



# PARENTS TOGETHER

A book for those who are preparing to be fathers and mothers.

It asks you some of the many questions you may need to think over and talk about on the way to having a baby

**far**  
FOR LIVET

### **Parents together**

Men's Health Forum

Prepared by the Men's Health Forum as part of the 'Father for Life' project, with the assistance of Svend Aage Madsen, Tobias Siiger Prentow and Mie Møller Nielsen and others.

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# PARENTS TOGETHER





## ON THE WAY TO BEING PARENTS

This book is for couples who would like some inspiration to consider and discuss all the myriads of thoughts and questions that arise when you are expecting a baby.

The book is designed with a question for each week. Under it is about half a page of space, where you can write your answers or keywords about the question.

At the bottom of the page is some brief information about the stage of development your baby has reached that week.

## HOW YOU CAN USE THE BOOK

The idea is that during the week each of you can write your answer or some notes in the book – and then you talk about them when you have time and feel like it.

It is not certain both of you will have anything to say about all the questions – so if not, just skip them. The most important thing is that the questions start you thinking. And there are no right or wrong answers! It is also possible that you do not want to share your answers – so you can each have a copy of the book, and only share when you want to.

Couples will be given the book at different stages of the pregnancy, so you can just start with the weeks corresponding to the stage you have reached. But you can also look at the questions from earlier weeks.

## WHY MAKE A BOOK LIKE THIS?

The questions in the book are based on many years' work as psychologists with women and men as parents, and from research and interviews with expectant parents and after the baby is born. While many of the questions arise quite naturally for most parents, some may be irrelevant, and some are essential for everyone. Some may be painful, while you enjoy thinking about others.

Experience shows that taking a thorough look at a lot of the questions is a good way of preparing psychologically for parenthood, and we hope it will prevent postnatal depression in some mothers and fathers.

The book has been prepared by Svend Aage Madsen, clinical psychologist, PhD and author of several books on parenthood, in dialogue with health visitors, midwives and employees of the Men's Health Forum . The book is part of the Father for Life project, carried out by the Men's Health Forum with financial support from Nordea-fonden.





### **Weeks 1 to 5**

***What were the first thoughts that came to mind when you heard that your baby was on the way?***

Her reply

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His reply

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**Your baby: The spine is beginning to form.**



**Week 6**

*How would you describe the way you reached the decision that you wanted a baby? And why now?*

Her reply

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**Your baby: Eyes, nose and mouth can be distinguished. It is now 5 mm long.**





**Week 7**

*How would you describe your partner's state of mind now, on the way to becoming a parent – and your own?*

Her reply

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Your baby has doubled in size in a week – and the heart is already functioning.





**Week 8**

*Is there anything you want to do or see before the baby comes?  
Do you want to do it together, or separately?*

Her reply

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His reply

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**Week 9**

*Is there anyone apart from your partner whom you talk to about becoming parents?*

Her reply

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His reply

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**Week 10**

***Do you sometimes think of doubts or regrets in connection with having a baby?  
If so, what are they centred on, and can you talk to each other about them?***

Her reply

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### Week 11

*How do you think your relationship will be changed when there are three (or even more) in the family? Is there anything you are looking forward to – and anything you are worried about?*

Her reply

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**Your baby: Can now open and shut his/her mouth, and personal facial features are beginning to show, which may look like the parents' features.**





**Week 12**

*What do you think about your baby's gender?  
Whether you know which it is or not.*

Her reply

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**Your baby:** All organs have now developed, and the beginnings of teeth are forming in the gums. The baby moves a lot, although it cannot be felt yet. If a scan is taken, it will often show the baby's gender.





**Week 13**

*Who will be the first person you tell that you are expecting a baby?*

*Is there a particular reason?*

*Is there anyone you are reluctant to tell?*

Her reply

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**Your baby: Is more or less fully developed, and the sex organs are visible.  
The hands often go up to the mouth, and sometimes the baby sucks a thumb.**

**Week 14**

*How does it affect your relationship as a couple that a baby is on the way?  
Has it already changed anything? E.g. in relation to your sex life?*



Her reply

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Your baby now measures about 8.5 cm and is the size of an apple. It is during this period that the baby grows fastest.





