

## Motherly advice

Well hellooo there,

Has it sunk in yet that you are someone's mum?! Crazy right! Congratulations! I remember my first time in hospital, feeling so excited and overwhelmed at the same time. With no rule book, they just hand you this tiny creature, that you have to somehow keep alive!

Firstly let me say I have gone on to have 3 beautiful daughters.... so whatever's just happened in your delivery room- no matter how horrifying or painful... you do, somehow, get to a stage of wanting more... but don't ask me how (i'm pretty sure we get amnesia or something)! But enough about that, who wants to think of the next time when we can barely keep up with the first!!

When I read about this university initiative I was prompted to write because thinking back on it, the first baby was my hardest and the first 12 weeks in particular. So I wish I had a heads up of what "normal" in the life of a new mum could look like.

Your experience with the first child will always be special. It's a first for both of you and you are learning about both parenthood and each other so of course its very likely this will be your biggest learning curve (that's a euphemism for shits gonna get real) There are moments in the day when your little one is unsettled ...or it's hours or days on end and you may feel lost, helpless frustrated as to what you should do.....and it's in these moments I wish I was kinder to myself. Don't beat yourself up. How the hell are you supposed to know exactly what to do, it's your first time!!! You are doing the very best you can and you are not even operating at full capacity!!! You are tired, confused and there's most likely a baby crying incessantly in your ear. There's no way you can make perfect decisions in these circumstances.

If by 4 weeks you feel like a sleep deprived, disheveled ravenous sugar craving monster! Then congratulations you are tracking perfectly into parenthood.

It's from around 4 - 12 weeks that I found the baby's needs and routine just keep on changing. One day they may sleep 3 hours in one nap the next day only 45 mins all day! Lack of routine is pretty hard. Hurl abuse if you need to, drink copious amounts of tea and coffee but take it in your stride because it keeps changing. Enjoy the high days and on the low days remind yourself that it won't be long until they are doing something new, (hopefully, for you, that's a 6 hour nap in one stretch!!) I should mention here that you can get sleep nanny's in home (free service through early childhood) by 6 weeks I did this and it was amazing! I lost my way again at 5 months and did Trescillian. Two words - Life Changing. Don't hesitate. One great thing about having the courage to contact professionals for help is that you then have those tools forever.

It was the 8 -10 week mark that got me down. I had convinced myself there was no end in sight and that I'd be slave to this tiny creature for all eternity, shushing, patting and rocking at all odd hours of the night, while my partner blissfully snores through it all. Should you experience the same thing then I'm here, willing you on!! It's just a few more weeks, hang in there and you will hopefully see by 12 weeks they are getting a bit more predictable.

In the meantime, to help get you through, here are my top suggestions... apart from Trescillian I didn't do any of these things first time round but in hindsight wished I had. By second and third time round I did not hesitate!!

1. If you have people who can help you - take it!! I didn't ask for help enough. If someone offers to cook or do your laundry say "yes that'd be great!" (don't worry if it was a disingenuous offer they won't offer again).
2. Don't assume your partner should be as intuitive to you or the baby's needs just because they have become a parent too. If they are blindly missing the mark don't hold it in and be resentful. Just tell them exactly what you need! My requests were pretty specific and sounded like this "when you get home from work. I need a hug then after you pee I need you to bathe the baby while I go for a walk (or hide in closet and eat full pack of tim tams!!!!)
3. Join a mother's group, there is value in having a sounding board for all your questions with like-minded mums and speak up about any struggles. Often first time mums are tentative about what they should or shouldn't admit to but chances are you are all going through the same ups and downs!!! However, if you are in the 0.01% of mums that have a sleeping, eating & non crying angel then my advice is just keep that to yourself, in fact pretend you have a terror on your hands too. No struggling mum can handle your happiness right now. Just give yourself mental high fives because you have won the BABY LOTTERY
4. Lastly, trust your intuition. No one spends more time with bubba than you. If something doesn't feel right you don't need everyone's advice or approval. Do whatever feels right to you.

On this day, I wish you lots of happiness and at least one hot cuppa!☺

Happy Mother's Day Mumma!