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MARCH 2006

MOM TO MOM, WOMAN TO WOMAN:™

Home—But  
Not Alone  
HOW TO MANAGE  
NEW-BABY VISITORS

When Should  
You Go to the ER?

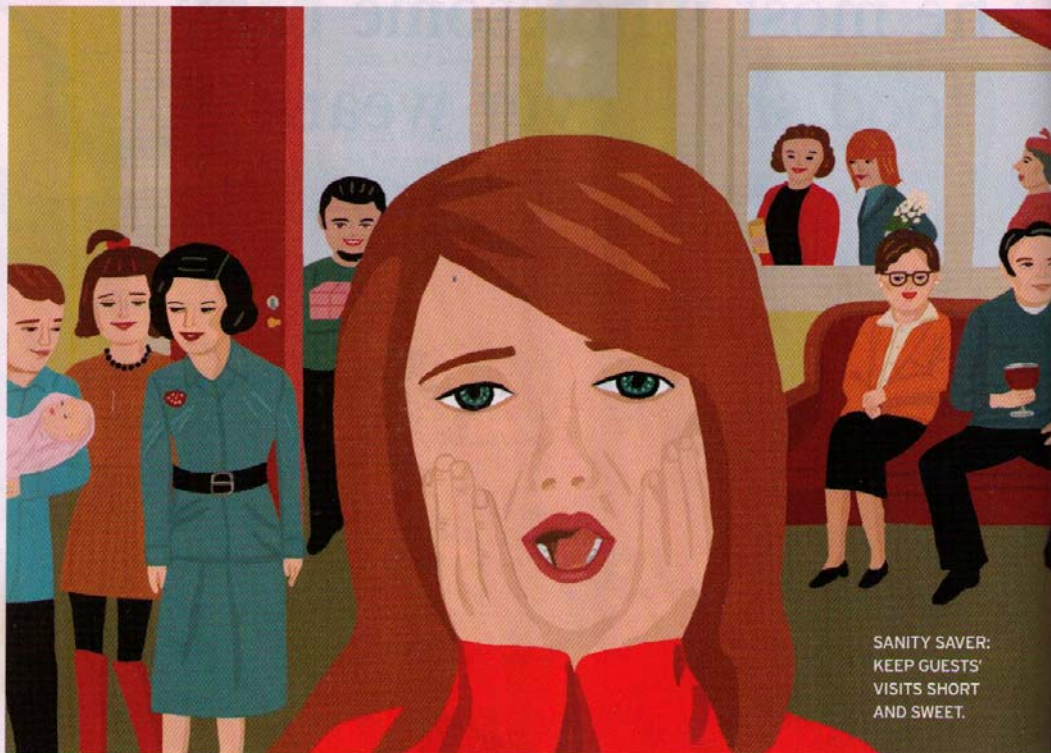
WHY LOVE  
TAKES TIME—  
EVEN BETWEEN  
MOM AND BABY

EAT UP!  
New Mealtime  
Gear That'll  
Put Baby in the  
Mood For Food

TODDLER  
LOGIC

MAKING SENSE  
OF YOUR CHILD'S  
MADDENING BEHAVIOR





SANITY SAVER:  
KEEP GUESTS'  
VISITS SHORT  
AND SWEET.

**T**he phone starts to ring, the doorbell goes off like an alarm, and well-meaning friends and family members start trooping through your home. Even though they promise not to stay long and insist that you not go to any trouble, you probably feel compelled to make them comfortable.

The standard advice is to limit visits.

in a while. Plus, of course, you want to show off your new baby.

The key is to make visits as stress-free as possible. We'll show you how.

#### TAKE IT EASY

You've been through an arduous journey—hey, it's called labor for a reason. And now the demands and sleep depri-

up. Promise yourself you'll sleep when baby sleeps, kick out visitors when you're tired, and don't be too proud to ask for help.

