

## Be positive and offer support.

Care for the expectant mom — cook dinner, rub her feet or back, help where you can so she gets the rest she needs.

## Attend the ultrasound and obtain an ultrasound picture of your baby.

This first photo will be a priceless memento that you can take home to show family and friends.

## Encourage the mother-to-be to have three nutritious meals per day and healthy snacks too.

A healthy eating plan is a great gift for your soon-to-be-born baby. It will help the mother-to-be feel good during her pregnancy and will contribute to the baby's health, as well.

## Attend a fatherhood program.

Learning to be a father takes time and experience. Connect with other fathers and learn how to become the father you want to be for your child. Many programs offer classes for new dads.

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JFS 08129 (Rev. 7/2019)

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# 10 Ways Fathers-to-Be Can Help



Having a baby is a special and emotional time for both the mother and the father. Many fathers-to-be like helping their partners through pregnancy from beginning to end. Although the mother carries the child for nine months, the father has an equal responsibility in preparing for the baby. There are many ways a man can prepare himself for fatherhood.

First-time fathers may not know what to expect and what role they can play during the birth. Apart from being present for major appointments, such as ultrasound scans, fathers-to-be can also help by being more accommodating to the needs of their partners.

It is important to talk with your partner and tell her how you feel during the pregnancy—and ask her how she feels, too. This will help develop a bond that will continue to build during labor and after birth.



### **Establish paternity.**

If you're not married to the mother of your baby, learn your options for establishing paternity. Research shows that infants with a father's name on their birth certificate are twice as likely to survive their first year of life as infants without a father's name on their birth certificate.

### **Encourage the mother-to-be to breastfeed your child.**

Expectant fathers can be powerful advocates for breastfeeding. Three quarters of women whose partners attend breastfeeding promotion classes initiate breastfeeding. Breast milk is FREE.

### **Create a smoke-free environment.**

Pregnant women who smoke and/or are exposed to secondhand smoke are at greater risk of giving birth to underweight babies, and their babies are at greater risk for a variety of health problems.

### **Accompany the mother-to-be to all medical appointments.**

Going with the mother-to-be to her medical appointments will allow you to see how your baby is growing. You may also be able to hear your baby's heartbeat.

### **Create a safe and peaceful environment.**

Physical and emotional abuse can damage the mother-to-be, as well as the baby. According to research, expectant mothers who live in unhealthy, abusive environments are at a much greater risk for delivering prematurely and for having babies with birth defects. Be a source of peace.

### **No drug or alcohol use.**

Drug use during pregnancy can cause premature births and birth defects. Create a substance-free environment.

