

You may feel a brief prickle, tingle or slight pain in your breast when your baby starts to nurse. You may also notice milk leaking from one breast while you're feeding with the other. Both of these occurrences are known as the "let-down" reflex. It just indicates that your body is making your milk readily available to your baby.

You may also feel strong abdominal (stomach) cramps the first few days of nursing. They are normal. Breastfeeding helps your uterus (womb) go back to its original size.

Remember that you and your baby are new at this, so give yourself enough time to make the experience successful.

BUY LINES: STROLLERS

Select a stroller with the following features:

- a firm, vertical backrest
- a canopy high enough to allow headroom
- seat belts
- brakes that can be securely locked
- a latch that prevents accidental folding
- a wide base to prevent tipping



We hope you have enjoyed the *Well On Your Way* newsletters.

Ask your county Extension office to put you on the mailing list for the *Baby Bouncer* newsletter, which talks about your baby's development each month for the first year.

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PUTTING KNOWLEDGE TO WORK

The University of Georgia and Ft. Valley State University, the U.S. Department of Agriculture and counties of the state cooperating. The Cooperative Extension Service, the University of Georgia College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences offers educational programs, assistance and materials to all people without regard to race, color, national origin, age, sex or disability.

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Gale A. Buchanan, Dean and Director

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County Extension Agent

Well on Your Way



EIGHTH • MONTH

Final Stages

COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE
The University of Georgia
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Well on Your Way

EIGHTH MONTH: Final Stages

Your nine months of pregnancy are almost over, and soon you will have one of life's most exciting experiences. You will be more relaxed during labor and delivery when you know what to expect. Childbirth education classes prepare both mother and father to participate actively in your baby's birth.

You will know labor has started when you feel regular contractions. These gradually get stronger and closer together. Some women may experience slight bleeding or a gush of water when the waterbag surrounding the fetus breaks. Call your doctor when you think labor has begun.

BABY'S GROWTH



Your baby is now moving into the final position in the uterus. As birth draws near, the uterus will move a few inches lower, which makes breathing more

E I G H T H • M O N T H



comfortable and walking more difficult. A “full-term” baby is born after 38 to 40 weeks. An average, healthy weight is 7½ to 8½ pounds for a full-term infant.

BIRTHING DECISIONS

Ask your doctor to explain the decisions that you may need to make about different kinds of delivery. You may want “natural childbirth,” or a C-section may be necessary. What kinds of medicine, if any, may be used? Do you want your partner to be present for the birth? How long will you likely be in the hospital?

POSTPARTUM BLUES

Many women become slightly depressed and cry easily after the baby is born. This common feeling is called baby blues and occurs temporarily. Understanding what causes this depression will help both Mom and Dad live through it.

Your unpredictable emotions may be due to the physical changes that take place after birth. Hormones are returning to normal levels, and your body may take several weeks to adjust. The physical discomfort of stitches, sore breasts, and tiredness may make you grouchy.

The emotional stress of new decisions, added responsibility, and an unsettled schedule can also make you tense.

You may feel contrasting emotions: the excitement of a new baby, but the burden of responsibility; love for your baby, yet resentment of the time that is no longer yours. All of these reactions are normal, and you should try to accept all of these feelings.

Having supportive relatives, friends and partner can make a difference. Both you and your baby need rest and gentle care. Someone to help with house chores and caring for the baby will give you much needed time for sleep.

YOUR NEW ROLE AS A PARENT

The birth of your baby will bring more responsibilities and changes in your life. First-time parents can expect many new experiences. If you already have children, you'll recall those infant caretaking routines while still meeting the needs of the older children. Either way, your schedule for the first few months will be determined by your infant.

Unfortunately, a new baby does not know what patience is. Babies immedi-

ately express their needs for food, clean diapers, warmth and attention by crying. You must respond to these demands quickly and patiently.

Each child has a unique personality, and the first few months is the perfect time for you to get to know your baby. Your baby will soon respond to your voice and your touch. This is the beginning of a bond that will last a lifetime.

IF YOU PLAN TO BREASTFEED

If you plan to breastfeed, try to learn as much about it as possible so you know what to expect.

Your baby will be getting colostrum (early milk) the first few days of breastfeeding. Colostrum is extra rich in some nutrients and has a greater supply of infection-fighting substances. The colostrum is important for the baby and the baby's sucking is important for producing a good supply of milk. You can nurse your baby as often as the baby wants.

Your baby may lose some weight the first couple of days until your milk supply meets your baby's demands. Most breastfed babies regain their birth weight after about a week.