When Gina Maggerd, of Neon, Kentucky, had her baby, she "decided not to worry about what everyone was thinking. Instead, I told myself, *This is me, how I am after giving birth, and I*

## Home...but Not Alone

Sounds easy, but it's tough to tell your 89-year-old grandmother that she has to wait a few weeks to see her first great-grandchild or suggest that your in-laws unpack the car and postpone their drive in from Peoria. Besides, you appreciate all of those presents, flowers, and casseroles people deliver when you feel exhausted and overwhelmed, and it's nice to be patted and congratulated once

**YOU'RE BACK FROM THE HOSPITAL, AND EVERYONE WANTS TO VISIT. HERE'S HOW TO MANAGE THE CROWDS.**

BY BRETTE MCWHORTER SEMBER / ILLUSTRATIONS BY JACKIE BESTEMAN

vation are increasing. It's important to take care of yourself, along with the baby. Even if you're the kind of person who is constantly in overdrive and can't stand to see a thing out of place in your home, now is the time to learn to ease

*am not going to fret trying to make everyone else feel comfortable."*

Taking it easy applies not only to you but also to the baby. "I made it a rule I would not wake the baby because someone was visiting," says Joyce Anthony, a



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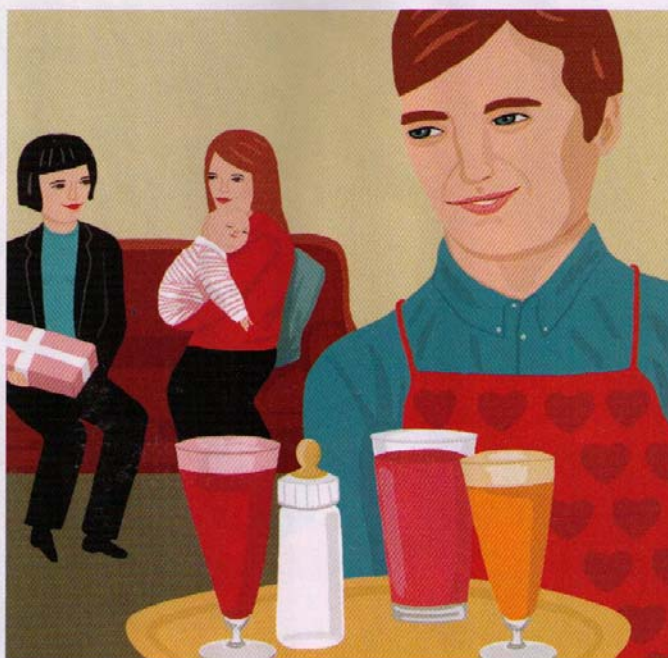
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## Doling Out Duties to Dad

While your partner may be pitching in like a champ, he won't know what you're stressing about if you don't tell him. It helps to have a plan in place for visits so you each know your roles. You should remain focused on staying comfortable. Before guests arrive, point out things he may have missed in his pre-visit cleanup. If you don't, it's going to irk you, and you may be tempted to clean it yourself. When guests arrive, let him handle food and drinks—you can deal with presents and small talk. Decide that Dad will be the doorkeeper, responsible for getting people in, keeping them comfortable, and moving them out. If you want time to relax and chat with visitors, he'll be more than happy to step in for diaper duty or soothing your baby.

mom from Erie, Pennsylvania. "Believe it or not, people constantly asked."

### NO-FUSS MAKEOVER FOR MOM

Okay, so they're really not coming to see you; they're coming to see the baby. But even so, you don't want to greet visitors in those pajamas you've been lounging in for four days straight with your hair standing on end.

Set aside one outfit that is decent looking and comfy. Put it on before people visit, then pull it off after they leave so it stays reasonably clean. Store it in the same easily accessible place so you know where it is at a moment's notice.

Or "throw a nice cardigan sweater over whatever pj's, sweats, or drooled-on clothes you are wearing," suggests Stacy DeBroff, author of *The Mom Book—4,278 of Mom Central's Tips—for Moms, From Moms* (Free Press, 2002).

