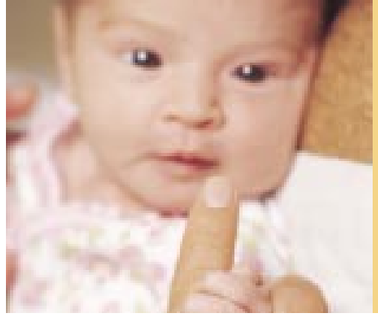
Are you Man Enough to be a Father?

If you are sexually active, it's time you think about what fatherhood means to you. After all, half of all pregnancies are surprises.

If you are not ready to be a father, be responsible and use a condom or make sure you and your partner use birth control correctly.



Are You Healthy Enough To Be A Father?

It's not just the woman's health that's important to the baby. If a man has a health problem, he can pass it on to his child, too. When a man is healthy, his baby has a better chance of being born without problems and growing up strong. A healthy father can also care for his family better.

HOW DO YOU HANDLE STRESS?

A family doesn't always run the way you want. Raising kids is a full-time job that needs a lot of patience. Babies get sick. Kids need help with homework. Teens will challenge your rules. And everyone needs new clothes. How do you cope with stress?

I get so mad I want to hit someone	❑ yes	❑ no	I keep it inside	❑ yes	❑ no
I don't know what to do	❑ yes	❑ no	I ignore problems	❑ yes	❑ no

WHAT'S IMPORTANT IN YOUR LIFE?

- ❑ Car
- ❑ Job
- ❑ Clothes
- ❑ Partying
- ❑ Church
- ❑ Family
- ❑ Sex
- ❑ Money
- ❑ Sports
- ❑ Love
- ❑ School
- ❑ Travel
- ❑ Being a dad
- ❑ Other

_____

_____

HOW WOULD YOU FEEL IF YOU BECAME A FATHER TODAY?

- ❑ Shocked
- ❑ Scared
- ❑ Angry
- ❑ Excited
- ❑ Confused
- ❑ Stressed
- ❑ Depressed
- ❑ Happy

RATE YOUR HEALTH

GENERAL HEALTH What you eat and how much exercise you get makes a difference in how you feel. Is this a problem for you?

- ❑ No – I eat well, exercise and am healthy
- ❑ Could be – I could be more active and healthier
- ❑ Yes – I have health problems

You can improve your health. Cut out junk food. Drink lots of water. Eat plenty of fruits and vegetables. And walk more.

FAMILY HISTORY Some health problems that run in the family, such as sickle cell disease, Tay-Sachs disease, hemophilia (free bleeder), mental illness and epilepsy (seizures) can be passed on to your baby. Is this a problem for you?

- ❑ No – No family diseases
- ❑ Could be – I don't know
- ❑ Yes – A disease runs in my family

Did you know that African American men are more likely to have high blood pressure and diabetes than other men?

SMOKING Smoking can cause serious health problems for you and people around you. Is this a problem for you?

- ❑ No – I don't smoke
- ❑ Could be – I smoke sometimes
- ❑ Yes – I smoke a lot

If your partner breathes cigarette smoke while she is pregnant, your baby can be born too soon or too small to be healthy. Smoke also increases the risk of a baby dying from Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS).

DRINKING Alcohol (beer, wine and hard liquor) can keep you from making good decisions. Is this a problem for you?

- ❑ No – I don't drink
- ❑ Could be – I drink sometimes
- ❑ Yes – I drink often

If you don't think clearly, it can be harder to keep your job or drive safely. And it may be harder for you and your partner to get along.

SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED DISEASES (STDS) STDs like syphilis, gonorrhea and HIV can make you and your partner very ill. Is this a problem for you?

- ❑ No – Recent tests show no STDs
- ❑ Could be – My partner and I have not been tested
- ❑ Yes – I have a STD now
- ❑ Yes – my partner has a STD now

