

Client Handout:

Healthy Attachment & Bonding



Pineapple Babies Birth Services

New mothers should spend as much time holding, cuddling, and caring for their baby as possible. Co-sleeping can be an easy way to ensure both mother and baby are getting lots of time together as well as adequate rest for the mother. Co-sleeping also encourages breastfeeding and may reduce the risk of SIDS. If you are interested in co-sleeping, please ask for the How to Safely Co-sleep with Your Baby handout. The more time she spends with her new baby the more attentive she will be to the infant's needs. Mother and baby bonding has lifelong implications for both. Infants need to be touched, held, and cared for to learn how to form healthy relationships, to learn what caring touch feels like, and to begin engaging in a give and take relationship. Babies know they have needs. Learning to communicate what those needs are and having those needs met is critical in their development immediately and for a lifetime. Newborns who are well cared for may experience less discipline issues, learn to solve problems without parental involvement, and gain independence more easily as children. These bonding benefits carry into adulthood with lower risk for diabetes, heart disease, anorexia, depression, as well as other mental illnesses. Successful bonding (with parents, caregivers, siblings, and other relatives) as an infant has benefits that will support this baby for a lifetime.

There is no such thing as a spoiled baby!

Moms need a break too. Family members can help a new mom out by caring for her nutritionally, assisting with household chores, and caring for older children while a new mom cares for herself and the new baby. Relatives and other family members can bond with the new baby while the new mother is showering, eating, or otherwise caring for herself in the early days.

Once a new mom has begun to feel rested and is doing more around the house and with the other children other family members can begin doing more caring for the new baby as long as the mother is comfortable with it. Remember, a new mother may not want many people caring for the new baby. In that case, give her more time and offer to do other things that can be helpful.

It is important for new mothers to know where to get support. Your midwife is a great support person and should be able to lead you to many other community support persons locally. Many communities have support groups that meet in libraries or coffee shops. You can begin forming these relationships before the birth of your baby. This can be an invaluable asset to have after birth. Having a new baby and caring for yourself and the baby can be a daunting task. If you need help, do not be afraid to ask for it. If you are feeling like you are unable to bond with your baby, speak to your midwife. She can help you determine the best course of care for you and your family. Don't have too high of expectations of yourself as a new mother. Doing too much too soon is one way to slow the bonding process with your baby. Don't feel like you need to have your baby with extended family members before you are ready either. This is your baby. Enjoy this time. The other family members will get a chance as the baby gets older and you are more comfortable sharing the joys of parenthood with others.

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