

LIFE WITH A NEW BABY – SOME PRACTICAL IDEAS (in no particular order!)

Your clothes will be frequently dirtied by your baby. Protect yourself with muslin squares, and wear clothes that are easy to launder.

Make night feeds as easy as possible. Don't change the baby's nappy unless it is soiled or very wet, as this will really wake him/her up! A snack and a Thermos of hot drink are welcome companions at 2.00am! If you have a dim light, you can read whilst you feed.

Simplify housework, or, better still, get someone else to do it.

Before the baby comes, buy large supplies of non-perishable food, household supplies and baby toiletries.

When you bath your baby, save your back by putting the bath on a table, or work surface. Likewise for changing the baby's nappy. Always get everything you need ready in advance as you can't just fetch something you've forgotten!

When changing your baby's nappy, cover the changing mat with a towel, to absorb the almost inevitable wee, and place a muslin square on his/her tummy over clothes for the same reason.

If you keep your baby's changing bag packed, you can pop out at short notice.

Decide on your priorities, and try to do something important to you each day.

It is often easier to follow your baby's timetable rather than your own at first. It is impossible to spoil a tiny baby. Try to sleep when s/he does, and take the phone off the hook to avoid being disturbed.

Try to discuss potential problems together, to avoid resentment building up, eg:

- How are you both going to get enough sleep?
- How is your social life going to change?
- How are you going to make time for your own relationship?
- How will the way you were brought up affect your ideas on parenting?

If you have a baby who is hard to calm, try the following:

- Sounds – womb tape, radio, records, singing, vacuum cleaner, washing machine
- Contact – cuddling, massage, stroking, carrying in a sling
- Movement – go for a walk, rock in your arms, go for a drive, swing gently
- Escape – ask someone to look after the baby, even if only for a short while
- Talk – to friends with new babies. Find support through your Health Visitor, NCT teacher, NCT post natal groups etc.

You know your baby better than anyone. If you are worried, seek help. If your baby is ill, take him/her to the GP. Note down the things you want to ask, as it's easy to forget.