Your Employee Assistance Program is a support service that can help you take the first step toward change.

Tips for When Baby Comes Home for the First Time

Congratulations on your new baby! The joys of parenthood are filled with so many new emotions, such as joy, pride, happiness and wonder. But aside from all of the baby talk and cooing from many of your friends and relatives, a reality of many sleepless nights, tension and fatigue are ahead.

While the stress of a new baby may not go away altogether, there are some ways for you to make this a more enjoyable and smoother journey for both you and your new little bundle of joy.

Accept help. There's no need to take on sole responsibility for baby care. Divide this up between you and your spouse. Also, take your friends and family up on their offers to help out. Tasks like house cleaning, laundry, grocery shopping and cooking, can be handled by others to free up your time. If your budget allows, you can also hire some outside help.

Let the machine take it. The constant ringing of your telephone can take your attention away from what you're doing at the moment. While it's great that your friends and family want to know how you and the baby are doing, it can also be a distraction while caring for your newborn. Record a friendly greeting to thank them for calling, and mention that you will try to return their call whenever it's convenient for you.

Remember your own health. It's hard to care for a little one if you're sick or stressed out. Newborns require your full attention and care, so it's important that you're fully able to cater to them. Try to get some rest at the same time your baby is napping and avoid using your baby's naptime to catch up on daily chores. There will be many adjustments during this time, and your health and well-being is much more important than a spotless house.

Build a support system. Being a new parent is a very rewarding experience, but it isn't easy. Realize that you're not alone in this journey and that there are people you can turn to for help and advice. Get together with other new parents at your local community center or local hospital. Talking about your experiences and sharing effective parenting strategies will help you through this time and will help you feel less isolated.

Get some fresh air. If the weather permits, try to spend some time outside when you start feeling overwhelmed or if your baby becomes really fussy. A breath of fresh air and natural light will help both of you feel calmer. When outside, dress your baby up appropriately and stay out of direct sunlight. Going outside will not only help you relieve stress, it's also a healthy way to share some personal time with your new baby.

Having a newborn is hard work, but do remember that all this stress is temporary. Like any new learning experience, you will encounter both good and stressful situations. Enjoy and revel in the happiness, pride and amazement of being a new parent. Take each day one step at a time, and pretty soon parenting will become second nature to you.

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