For quick touch-ups, create a beauty station in the living room or family room so you don't have to make a dash or climb the stairs to the bedroom or bathroom. Stash some facial wipes, lip-stick or lip gloss, a small mirror, a comb or brush, ponytail holders, and breath mints in a drawer or in a box under the couch. After a quick touch-up, no one will know that you haven't showered or brushed your teeth. Keep fresh nursing



**LEARN NOT TO APOLOGIZE FOR THE STATE OF YOUR HOME. "NOT SAYING ANYTHING SENDS THE MESSAGE, 'I'M COPING WITH A BABY, PLEASE RESPECT THAT.' "**

pads there as well so you can easily change them before or after company visits. If you want to get your breast pump out of sight, keep a gym bag nearby in which to store it.

**HOME CLEAN HOME**

A lack of sleep, coupled with your newfound responsibilities, makes it a real challenge to keep your house from looking like a combat zone. Stop stressing about it. "Consider using just one room to entertain," says Maureen Wild, owner of High Road Solutions and a certified hostess from The Protocol School of Washington, in Washington, D.C., which provides hospitality training for the diplomatic community. "It may be your living room, or family room, or if you live in a warm climate, the patio. Be a little more scrupulous about making this space enticing to guests." However, there's no need to go overboard: "The disorder is part of the charm," she adds.

Skip making the beds, putting away the laundry, or taking out the trash—remember, you are supposed to be resting. Just close the doors to these rooms. Focus on the things that guests will notice, like dog fur on the carpet, dishes piled to the ceiling, and a dirty bathroom. Let other less noticeable things, like dust on your knickknacks or water stains in the shower, go. "People notice clutter more than dust," points out Lisa Groen Braner,

author of *The Mother's Book of Well-Being* (Conari Press, 2003). "Place dishes in a sink of hot sudsy water and wipe the counters and table clean. Straighten towels in the bathroom and swish a brush in the toilet."

Put your feet up and let your partner vacuum a few times a week, and use bathroom wipes to clean the bathroom. For the usual things that get left around a house, Amy Crane, a mom from Erie, Pennsylvania, suggests "keeping a laundry basket handy so the new mom or her helper can quickly dump all the stuff into the basket and then hide it." Pile gifts and gift bags in a room where no one will see them, and discard crumpled wrapping paper as soon as you open a gift, to deter clutter. DeBroff also points out that if you are in a hurry, you can quickly hide kitchen stuff, like dirty dishes, in the oven. Use paper plates and cups for guests and for your own daily needs if you don't want to worry about dishes.

Some guests may want to see the baby's room, but they won't expect it to be perfectly in place. Baby is likely to be spending most of her time in your room or the living room, and the nursery might serve as a temporary repository for gifts, boxes, and baby clothes that haven't yet been put away.

Learn not to apologize for the state of your home. "Apologizing calls attention to the house and invites scrutiny,"



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says Susan Isaacs Kohl, author of *The Best Things Parents Do* (Conari Press, 2004). "Not saying anything sends the message, 'I'm coping with a baby, please respect that.'"

## HELLO, GOODBYE

While you might be happy to introduce your new family member to guests, a long visit will only make you tired. Make it clear how long the social call will be by saying something like, "It would be great if you could stop by at 2. Just so you know, we're usually ready for a nap by 2:30."

Take charge of the visits. Michelle Palter, of Sea Cliff, New York, says, "I screened my calls. I'd call back in batches when I got the time and try to schedule visits in batches too." Having three visits in one day simplifies the cleaning and straightening process too—it's the same amount of work for three times as many guests.

Getting oblivious guests to leave can be a challenge, but there are discrete ways to make the point. "My trick was to simply say it was time to nurse and take the baby and leave the room," says Manton, Michigan, mom Ami Weaver. "Most people seemed to get the message." Her husband, Anthony, would put the baby down for a nap, "then mention how I usually took a nap when he did. People took the hint," she adds. Heather Truett, from Tallassee, Alabama, would begin putting away food or dishes to give guests a clue that the visit was over. Jennifer Reno, of Howell, Michigan, remembers that she and her husband worked out "a signal that only he knew about that would tell him I had enough and needed to rest."

It's okay to be blunt and say, "Sorry for such a short visit, but it's time to feed the baby." Remember, visits are supposed to be fun. And with a little crowd control, you can revel in your newest family member.

Brette McWhorter Sember, a mother of two, is the author of *Your Plus-Size Pregnancy* (Barricade Books, 2005).

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