

HAPPINESSMAMA

from striving to thriving

Postpartum Bliss List: 10 Conversations to Have Before (or After!) Baby Comes for Maximum Relationship Bliss

1. Life With Baby

- Do we know how to bathe baby?
- How can we play with baby at different ages?
- How do babies grow and change in the first couple of years?
- What do babies need?
- Where can we get our questions answered?
- How do you change a diaper?
- What toiletries do babies need?
- How will our lives change when baby comes?
- How can we make sure to stay close after baby comes?

Action Steps: Even though nothing can fully prepare you for what it's really like to have your own baby, it's good to try to get some idea so it's not quite as big of a shock. Learn and talk to your partner about what having a baby will be like, including collecting a list of resources about baby development and resources for getting questions answered--what baby does, how you can interact with baby (playing, talking, cuddling, holding), and the basics of baby care (feeding, sleeping, diapering, etc.).

2. Baby Sleep

- How do babies sleep?
- How can we help baby learn to sleep?
- Are there any tools or resources we'd like to buy before baby comes or plan to buy after baby comes?

Action Steps: Learn about Baby Sleep and prepare for it. In addition to knowledge of how babies sleep, arm yourself with the tools, supplies, and strategies for maximizing baby's sleep--and yours! (See my Postpartum Bliss List: Favorite Baby and Toddler Sleep Tools and Resources to learn about my favorite sleep tools and resources.)

3. Your Healthy Mind

- What are the signs of baby blues?
- What are the signs of postpartum depression and anxiety?
- What will you do if you think you might have baby blues or PPD/A?
- Are you aware of eating the placenta as a preventive measure for PPD?
- What about placenta encapsulation?
- Which antidepressants are compatible with breastfeeding?
- Are you assuming it won't happen to you? Are you assuming it will?

Action Steps: Learn about baby blues and postpartum depression/anxiety, and be aware that it could happen. Make sure both partners know the signs, and have a plan in place to prevent it or deal with it if it happens.

4. Breastfeeding

- How does breastfeeding work?
- How do you and baby learn to breastfeed?
- What can you expect at the start of breastfeeding?
- What does a correct latch look like?
- How long does it take to establish an easy breastfeeding relationship?
- What supplies do you need for breastfeeding?
- Do you want to pump?

Action Steps: Prepare for Breastfeeding Success. In addition to learning how breastfeeding works and that it's a skill to be learned, even though it's natural. Also make your breastfeeding plan, and make sure you have the tools and resources to help you succeed.

5. Dad's Role

- How does dad want to be involved in baby's life?
- How do you want dad to be involved in baby's life?
- How do you see both of your roles in baby's care and upbringing?

Action Steps: It's important to talk about expectations, and to continue talking as life unfolds. Talk to your partner about how he can be involved in baby's care. The more dad is involved in this huge life change that is having a child, the stronger the relationship will be. If mom is breastfeeding, much of the hands-on care falls to her, but there are still important ways for dad to help and take care of baby, too, and that role will expand as baby gets older and goes longer between feedings. Listening and being there for her emotionally are also critical.

6. Cloth Diapering

- How do you feel about cloth diapering?
- Are you aware of all the modern cloth diapering options?
- What worries you about cloth diapering?
- What excites you about cloth diapering?
- How do you wash cloth diapers?
- How many do you need?
- What else do you need?
- Is it hard?
- How much money can we save?
- What are the benefits of cloth diapering?

Action Steps: Learn about Cloth Diapering, and prepare for it if this is something you would like to do. You will need to decide what type of diapers you will use, learn how to use them and launder them (not hard), and make sure you have everything you need.

7. Babywearing

- Do you want to wear baby?
- Does dad want to wear baby?
- What are the benefits of babywearing?
- What are the different types of baby carriers, and which are better for different ages and stages?
- What type(s) of carriers or slings would you like to get?

Action Steps: Learn about Babywearing, and decide if you would like to do it. Prepare by learning about the different types of baby carriers, purchasing one you would like to use, and learning how to use it. Babywearers.com is one great resource.

8. Your Healthy Body- Nutrition

- What will you need nutritionally after baby arrives?
- Do you want to prepare any meals and snacks in advance?
- How can dad support mom nutritionally during the intense “4th trimester” and beyond?
- Do you have everything you need and want, such as a water bottle, snacks, frozen meals, etc? Are you prepared with ideas and recipes for healthy snacks and meals?

Action Steps: Learn about your nutritional needs, and prepare to make sure they’re met.

9. Your Healthy Body-Rest

- How will you protect your time to rest postpartum?
- How much do you need to cut back?
- How will you make sure you get the rest you need to function?
- How will you make sure you spend some time connecting with other people, such as other mothers, who will understand what you're going through?

Action Steps: Learn about your body's needs postpartum, and prepare for a period of rest. Our culture places an unnatural, unhealthy emphasis on "bouncing back" too soon after birth. Also have a gentle plan for getting back into movement at an appropriate pace.

10. Support

- Who can help you in the first weeks and months?
- Would you like people to bring meals to you?
- Whom could you mention a meal train to if no one offers?
- Would you like to have someone come clean the house once or twice a month, at least for a few months?

Action Steps: Prepare to have additional support. Having people support you with meals, help around the house, and connection are invaluable.

How to Use This List

Dear Sweet Reader,

This is a lot of conversation! Take your time going through the questions. Skip around and start with the ones that are most pressing on your mind, or his. Also you can always revisit ones that you've talked about before. If you have the benefit of using this list before baby comes, definitely hang on to it and use it again after baby comes. You'll find that some of your thoughts around these topics will change as you have real life experience with your own sweet baby.

You can use this any time you and your partner make time to talk. You may also want to set aside some special time specifically to talk about these topics. Have fun with it! Maybe add some special food, or your favorite coffee, or get out of the house for a walk as you talk.

I hope you get much value out of using these questions as a springboard for communication between you and your partner, and also as a framework for preparing for life with your new baby.

If you have any questions or comments, I'd love to hear from you. Email me at heather@happinesmama.com. Also visit my blog, www.happinesmama.com, for more tips and inspiration for living your happiest life.

Love, Heather