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### Toddlers: Sharing & learning to share

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### Doing your family vacation right

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### 10 adorable facts about babies



1. During the nine months between conception and birth, a baby's weight increases by 3,000 million times.
2. The brain of a newborn accounts for 10% of its total body weight. In adults this figure is down to 2%.
3. Babies are born with natural swimming abilities and can hold their breath. However, this ability quickly disappears.
4. Most newborns will lose all the hair they are born with in the first three or four months of life.
5. An average baby will go through approximately 2,700 diapers a year.
6. Babies typically prefer a female voice over a male voice, which may explain why people raise the pitch of their voice when talking to babies, otherwise known as "motherese."
7. A newborn baby has about one cup of blood in its body.
8. After birth, the human brain never then doubles to reach 60% of its adult size by the time a baby is 1 year old.
9. Newborns are more likely to turn their head to the right than to the left.
10. At birth, babies have no kneecaps. Kneecaps do not develop completely until after six months.



### Antenatal care

Antenatal care is the care you receive from healthcare professionals during your pregnancy. You'll be offered a series of appointments with a doctor who specializes in pregnancy and birth (an obstetrician).

They will check that you and your baby are well, give you useful information to help you have a healthy pregnancy (including healthy eating and exercise advice) and answer any questions you may have.

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### To be dads: Supporting your pregnant partner

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## Sharing & learning to share

Learning to share can be a challenge for young children, but sharing is a skill they need for play and learning throughout childhood. You can help your child learn to share by giving her plenty of time and opportunities to practice. Praise and encouragement for good sharing will help too.

### Why sharing is important

Sharing is a vital life skill. It's something toddlers and children need to learn to make and keep friends and play cooperatively.

Once your child starts having playdates and going to child care, preschool or kindergarten, he'll need to be able to share with others.

Sharing teaches children about compromise. They learn that if we give a little to others, we can get some of what we want as well. Children who share also learn how to take turns and negotiate and how to cope with disappointment. These are all really important life skills.

### Helping your child learn about sharing

Children learn a lot from just watching what their parents do. When you model good sharing and turn-taking in your family, it gives your children a great example to follow.

Children also need opportunities to learn about and practice sharing. Here are some ways to encourage sharing in everyday life:

- Point out good sharing in others. You can say things like, 'Your friend was sharing her toys really well. That was very kind of her.'
- When you see your child trying to share or take turns, make sure you give lots of praise and attention. For example, 'I liked the way you let Aziz play with your train. Great sharing!'
- Play games with your child that involve sharing and turn-taking. Talk your child through the steps, saying things like, 'Now it's my turn to build the tower, then it's your turn. You share the red blocks with me and I'll share the green blocks with you.'
- Talk to your child about sharing before she goes on play dates with other children. For example, you could say, 'When Aisha comes over, you'll need to share some of your toys. Why don't we ask her what she wants to play with?' You can also talk to your child about sharing before heading off to child care or preschool.



Although it's important to share, there are some toys that children can keep for themselves. It's a good idea to put away these special toys when other children come to play at your house. This can help you avoid problems with sharing.

### When your child won't share

Sharing can be a challenge, especially at first. Most children need practice and support to develop this skill.

If your child doesn't share well, you can try practicing together at home and talking about what you're doing. For example, 'Let's share this banana. You can have some, and I can have some.'

Another strategy is to stay nearby when your child plays with others, encouraging him so he doesn't forget to share.

There's no reason to avoid playdates if your child has trouble sharing. Instead, use them as a chance to help your child practice. When she does try to share, you can say exactly what she did well and how proud you are. Consequences for not sharing

It can help to create consequences when children don't share. For instance, if siblings are fighting over a toy and not sharing, a reasonable consequence might be to take away the toy from both of them for a short period of time.

When you use consequences for not sharing, it's important that the consequences relate to the thing that's being shared - or not shared! For example, if children aren't sharing a toy train, you might take the train away. Neither child can play with the train, so this feels fair to both. It can also get your children thinking about what they need to do if they want to play with their toy together.

When you think they're ready, you can give the toy back so your children get another chance to show they can share.

### Toddlers

Your toddler probably doesn't have an understanding of what sharing is. In general, toddlers believe they're the centre of the world and that everything belongs to them. So consequences for not sharing aren't likely to help your toddler learn to share. Encouragement and practice are likely to bring better results.

By age three, many children will start to understand the concept of turn-taking. But they might still throw a tantrum if another child takes a toy that they want.

When another child has something your toddler really wants, your child will probably find it very hard to wait his turn. He might even try to get the toy any way he can.