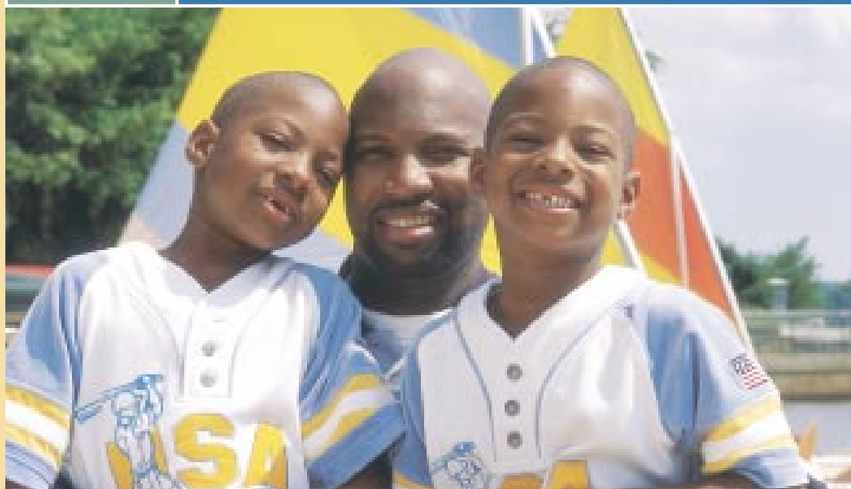
Partners can pass STDs to each other before, during and after pregnancy. Infected mothers can pass diseases to their babies.

DRUGS If a man uses illegal (street) drugs even three months before he makes a baby, his unborn child may have serious problems. Is this a problem for you?

- ❑ No – I don't use any drugs
- ❑ Could be – I use once in a while
- ❑ Yes – I use a lot

Pharmacy drugs (prescriptions and over the counter drugs) can also be risky.

HOW DID YOU SCORE? If you answered "yes" or "could be," to any of these questions, talk to a doctor soon. Your family wants you with them a long time.



Are you Ready to be a Father?

Are You Being Responsible?

Whether you are married, in a steady relationship or just dating, if you are not using birth control, you risk becoming a father before you want to be one. Children can totally change your life. They are a life-long responsibility. Is raising a child part of your plan?

Can You Afford A Baby?

Money can get tight even before the baby comes. There will be bills for prenatal care and maternity clothes. The mother might not be able to work anymore. Then come the hospital bills for the delivery. The baby will need things too, from diapers to doctor visits. And a sick baby costs a lot more than a healthy one. Fathers, whether or not they live with their children, have financial responsibilities even if they are on disability or unemployment. (Both are considered income.)

Do you have a steady job? ❑ yes ❑ no

Do you think you can afford a child? ❑ yes ❑ no

How Would You Be Involved?

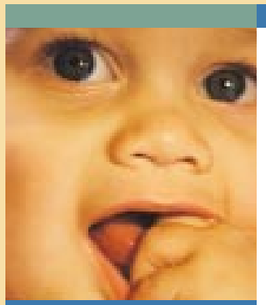
The family is where children first learn to love and trust. As a father, you have responsibility for the health and happiness of your child. It's not all about money. Babies need fathers who change their diapers, take care of them when they are sick, and give them lots of hugs. Fathers who don't live with their children may need to find special ways to be involved with them. Fill in the blank:

As a father, I would teach my child _____

_____

_____

_____



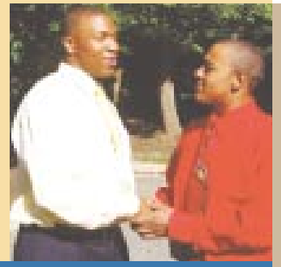
Are You Ready To Make Your Child Your Top Priority?

Support your partner:

Just like it's important for you to be physically healthy, help your partner to do the same. Encourage her to eat the right foods, take a multivitamin with folic acid, and quit smoking, drinking or doing drugs. When she is pregnant, her body will change and so will her emotions. She will need your help the entire 40 weeks of pregnancy. Go with her to her clinic visits, cook her a meal, take walks together. Listen to her and be there for her.

Count on your friends and family:

A lot of men think they have to do everything for themselves. They feel strong men don't need anybody else – especially other men. Everyone needs good friends – both men and women – they can count on, talk to, and help get through the tough times. Friends, family, neighbors and church members can make the good times great.



FOR MORE INFORMATION ON MEN'S HEALTH, RAISING CHILDREN AND FATHERHOOD CALL

NC FAMILY HEALTH RESOURCE LINE

Calls are toll-free and confidential

1-800-367-2229

TTY for the hearing impaired 1-800-976-1922

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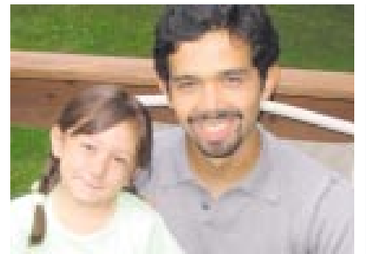

FIRST STEP