference_to_Post_Natal_Depression.pdf (accessed 25 November 2008)

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