

# Tips for New Mothers

44 tips for mothers and their children.

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by Ronald Steriti, NMD, PhD

## **About this booklet**

This booklet is written as a handy guide for mothers.

## **About the Author**

Dr. Ronald Steriti, NMD, PhD is a graduate of Southwest College of Naturopathic Medicine and a member of the American Association of Naturopathic Physicians.

Dr. Steriti advocates freedom of choice in health care and assists people in making informed decisions about natural health throughout the United States and Canada.

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# Pregnancy

## **1. Get a good prenatal multiple**

Good nutrition is important throughout life, but is particularly important during the development of a fetus. Choose a high quality multiple designed specifically for prenatal women.

## **2. Eat plenty of protein**

A growing fetus needs plenty of protein. Many women find it is much easier to drink a protein shake, in addition to eating plenty of eggs, fish and meats.

## **3. Try some raspberry tea**

Raspberry tea has been used for centuries to help women through their pregnancies. It is both safe and tasty. Take a break and brew a cup.

## **4. Discontinue all drugs, if possible**

All drugs, whether prescription, over the counter, or recreational have potential side effects on a growing fetus. Reducing or eliminating any drug use is very important during pregnancy. Strive to have a purely natural birth, from beginning to end.

## **5. Don't worry about nausea**

Many people consider nausea of pregnancy to be a good sign that the baby is healthy. Some people find ginger tea to be helpful.

# Childbirth

## **6. Consider hiring a midwife**

Childbirth is a natural process which before the advent of modern medicine was performed almost exclusively by midwives. This practice continues in most countries except the United States.

## **7. Avoid drugs during labor**

Many drugs are given routinely prescribed during pregnancy and labor. All drugs have risks and side effects and should be used only in emergencies.

## **8. Take your time giving birth**

Midwifery views childbirth as a natural process that moves at it's own pace.

## **9. Give birth vaginally, if possible**

Studies show that vaginal births are much safer than cesarian sections. If possible, choose the natural method.

## **10. Choose a comfortable position**

During a home birth, women are encouraged to choose the position they feel most comfortable, whether it is sitting in a chair, squatting or kneeling.

## **11. Squat during your pregnancy**

Squatting helps loosen the pelvic area which will make your childbirth easier.

# Sleep

## **12. Be careful with new mattresses**

New mattresses have a variety of chemicals used during their manufacture. Chemical gasses will evaporate and may cause respiratory difficulty in sensitive children. Wash new blankets several times and allow several months for new mattresses to off-gas before using them.

## **13. Avoid freshly painted rooms**

Many people furnish and renovate the babies room in preparation for the blessed event. Painting is one of the last chores. Paint fumes are toxic. Allow plenty of time (several months) for the paint to dry thoroughly before using it.

## **14. It's OK to sleep with your baby**

Many cultures consider it natural for babies to sleep with their mothers, especially in the early weeks. This will not do the baby any harm. In fact, there's some evidence that it helps the baby's heart rate and sleeping patterns.

## **15. Rock your baby to sleep**

Babies take comfort from gentle rocking movements. Perhaps it reminds them of when they were in the womb. Rocking and gently rubbing your babies back will help calm them down and prepare for sleep.

# Feeding

## **16. Breast feed your child**

Breast-feeding is considered by most to be the preferred method for feeding an infant. It forms a deep bond between mother and child. Breast milk also provides specific nutrients for growing immune system. There is simply no substitute for breast milk.

## **17. Make your own natural formula**

There are some natural breast milk formulas that mothers can use. The base is usually soy milk, although rice milk, almond milk or goats milk can also be used.

## **18. Find out what your child likes**

It may be beneficial to change the formula periodically and see whether your child prefers something different.

## **19. Avoid using a microwave**

Unfortunately, microwaves aren't very good for heating baby bottles. They tend to heat the formula unevenly which could burn your baby.

## **20. Use fresh breast milk or formula**

Formula and breast milk tend to spoil quickly. Keep any unused formula in the refrigerator and use it up at the next feeding.

# Diet

## **21. Introduce foods slowly**

New foods should be introduced one at a time with a three-day trial period to check for possible allergies. Allergic symptoms include a rash, hyperactivity or lethargy, tantrums, runny nose, infections, mucus stools or diarrhea, or red cheeks.

