



BEING A FATHER

Being a father is an important job.

During pregnancy, help your baby's mother take good care of herself and your baby. Once your baby is born, helping to take care of your child shows that you love him or her.

You can help keep your child safe, healthy and happy. Here are some tips:

- Talk with your baby's mother about how you can work together to raise your child.
- Support your child financially, even if your child does not live with you.
- Be a healthy father. Eat healthy foods, exercise and avoid alcohol and drugs. Schedule a routine checkup with your health care provider.
- Don't smoke or let others smoke around your baby's mother or your baby. Secondhand smoke is harmful to babies' lungs. For information about smoking cessation classes and quit kits, call the Learn To Live Line at 410-222-7979 or visit www.myquitkit.org.

**BE A GOOD FATHER.
BE ACTIVE IN YOUR CHILD'S LIFE.**

WHAT FATHERS SHOULD KNOW

Be involved during pregnancy. Here's how:

- Go to prenatal care appointments and parenting or childbirth classes. Learn how your child will develop during pregnancy and childhood.
- Encourage your baby's mother to drink plenty of fluids (water, skim or low-fat milk and 100% fruit juice) and eat healthy foods like fruits, vegetables and whole grain breads and pastas.
- Encourage your baby's mother to exercise with her health care provider's permission. Walking is a good way for pregnant women to exercise.
- Help your baby's mother stay away from tobacco, alcohol and drugs.
- Help select and buy baby items.

Be involved after your baby is born. Here's how:

- Spend time with your child by holding, cuddling and playing with him or her.
- Help your baby's mother. Change diapers, bathe and dress your baby.
- Go to your baby's health care appointments.
- Always put your baby on his or her back to sleep. Babies should sleep alone and in a safe crib.
- Learn how to calm a crying baby. Never shake a baby – it can cause brain damage or death.
- Make sure your child has a safe car seat that is used correctly.
- Support breastfeeding – it is best for your baby.
- Model healthy behaviors. Eat healthy and exercise. Quit smoking and avoid drugs and alcohol.

Ask for help if you need it. Visit www.aahealthybabies.org for more information. You can also call the Tot's Line at 1-877-817-TOTS(8687) if you have questions about pregnancy, caring for a baby or community resources.

