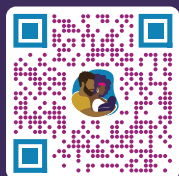




AFRICAN AMERICAN INFANT
AND MATERNAL MORTALITY
PREVENTION INITIATIVE
FATHERHOOD PROGRAM

EXPECTANT FATHER TIP GUIDE: FOR BLACK DADS BY BLACK DADS

Embrace your role as
a powerful advocate for yourself,
your partner and your baby.



COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES
Public Health

DADS MATTER!

Fathers are a vital component of the village of support, playing a significant role in creating healthy and joyous births. Fathers are protectors and providers for their families and are powerful advocates for their partners before, during, and after birth, when equipped with the proper tools, information, and resources.

The African American Infant and Maternal Mortality Prevention Initiative (AAIMM) has created this Expectant Father Tip Guide—developed with Black dads for Black dads—to provide you with an overview of what to expect as a new or expectant father, along with some resources to help you on your parenting journey. This guide is a compliment to AAIMM’s Fatherhood initiatives: the Expecting Fathers Group for Black Dads and Black Daddy Dialogue. You can find more information about these groups, as well as additional resources, information, and dad-inspiration on our website:

BlackInfantsAndFamilies.org/Fatherhood



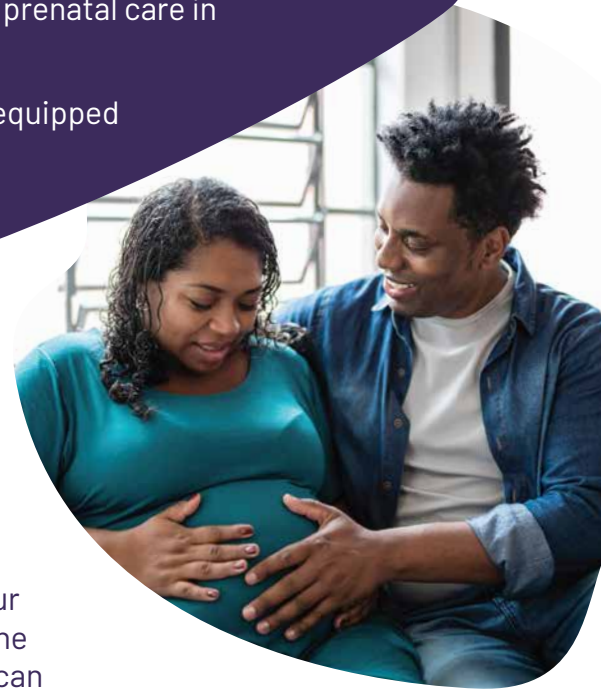
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PREGNANCY SUPPORT

As an expectant father, providing a safe, nurturing, and supportive environment for your partner is one of the most valuable things you can do. Studies show that mothers/birthing persons whose partners were involved in their pregnancy were 1.5 times more likely to receive prenatal care in the first trimester.

It's equally important for you to be supported and well-equipped to be the best advocate for yourself, your partner and your baby.



HERE ARE SOME WAYS IN WHICH YOU CAN RECEIVE/PROVIDE PREGNANCY SUPPORT:

ADVOCACY

Being an advocate means providing support to ensure that your partner, baby, and yourself are cared for. This means getting the emotional and physical support you need as a dad so that you can best advocate for your family. Below are some recommendations:



Attend all or as many prenatal visits as you can with your partner. You have the right to be heard if you feel like something is not quite right or if your partner is not being treated well.



Attend prenatal and/or childbirth classes. These classes will assist in preparing you for labor and delivery. They also will explain what you can expect at each stage of pregnancy.



Take some of the load off your partner. Helping out with household chores and errands can help reduce their stress during pregnancy. Keep track of all appointments and upcoming appointments as well. Ask lots of questions and take notes if needed. Now would be a good time to learn her medical history.

EMOTIONAL & ENVIRONMENTAL SUPPORT

When your partner is stressed, the baby can get stressed too. See where you can help limit the stress your partner may be experiencing in their environment or emotionally. Visit **BlackInfantsAndFamilies.org/Fatherhood** for resources.