## **22. Avoid common allergens**

Many people have allergic reactions to dairy (cow's milk and cheese), wheat, peanuts, soy, and orange juice.

## **23. Use a variety of foods**

A variety of foods should be given without having any food predominant. It is best to find out which foods the child prefers.

## **24. Follow a food schedule**

Ask your naturopath or midwife for a food introduction schedule that begins with easier to digest foods such as fruits and vegetables and progress to grains and legumes. Harder to digest foods such as dairy and nuts and seeds are added last.

## **25. Keep the head up when feeding**

Many people like to let the baby fall asleep with a bottle. This is not an easy position to drink from, and may cause the milk to pool in the eustacian canal causing earaches. The best position for feeding is sitting. Use a pacifier to help your baby sleep.

# Diapering

## **26. Get everything ready**

Have all items you might need available: diapers, powder, damp wash cloth, diaper pail, hamper for soiled clothes, change of clothes, plastic diaper cover (if using cloth diapers), and don't forget a crib mobile or toy to keep your baby occupied.

## **27. Always keep a hand on your baby**

Without even trying, your baby can roll over unexpectedly. This is particularly important when bathing your child on a table.

## **28. Wash your baby with water**

It is important to thoroughly clean your babies buttocks after removing a soiled diaper. The best, and oldest method is with water. Soap is used only if your baby had diarrhea which won't clean with water.

## **29. Test the bath water temperature**

Remember to test the temperature of your child's bath water with your elbow before using it. For newborns, use warm water.

## **30. Use a damp cloth**

Most commercial baby wipes contain alcohol or some other drying agent which can dry out the protective oils in your babies skin. Damp washcloths are handy and easy to use.



# Avoid Diaper Rash

## **31. Change diapers frequently**

The primary cause is ammonia released from urine which irritates the skin. It can usually be avoided with better diapering techniques, such as more frequent diaper changes and taking care to dry the babies skin after washing.

## **32. Don't use plastic pants**

Plastic pants may cause problems because they tend to hold moisture in. One-way fabric liners which let urine pass in one direction may help.

## **33. Use gentle soaps**

Some babies have sensitive skin. They may be sensitive or allergic to the bleach, fabric softener or soap used to clean the diapers. Some are sensitive to the dyes and chemicals used in disposable diapers.

## **34. Check for a yeast infection**

Sometimes, the diaper rash may be due to a yeast infection (usually candida). Check on the cheeks and tongue for white patches which leave red patches underneath when wiped away.

## **35. Improve your babies diet**

An improper diet is sometimes the cause of diaper rash. Candida sometimes is caused by excessive carbohydrates such as sugar, fruit, breads and cereals.

# Crying

## **36. See if your baby is hungry**

Perhaps the most common reason for babies to cry is hunger. They will fuss, make noises or root around the breast. Sometimes they will stop crying right away, but sometimes they will continue crying until their bellies are full.

## **37. Check their diaper**

Nobody wants to walk around wearing a soiled diaper. If your child is crying, it may be a good idea to check, although it may be good to make sure they have finished completely before changing them.

## **38. They're too hot or cold**

Babies are very sensitive to the environment. They like to be bundled up and kept comfortable. If they're too hot or cold, they'll complain.

## **39. They want to be held**

Babies like a lot of cuddling. They like to hear their parents voices and feel their heart beating.

## **40. Your baby is annoyed**

Although babies thrive on attention, sometimes they can get overwhelmed, especially if there are a lot of people, too much noise or lights. Keep the atmosphere around your baby peaceful and calm.

# Health

## **41. Keep yourself healthy**

Keeping the mother healthy is the most important way to improve the health of the baby. This is because the baby derives its nutrition and immune support from breast milk. Be sure to eat a healthy diet with plenty of fresh vegetables and high quality fats such as flax and borage seed oils. A good multiple vitamin and mineral supplement may also help.

## **42. Don't smoke in the house**

Mothers should not smoke or allow others to smoke in the house. A young babies lungs are still developing and they need plenty of fresh clean air to breathe.