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## Doing your family vacation right

No matter how well traveled you are, traveling with young kids is a very different experience than solo backpacking or couples travel. With no experience as traveling parents, you are bound to have questions along the way: How do we get a passport for a baby? Do we need to get clearance from a doctor before we travel? What do we need to pack? Will we get any sleep if we share the hotel room with our little one? How do we keep him entertained? What if something happens abroad?

Here are some relevant tips to make travel easy and fun:

### 1. Book accommodations with separate sleeping areas

Choose accommodations that offer one- or two-bedroom suites instead of the standard hotel room with two beds. You'll pay a little more for this convenience, but a good night's sleep is the key ingredient to a successful family trip.

Consider this: If everyone is piled into one room, you'll likely have to go to sleep when your kids do. Now, if it's been a long travel day and sleep is what you're after, this won't be an issue. However, if you want to have a drink, read a book, watch a movie, or have a conversation, it's best to book accommodations that will give you and your kids separate sleeping areas.

Not every hotel offers one- or two-bedroom suites, so you need to do a little more research.

### 2. Play it safe; make reservations

Before kids, we rarely made reservations in advance. Part of the adventure is arriving without a plan and allowing the moment to guide you, right? The problem with this travel style is that when you have kids you need to consider their threshold for being uncomfortable.

Do yourself and your kids a favour: make hotel and transportation reservations ahead of time to avoid unnecessary frustrations.

Don't assume that your hotel or apartment rental will have a crib or high chair available. Call ahead to confirm availability, even if the hotel's website states that it has cribs on hand (they may be used by another guest during your stay).

### 3. Protect yourself and get proper travel insurance

Travel insurance can feel like an annoying, unnecessary expense, but it's always best to play it safe, especially with young children. This is not the time to cut corners to save a buck, so get the right plan that protects everyone.



### 4. Load up your tablet

Being able to have our kids watch their favourite shows is a life saver, especially on long flights and in the evenings when we need some quiet time. It might be a good option to carry two, so while your kid is busy on one, it doesn't come in the way of getting your work done/compromising on your source of entertainment.

### 5. Choose your destination wisely

Choosing the right destination can make or break your family trip. It's important to consider your children's needs, but it's equally important to visit a place that interests you. Most destinations have some form of amusement park or family-friendly attraction, so when you make your short list, look for destinations that have some adult fun for you, too. Do you still travel with a stroller? If so, consider destinations with proper streets and sidewalks, as it will be easier to get around than trying to navigate jungles and more-obscure places.

Long travel days are hard on the little ones, so it's wise to pick a destination that has direct flights. Choose hotels that are centrally located and/or close to attractions (like the beach), which reduces the need for taxis or public transportation. Make sure to factor these things in when picking a destination.

### 6. Treats and surprises are always a good idea

Bring small presents and/or treats and reward your little ones for good behaviour. When on a long flight or train ride, give your children a small present like a toy car, puzzle, or colouring book. Not only does it encourage good behaviour, it keeps them entertained.

It's a good idea to let your children choose a few small souvenirs from the places you visit so they have a memento from the trip.

### 7. Check your ego with your bags

Most parents fear the dreaded meltdown while on a flight. The anxiety level of parents rise the moment the baby gets irritable and fussy as they don't want to disturb others on the plane.

But the reality is that even the calmest of children have a breaking point. Crying and misbehaving will happen, so it's up to you to roll with the punches. How you react will set the tone for future flights. If you freak out too, there's a good chance your children will associate air travel with daddy and mommy being angry.

Don't worry about what others think. Many people on the plane are parents that have been in your position before. They are empathise with you and are usually willing to give a hand when needed.

Stay cool. Smile. Ask for help. It will be over before you know it.

### 8. Slow down

If there's one tip I'd like all traveling families to take, it's this: slow down!

Don't try to replicate the way you used to travel before kids. Things are different now, so try not to squeeze too many activities or sightseeing into one day. Enjoy your big activity or adventure in the morning when everyone is fresh and recharged. Break up the day and spend some quiet time back at the hotel before you venture out again.

The most enjoyable travel experiences are the ones where we've set proper expectations for each day. Remember, travel is supposed to be fun. So make it fun!

Family travel doesn't have to be a daunting experience that should be put on hold "until the kids get older." It takes a little more planning and an adjustment of attitude, but you'll be so glad you made the extra effort when you see the positive impact travel will have on your children...and you.

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## Antenatal care

### What is it?

Antenatal care is the care you receive from healthcare professionals during your pregnancy. You'll be offered a series of appointments with a doctor who specialises in pregnancy and birth (an obstetrician).

They will check that you and your baby are well, give you useful information to help you have a healthy pregnancy (including healthy eating and exercise advice) and answer any questions you may have.