**Ask what you can do to help.
Get help yourself.**



BIRTH PLAN

A birth plan is a written guide to your preferences for labor, delivery, and newborn care. If you stay ready, you don't have to get ready. Setting up a birth plan with your partner gets both of your heads in the game so that you can execute a strategy to create a smooth and stressless delivery experience. Once you and your partner have a birth plan, you can:

- ✓ **Share your birth plan with your village so they can step in where help is needed—and everyone understands how to best support you.**

Sample Birth Plan

YOUR BIRTH PLAN MAY INCLUDE:

- ✓ **Contact Info**
- ✓ **Type of Delivery**
- ✓ **People Present in Room Before and/or During Labor**
- ✓ **Labor Preferences**
- ✓ **Environment Requests**
- ✓ **Pain Management Methods**
- ✓ **Medical Interventions**
- ✓ **Requests During Labor**
- ✓ **Requests After Delivery**
- ✓ **Partner Requests/Preferences**
- ✓ **What to Bring (clothing, nursing pillow, toiletries, etc.)**



Check out the
March of Dimes
Birth Plan
that's easy to
download,
print and fill out.



LABOR AND DELIVERY

Although you can never predict all possible outcomes, you can prepare and reduce stress by using the following recommendations:



- Water breaking
- Contractions
- Delivery
- Prepping to go home with the baby

Possible outcomes that are not always typical:

- ✓ Planned home births sometimes result in having to go to the hospital
- ✓ Preterm birth or stay in the NICU (In case of a preterm birth, we have a tip guide [HERE.](#))

Also prepare for...the rollercoaster ride of emotions. Check in with yourself and your partner. What are your hopes, expectations, or concerns regarding the birthing process and when your baby comes home? Creating a strong foundation together and managing your expectations ahead of time will help you ride the waves to come.



POSTPARTUM SUPPORT

Postpartum depression in fathers:

While we typically associate the “baby blues” and postpartum depression with women, new fathers can experience serious mood changes after bringing a baby home too. Symptoms of depression can look different in men and women. Men may be less likely to express their needs or seek help because of cultural bias, or out of concern that it would take away from their partner’s needs.

USE THIS CHECKLIST TO SEE IF YOU ARE EXPERIENCING SYMPTOMS OF MASCULINE DEPRESSION:

- | | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> I have increased anger, irritability, or aggression | <input type="checkbox"/> I have fatigue or loss of energy every day |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I experience feelings of worthlessness or guilt | <input type="checkbox"/> I've had unexplained aches and pains or other physical symptoms |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I feel frustrated and discouraged | <input type="checkbox"/> I've had lots of reasons to cry/wanted to cry, but I haven't been able to |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I feel sad, hopeless, or overwhelmed | <input type="checkbox"/> I haven't been able to perform sexually |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I have reduced interest or pleasure in activities throughout the day | <input type="checkbox"/> I've started drinking or have been drinking more than usual |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I am keeping to myself and withdrawing from family and friends and have difficulty making decisions | <input type="checkbox"/> I've started to use recreational drugs or use more than usual |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I feel like things are out of my control | <input type="checkbox"/> I focus on work or school to avoid the rest of my life |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I feel less motivated | <input type="checkbox"/> I'm under constant pressure |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I'm more tense than usual | <input type="checkbox"/> I've needed more sex than usual to feel good |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I have a difficult time keeping up with my responsibilities | <input type="checkbox"/> I've had thoughts of death or suicide |



Dad, time with your baby after birth is important. Get to know your rights regarding Paid Family Leave and Paternity Leave Law in California

[LEARN MORE](#)

TOOLS AND RESOURCES FOR MENTAL HEALTH



Therapy for Black Men
@therapyforblkmn

SOCIAL SUPPORT

Having a strong team behind you will help you on your journey. AAIMM's Fatherhood initiatives give you a chance to meet other Black dads and get the support and tools you need for the prenatal, labor and delivery, postpartum, and early parenting periods.

Expecting Fathers Group for Black Dads

Designed specifically for Black soon-to-be fathers and meets for 5 consecutive weeks.

[LEARN MORE](#) ↗

Black Daddy Dialogue

Meets virtually every 2nd Wednesday of the month.

[LEARN MORE](#) ↗



BREASTFEEDING

Make sure your delivery team knows that you are planning to breastfeed and that you prefer to feed your baby breastmilk. Breastmilk has the following benefits:

- ✓ **Protects against death or injury from childhood infections, Type 2 Diabetes, and sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS).**
- ✓ **Can boost your child's IQ by 7 points.**

Dads can help mom and baby prepare for feedings. Make sure she has a nursing pillow and any other comfort items.