## **43. Child-proof your home**

Your child will soon learn to crawl, and will certainly get into everything. Go through your home and make certain that everything is secure and safe for a small child.

## **44. Postpone vaccinations**

There is a lot of controversy surrounding vaccinations. It is best to make an informed decision and there are many books available at bookstores on the subject. Vaccinations for children should be postponed until the immune system has had a chance to mature, which occurs after age 2. Many parents are choosing not to have any vaccinations.

# Resources

## **Midwives**

The Midwife Association of North America (MANA) web page is:

[www.mana.org](http://www.mana.org)

The American College of Nurse-Midwives web page is:

[www.midwife.org](http://www.midwife.org)

## **LaLeche**

La Leche League International provides education, information, support, and encouragement to women who want to breastfeed. The LaLeche web site is:

[www.laleche.org](http://www.laleche.org)

## **Doulas of North America**

Doulas of North America (DONA) is an international association of doulas (labor assistants) who are trained to provide the highest quality labor support to birthing women and their families.

[www.dona.org](http://www.dona.org)  
(801)756-7331

## **Birth Centers**

The National Association of Childbearing Centers web site is:

[www.birthcenters.org](http://www.birthcenters.org)

# **Top Ten Reasons to Use a Birth Center**

- 1 Birth centers have a very relaxed atmosphere. It feels like a nice country inn or somebody's well kept home.
- 3 There is a lot of privacy at the birth center. Usually only one or two women will be there at the same time.
- 4 You can get comfortable in a birth center. You know the staff and are in familiar surroundings.
- 5 Midwives understand that birth is a natural process, not an illness.
- 6 Babies prefer a gentle birth in a loving environment.
- 7 You can take part in the decisions about your birth.
- 8 Mother and baby are not separated at any time.
- 9 Birth centers promote breast-feeding. The baby is usually alert and will nurse well in the first hour after birth.
- 10 Birth centers have Jacuzzis for women to relax in during labor.

## **More Booklets**

Dr. Steriti has written several booklets on natural health, including:

Tips for New Mothers

Healthy Skin, Hair and Nails Naturally

Sports Nutrition for Athletes

A Guide to Diets

What Foods to Buy at an Organic Market or Health Food Store

How to Choose a Good Multiple

Great Health Quotes

An Introduction to Naturopathy and Naturopathic Medicine

Alternative and Nutritional Lab Tests

These booklets can be ordered by sending \$5 per booklet with a self-addressed, double-stamped envelope to:

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# How to Find a Naturopath

## What is Naturopathy?

Naturopathy is a term made popular in the early 1900's to describe a system of medicine that emphasizes natural therapies including herbs, homeopathy, hydrotherapy, nutrition, diet, and manipulation.

## What is Naturopathic Medicine?

Naturopathic medical schools have four-year full-time programs that teach both naturopathy and conventional Western diagnosis and treatment. Graduates are trained to become primary care physicians in licensed states.

There are currently four naturopathic medical schools in the United States and one in Canada: Bastyr, National, and Southwest Colleges of Naturopathic Medicine, The University of Bridgeport, and the Canadian College of Naturopathic Medicine.

Currently Alaska, Arizona, British Columbia, Connecticut, Hawaii, Maine, Manitoba, Montana, New Hampshire, Ontario, Oregon, Utah, Vermont and Washington have naturopathic medical licensing laws.

## Where do I find a naturopath?

Check the American Association of Naturopathic Physician's web site:

[www.naturopathic.org](http://www.naturopathic.org)

# **Top Ten Reasons to See a Naturopath**

- 1 It's part of your healthy life-style.
- 2 You are taking a lot of supplements, but aren't sure if they are right for you.
- 3 You want advice from a specialist that is well trained in natural therapies.
- 4 You want to make an informed decision about your health.
- 5 You want a natural health program designed for you.
- 6 You are confused by contradictory health claims.
- 7 You have vague complaints but aren't sick enough to see a medical doctor or use drugs.
- 8 You are concerned about the long-term side effects of drugs.
- 9 You have an uncommon health problem which has many specialists baffled.
- 10 The drugs you are taking cause side effects which are worse than the original problem.