### Starting antenatal care

You can book your appointment with your GP as soon as you know you are pregnant. He can put you in touch with the nearby OB.

It's best to see them as early as possible to obtain the information you need to have a healthy pregnancy, and because some tests, such as screening for sickle cell and thalassaemia should be done before you're 10 weeks' pregnant.

### Antenatal appointments

If you're expecting your first child, you'll have up to 10 antenatal appointments. If you've had a baby before, you'll have around seven antenatal appointments.

Early in your pregnancy, your doctor will give you written information about how many appointments you're likely to have and when they'll happen. You should have a chance to discuss the schedule with them. If you can't keep an antenatal appointment, let the clinic know and make another appointment.

Your antenatal appointments should take place in a setting where you feel able to discuss sensitive issues that may affect you, such as domestic violence, sexual abuse, mental illness or drugs.

### Your first visit

At this first visit, you will be given information about:

- Folic acid and vitamin D supplements
- Nutrition, diet and food hygiene
- Lifestyle factors that may affect your health or the health of your baby, such as smoking, recreational drug use and drinking alcohol
- Antenatal screening tests, including screening for sickle cell disease and thalassaemia, infectious diseases and screening for Down's syndrome.

It's important to tell your doctor if:

- You've had any complications or infections in a previous pregnancy or delivery, such as pre-eclampsia or premature birth
- You're being treated for a chronic disease, such as diabetes or high blood pressure
- You or anyone in your family have previously had a baby with an abnormality, such as spina bifida
- There's a family history of an inherited disease, such as sickle cell or cystic fibrosis
- You know that you are a genetic carrier for an inherited condition such as sickle cell or thalassaemia. You should also tell the doctor if you know the baby's biological father is a genetic carrier for one of these conditions
- You have had fertility treatment and either a donor egg or donor sperm

An important part of antenatal care is getting information that will help you to make informed choices about your pregnancy.

### Questions you might be asked

The doctor might ask about:

- The date of the first day of your last period
- Your health
- Any previous illnesses and operations
- Any previous pregnancies and miscarriages
- Ethnic origins of you and your partner, to find out whether your baby is at risk of certain inherited conditions, or other relevant factors, such as whether your family has a history of twins
- Your job or your partner's job, and what kind of accommodation you live in to see whether your circumstances might affect your pregnancy
- How you're feeling and whether you've been feeling depressed

Your booking appointment is an opportunity to tell your doctor if you're in a vulnerable situation or if you need extra support. This could be due to domestic abuse or violence, sexual abuse or female genital mutilation.

### Later visits

From around 24 weeks, your antenatal appointments will usually become more frequent. However, if your pregnancy is uncomplicated and you are in good health, you may not be seen as often as someone who needs to be more closely monitored.

### Later visits are usually quite short. Your doctor will:

- check your urine and blood pressure
- feel your abdomen (tummy) to check the baby's position
- measure your uterus (womb) to check your baby's growth
- listen to your baby's heartbeat if you want them to



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## Get your groove back after the baby

During pregnancy you prepare by researching and buying gadgets and gizmos that sound fantastic for your baby's development. But nothing can truly prepare you for the moment your baby is passed to you.

Just like that... with the flip of a switch your life is forever changed.

Once our babies are born, everything we think of and do is for them. Well Moms, who you are and how you feel is absolutely important too! In fact, you resolving this identity crisis and getting your groove back is probably the best gift you can give your baby.

Here are some nuggets on how to make it happen.

### Overcome inadequacy and insecurities

#### #1: Cut yourself a break, Name it to tame it!

Life pre-baby most likely was one filled with knowing what your day looked like, knowing how to do your job and knowing your strengths. Post-baby you are faced with the hardest and most important job of your life, taking care of your baby 24 hours a day in every way possible. Now that is a tough career change, massive promotion (with no past experience) and get this... all this with no breaks and no supervisor to teach you. No wonder you feel overwhelmed and out of your league. Acknowledge this is all new for you and it is OK to not know exactly what to do. Use strong self-talk, "I am feeling completely unsure but that makes sense since I have never done this before. It is so normal to feel this way. It is going to get easier and better."

#### #2: Create your village and increase your knowledge.

The best way to tackle that "insecure and inadequate" feeling is to call in the troops. It takes a village to raise a baby, right? Well then why does it feel so isolating? It doesn't have to. Create the village! Connect with a mom friend who has been through it recently (I don't recommend one with older children who might have forgotten how fragile and tough the first few months are). Attend a Mommy and Me group. Take an infant care class. Take time to educate yourself to build your skill set in your amazing and challenging new job as Mommy! Speak to the CareNine case manager on tips to handle the stress.