Support and Resources:



PARENTING AND INFANT CARE

Congratulations! Now that you're a parent, wrapping your head around the reality of providing 24/7 care and attention is the next big step. Learning how to tackle these new responsibilities of caring for a child and supporting your partner where needed is going to help you on this parenting journey. If you've taken a parenting class or attended a parenting group like our *Expecting Fathers Group for Black Dads*, you may already know all the tips and tricks of swaddling, clothing, changing diapers, feeding, baby crying, and safe sleeping. If not, here are a couple of tips to help get you started:

BABY DUTIES

Here are some **"How to"** tips on caring for your new baby:

Infant Swaddling

- Spread out a cotton cloth so that it lays flat and fold over one corner about 6 inches.
- Lay the baby on their back on top of the cloth with the neck and shoulders in line with the fold.
- Wrap the top left-hand corner of the cloth across the baby and tuck it underneath the left arm.
- Bring the bottom left-hand corner over the baby's feet.
- Wrap the right corner behind the baby's back, leaving only the head and neck sticking out.
- **IMPORTANT:** Make sure that baby can still move hips and knees.

Diapering



Girls:

Wipe front to back to avoid causing infections.



Boys:

New dads, be ready - diaper changes can get messy and that's completely normal!

Safe Sleep

- Babies should sleep in the same room with parents for the first 6 months, but not in the same bed.
- Baby should only sleep in a crib, not on a couch, chair, or other soft surface.
- Baby's crib should be bare with none of the following items: toys, stuffed animals, pillows, or soft bedding.
- Babies should always sleep on their backs.
- No smoke, alcohol or illegal substances around the baby.
- Keep a video and/or audio monitor in the baby's room.



Skin-to-Skin (AKA Kangaroo Care)

Place your baby with their tummy directly on your chest right after birth. Cover with a warm blanket. Do this as often as you can.

TEAM DAD, LET'S HUDDLE:

PARTICIPATE IN YOUR PARTNER'S PREGNANCY (APPOINTMENTS, CLASSES, ETC.)

- Attend medical appointments
- Attend prenatal classes
- Attend childbirth classes
- Attend parenting classes

BE AN ANCHOR OF SUPPORT DURING YOUR PARTNER'S PREGNANCY AND AFTER YOUR BABY'S BIRTH

- Prepare the home for the baby
- Co-create a birth plan
- Activate your village of support
- Take the lead in all household responsibilities (chores, errands, etc.)
- Be the primary caregiver of the other kids and/or pets
- Provide breastfeeding support

TAKE CARE OF YOUR MENTAL AND EMOTIONAL HEALTH

- Attend the Expecting Father's Group for Black Dads / class for dads
- Attend Black Daddy Dialogue / support group for dads
- Go to counseling / therapy
- Create your village of support
- Talk to friends and/or family

CLEARLY COMMUNICATE YOUR NEEDS AND EXPECTATIONS WITH YOUR PARTNER

- Talk openly about your hopes and concerns during pregnancy and after the baby arrives
- Let your partner know how you'd like to be supported
- Be honest about what you're struggling with—emotionally, physically, or mentally
- Discuss roles and responsibilities ahead of time
- Don't assume—speak up about what you need

ENSURE YOUR PARTNER IS COMMUNICATING THEIR NEEDS AND EXPECTATIONS WITH YOU

- Ask how they're feeling and really listen
- Create space for open, judgment-free conversations
- Check in regularly—needs can change as pregnancy progresses
- Encourage them to share what support looks like for them
- Be present and engaged when they express their concerns or hopes

IDENTIFY WHO IS A PART OF YOUR VILLAGE OF SUPPORT

- Think about who you can count on—family, friends, mentors, or community members
- Include people who show up for you emotionally, physically, or spiritually
- Consider professionals too—like doulas, therapists, or support group leaders
- Don't be afraid to reach out and reconnect with people you trust
- Talk with your partner about who's in their village, too

THINK OF WAYS YOU ACTIVATE YOUR VILLAGE

- Ask for help when you need it—big or small
- Let people know how they can support you: meals, rides, childcare, or just listening
- Include your village in milestones and appointments when possible
- Send updates or check-ins to keep your support network connected
- Remember, it's okay to lean on your village—you're not in this alone



DADS NEED A VILLAGE, TOO!

You can find more information and resources by scanning the QR Code or visiting blackinfantsandfamilies.org/trimester_tips

← GET STARTED



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DISCLAIMER:

This publication was made possible by State of California General Funds. Contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of the California Department of Public Health or State of California.

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