

How to Approach Your Friend's New Baby: 3 Tips for Childless People

Visiting a friend who has just given birth can be a daunting experience when you don't have a child of your own. How do you act? What do you give? What's polite to say and what isn't?

I have two kids now, but I didn't give birth till I was over 30 and before that I'd had very little contact with babies. To be honest, babies scared me a bit. I had no idea how to act around them or their mothers.

A few weeks ago, I visited a friend who recently gave birth. I realized my approach to meeting a new baby has changed dramatically since I became a mom myself. I've learned so much along the way, and I've broken it down into three tips. If you're childless and you've got a friend who recently had a baby, perhaps these will be useful to you.

Tip One: Tread Carefully on Holding the Baby

The question of whether or not to hold the baby and for how long is complicated. Each new mother will have her own feelings on the topic – and those can change per baby. After my first baby was born, I was very clingy and didn't like anyone else to hold her for longer than 5 minutes. By my second baby, I'd chilled out, plus he was fussy. So I was happy to hand him off and get a break.

It's always good to start by asking if you can hold the baby. Some moms would appreciate the help, but they are scared to impose. After that, you should keep checking in with the mother and ask if she wants her little bundle of joy back. Also, try to read her body language. If she starts hovering over the baby or giving anxious looks, it's a sure sign her

arms are feeling empty.

Tip Two: Be Diplomatic on the Topic of C-sections

Before I needed a C-section myself, I was miffed when mothers expressed sadness about them. I thought: "Aren't, like, a third of babies born via C-section? What's the big deal?" Now I understand that a C-section can be a significant disappointment and a very difficult issue for the new mother. She may also have some anger or resentment towards the medical professionals who handled the delivery.

You should ask the mother about the method of delivery in a neutral way and let her share what she wishes. It's important to keep in mind that women are often quite emotional after giving birth. Saying anything like "Well, all that matters is that you have a healthy baby" is condescending.

Tip Three: Give a Gift that's Practical or Thoughtful

When you visit a new mother, it's nice to bring a baby gift. I recommend giving practical items. Trust me, they will get used. Many new moms have an Amazon registry.

The [Debrett's Guide to Modern Manners](#) in Britain advises against giving clothes because "most mothers have strong ideas about how their children should look." I wouldn't say to never give baby clothes, but you should think very hard about the new mother's personal style. The way she dresses herself and decorates her house will tell you a lot about how she intends to dress her baby.

Also, if decided to give clothes, you should buy size 6 months or larger. Babies grow crazy fast in their first months. My kids got tons of cute outfits that they could only wear once or twice before they were outgrown.

Whatever you do, don't give the baby a toy that makes obnoxious electronic sounds. This will drive the new mother

crazy. She will remember what you did and take her revenge when you have your first child.

This list of advice is definitely not comprehensive. These are just some of the things I've learned during my journey into motherhood. Do you have anything to add? What other tips might help childless folks feel more comfortable when meeting a friend's new baby?

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