### Reattach to who you were before the baby

#### #1: Do something every week that you love.

Maybe you loved going to yoga, or finding a new recipe to create, or attending an art class, or writing in your journal, or reading the newspaper on a Sunday. Whatever you loved doing before the baby needs to find a way back into your life now post baby. In the first few months you most likely won't have time or possibly the energy to do something for yourself every day but it is a must to do so at least once a week. Mark it on your calendar, ask your partner to make sure you do it, and remind yourself how important you are.

### Reconnect with your relationships

#### #1: Utilise the magic 7 p.m. bedtime for Baby.

Not only do the babies love this bedtime, but so do their parents! Having a break from parenting duties at an earlier hour like 7:00 p.m. creates a nice chunk of time to spend with your partner. Try eating dinner together without the TV on. Talk about things other than the baby. Plan an in-home date night where you cook together or order in, watch a movie or play a game. The most stressful time on a relationship is the baby's first year of life. Take advantage of the baby's early bedtime to reconnect in your relationships. It is the best gift you can give your baby.

### Reset expectations of yourself

#### #1: Tackle one baby outing per day.

As mentioned above, being a mom with a young baby can feel and be isolating. Get out once a day to do something with your baby. Take a baby class. Go to the park and sit on a blanket. Attend a family event in your community. Visit a friend or a family member. Host or go to a play date. Since the babies are too young to play with one another you get a great outing with a mom friend who completely gets the stage you are in. Find balance, don't try and do too much. A little goes a long way!

#### #2: Tackle your life list: Prioritise and delegate!

Your to-do list is most likely beginning to multiply. You may feel overwhelmed or constantly behind. This is so normal yet so frustrating. Remember your life is different now. Prioritise; what must get done...do. And start to let go of what isn't a must. Try tackling one thing on your list each day. Overcome the overwhelm by setting realistic expectations regarding time frame. Delegate; pass along some of your list to those eager-to-help family members and friends. It's a must as a new mom!



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## Supporting your pregnant partner

If you're the partner of a pregnant woman, the closer the two of you are the more you'll be able to share the experience of pregnancy and birth.

In the early weeks (up to around 14 weeks of pregnancy) pregnant women can feel very tired and sick. Certain smells and tastes might make your partner feel nauseous, and she might only want to sleep. She might be irritable about things that seem minor to you. After this, many pregnant women find that much of their energy returns and she may not want to be given special treatment any more.

Towards the end of pregnancy (around 27-40 weeks) the baby can feel very heavy. The tiredness and irritability of the early weeks often returns and your partner may start to feel frightened about the birth. If she's on maternity leave from work, she might feel lonely without the company of her colleagues.

If your partner is anxious, encourage her to talk about it. Many women are more used to listening than being listened to, so it may take a while before she opens up. Be patient. If you can learn to support each other now, your relationship will be stronger when the baby arrives.

### Practical support

Now is the time to start sharing the housework, if you don't already do so. There are two areas where you can be helpful:

- **Cooking** - In the early months the smell of cooking may put her off and if you cook she's more likely to eat what she needs
- **Carrying heavy shopping** - carrying can put a lot of strain on her back, so do the shopping yourself or together

Let your partner know that she's not alone. The basic health advice is just as important for you as it is for her:

- **Eating well** is much easier if you're doing it together - start picking up healthy food habits you'll want to pass on to your child
- **Cigarette smoke** is dangerous for babies, so if you're a smoker, get advice on how to stop smoking - if you continue to smoke, don't smoke near your partner, don't offer her cigarettes, and don't leave your cigarettes lying around
- **Go with your partner to the doctor** if she's worried, or be sure to talk it through when she gets home
- **Be there** if she has a pregnancy ultrasound scan and see your baby on the screen - if she needs to have extra tests, your support is especially important

When your partner is offered blood tests in early pregnancy, you may be asked to have blood tests as well. This is to check whether your baby is at risk of having an inherited or genetic condition, such as sickle cell anaemia, thalassaemia or cystic fibrosis. You'll also be asked about your family history and origin, because certain inherited conditions are more common depending on family history.

Most people stay with their partner during labour, but it's important that you're both happy about this. Find out what happens in labour and what's involved in being her birth partner. If you prefer not to be present, talk to your partner and listen to how she feels. You may be able to think of a friend or relative who could accompany her instead.

Talk about what you both expect in labour and talk about the birth plan. Fill it in together so that you know what she wants and how you can help her achieve it. Support her if she changes her mind during labour. Be flexible - the health of your partner and the baby is the most important thing, so birth plans sometimes have to change.



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