**Week 15**  
*How do you think being a parent will change you?*

Her reply

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**Your baby: Is about 10 cm long and practising breathing. Grasps and kicks with his/her legs. The hair colour is more or less determined.**







### Week 16

*How do you think being a parent will change your partner?*

Her reply

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**Your baby: Is now about 16 cm long and often makes jerking movements. He/she sometimes gets hiccups from drinking amniotic fluid.**





### **Week 17**

*Is there anything you think you will be particularly good at as parents? And anything you will not be so good at?*

Her reply

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His reply

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**Week 18**

*What does your mum think about the two of you expecting a baby?  
And your dad? What do you think they expect you to be like as parents?*

Her reply

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**At the end of the week your baby will weigh about 200 g, and perhaps the woman can now feel the foetus moving – perhaps like bubbles in the stomach.**





**Week 19**

*How do you hope your dad and mum will be as grandparents for your baby?*

Her reply

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**Week 20**

*Have you been most attached to one of your parents while you were growing up?  
What about right now?*

Her reply

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His reply

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**Now you have reached the half-way point as expectant parents. Your baby sleeps and is awake in roughly the same way as a newborn baby.**



**Week 21**

*Is there anything in the ways your own mum or dad were parents for you that you would like to copy? Is there anything in their parenting that you want to avoid?*

Her reply

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Your baby moves more and more, and most women will now be able to feel it.

**Week 22**

***What was it like for you to be a child as you grew up? Did you feel that you were understood? Were you comforted when you needed it?***



Her reply

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## Week 23

*Is there anything from your own childhood that will influence what you are like as a parent?*

Her reply

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**Your baby: Is now beginning to find a daily rhythm.**





## Week 24

*What do you feel about the dialogue with professionals – the doctor, the midwife and others?*

Her reply

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His reply

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**Week 25**

*Is there anything you are especially looking forward to seeing or doing with your child?  
If so, have you a particular age in mind?*

Her reply

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**Your baby: Would be able – with a little help – to manage outside the womb, if things went that way.  
From now on, it is mostly a matter of growing and maturing.**





## Week 26

*What do you think the first weeks will be like with a newborn and very young baby? Is there anything you are especially looking forward to? And anything you are worried about?*

Her reply

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**Week 27**

*Have you talked over and agreed about parental leave – and have you agreed how you will spend it and perhaps divide it between you?*

Her reply

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His reply

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**Week 28**

*Have you made any plans for what the family could do together during parental leave?  
What would you like to do?*



Her reply

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His reply

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## Week 29

*Have you thought about which roles you each will take in the early days?  
Who will do things like changing nappies, bathing the baby, bedtime and  
getting up at night?  
How do you want things to be? Do you both agree?*

Her reply

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Your baby now weighs well over a kilo, and uses all his/her senses.  
The midwife can now assess the baby's size and weight approximately.





## Week 30

*Have you thought about your approach to upbringing, and what you think about comfort and caring and so on?*

*Have you talked about it, and do the two of you agree?*

Her reply

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Your baby's brain functions are well on the way in their development.  
His/her eyes are often open, training the sense of sight.





**Week 31**

***What do you think about your job or your studies during the coming period of parental leave and while the baby is young?***

***Will it be trouble-free, or are there some problems to face?***

Her reply

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His reply

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**Week 32**

*Is your home ready for the newborn baby? Is anything missing?  
Anything you can't manage in time? Do the two of you disagree on how anything should be?*

Her reply

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Your baby is now about 40 cm long – about three quarters of the height at birth.





**Week 33**

*What do you think now about how your life will change when the two of you become parents and have to live with a baby?*

Her reply

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Your baby now weighs about 2 kilos and is beginning to take up a position head downwards in the womb.



**Week 34**

*Is there anything now that you want to discuss with the professional people who will help you through the birth and in the first days after it? Do you know the health visitor?*

Her reply

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His reply

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### Week 35

*Do you feel you are ready and prepared for the birth?*

*Is there anything you are in doubt about? Anything you are worried about?*

Her reply

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His reply

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**Your baby's growth means there is less and less space in the womb  
– many babies now turn head down.**





**Week 36**

*Now the birth is approaching fast. What are your thoughts today about the baby on the way, and about meeting him/her?*

Her reply

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His reply

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**Week 37**

*Have you agreed on how you want the arrangements during the birth?  
Where will the man be, and what will he do?*

Her reply

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His reply

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### Week 38

*Who is going to be the first person you tell when the baby is born? Who will be next?*

Her reply

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### Week 39

*Who – if anyone – do you want to visit you in hospital – and in the first days after you get home? Do you both agree? Have you arranged it with the people concerned?*

Her reply

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**Your baby: Most babies' heads are now firmly in the pelvis in a position ready for birth.  
The woman's body is preparing for the birth.**





**Week 40**

*The baby may have been born now – or are you still waiting for it to happen?  
How do you feel, and how are you functioning together at this stage?*

Her reply

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**On average, your baby will weigh between 3.5 and 5 kg and measure 50-53 cm.  
Most babies will be born at the end of this week. But you may have to wait a couple of weeks more.**





**Weeks 41- 42**

***What are your thoughts about coming home with the newborn?  
- or what is it like now, being at home with a new baby??***

Her answer

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**Your baby will have been born or will be born during these weeks.**







**far**  
FOR LIVET

**PARENTS TOGETHER – A handbook from the Men's Health Forum**