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Daddy fears: How to take care of it all?!

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by Elizabeth Weiss McGolerick

You've been mentally preparing for everything before the arrival of your newborn. Diapers? Check. Changing table? Check. Plethora of onesies? Check. But before you know it, the ninth month has arrived and you get this panicky feeling clutching at you... what have you forgotten?

Then it hits you. You've been planning for baby, but you haven't been laying out a plan for dad.

Help him help you

The things that come most naturally to you around the house may not be second nature to your hubby. From grocery shopping to cleaning duties to laundry cycles to menu planning, everything that used to fall on you is now going to require a big chunk of support from the big guy.

Every new mom needs to know that this "back-up" is going to be there. When you are confident that all the little details are being taken care of, your every-other-hour feedings of a newborn with a voracious appetite will be a little less draining. Here's a checklist of things to implement sooner rather than later in your household:

Stave off hunger: Baby will be fed, but what about the two of you? If you do the majority (OK, all) of the meal preparation in your household, your hubby may end up standing in line for some [breast milk](#). Put together a grocery list of must-haves and, if you have the energy, try to organize the list aisle by aisle (you know you have that store memorized) so he can find everything quickly and easily. Details are good – less room for error and he'll feel like a hero.

Back to basics: This is the ideal time for your electronics guru of a husband to learn Appliances 101. Let him put a load of towels through the washer and dryer, heat up his own leftovers in the microwave or run the dishwasher (though you may end up with some melted [Tupperware](#) if you neglect to point out what doesn't belong on the bottom rack). And don't forget to point out the importance of finishing a job – making the wash happen is great, but the task isn't complete until he unloads, folds and puts things away.

Money, money, money: Do you handle all of the household finances? If so, your bills might not get paid when you're fuzzy from [sleep deprivation](#). Better to start prepping for this one far ahead of your last trimester so he can get in the habit of reviewing the bills and balancing the checkbook. If you don't already pay your bills online, set up as many accounts as you can this way so that it's merely a matter of visiting a website, entering some numbers and hitting "pay."

Teamwork: It's not just about what dad *needs* to do. Just because you're breastfeeding, that doesn't mean the proud papa can't help with feedings. Consider pumping and letting him take a few middle-of-the-night shifts so you can get some much-needed rest. It's a good opportunity for him to bond with baby and he'll feel like he's contributing to the greater good by giving you a break.



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Showing your appreciation

The thing to remember is this – guys like figuring things out for themselves, but deep down they appreciate your suggestions. So try not to turn into Little Miss Bossy when you deliver your instructions. Schedule a time to chat so he can express what might be concerning him and you can tell him what you're hoping he'll manage for you and the house while you're settling into your all-encompassing new role.

Remember, you both might be rookies in these mom and dad roles, but you're always on the same team. Show him that you appreciate him and his efforts – even if he mucks it up a little bit when the time comes – and accept that he is doing the best he can, just like you always do.

And you never know – he might like some of these jobs so much that you'll never have to do them again!

A girl can dream, can't she?

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