

HEY DAD, GET READY FOR MY ARRIVAL!

Speaking for the Baby x SMS4dads Campaign

Time to get ready, I'm almost here, Dad!

Here are some things to know about me so you can be prepared when I arrive.

Babies can start sucking their thumbs in the womb as early as 15 weeks into pregnancy. This sucking helps them prepare for feeding after birth. You might see your baby sucking their thumb in the ultrasounds around 30 weeks into the pregnancy. Thumb-sucking provides baby a way to find soothing comfort, it is normal and not a health concern in infancy.

Babies often search for things to suck in the early months when they arrive. It might be hunger but babies also suck for self-soothing, helping them to calm down. If your bub is stressed, you can help them find their thumb or try offering a toy to suck on. Around 3-months a teether to chew on can help baby self soothe and find relief from teething pain.

Help me self-soothe, Dad



Soon after birth

Have you heard about kangaroo care?

Kangaroo care is where you put your baby on your chest when you don't have a shirt on. You go skin-to-skin with your baby.

Kangaroo Care



Why do it?

Kangaroo care can help babies:

- Regulate their heartbeat and breathing
- Improve oxygen levels
- Gain weight
- Reduce risk of infection
- Feel close, supporting feelings of protection and safety

Dads benefit too!

- Feeling more confident with baby
- Close loving contact promotes bonding
- Reduce stress

Newborns and prematurely born babies benefit a lot from kangaroo care. Physically well and unwell babies also benefit.

Holding your baby soon after they are born, whether it is skin-to-skin or not, will have benefits for you Dad. A hormone called oxytocin is released when you are holding them close and that helps you bond with your baby.

Sometimes you may not be able to hold your baby immediately if baby needs to receive medical care. If this happens, touch and hold your baby as soon as it is safe to. Know that you can stay connected through voice if it is not possible to hold your baby. Talk with them gently.

Hold me, Dad



You might get to hold me soon after I am born. If you do the chemicals in your brain will change. You'll get a happy feeling and that's just the start for us. So hold me if you can Dad.

Holding your baby provides closeness and safe feelings for baby, which they love. There are lots of safe ways to hold a newborn, find what works best for the two of you. It's a way to get to know who this little person is and what their preferences are.

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