

My Circle of Support

Having one or two good friends that you can talk to is very important. Human beings are meant to depend on one another rather than go it alone. Such friends are often called your “circle of support.”

While you are pregnant, being around friends, family members, co-workers or others who know about the baby and support you will make you feel good. Women friends are especially important. Think about who these people are and make a list. If there are at least two names, you are lucky. If you cannot think of anyone, talk with your health care provider. You will feel more relaxed if you know there is someone you can call on if you need help. You will also feel better having someone to talk things over with. Scientists have shown that mothers who have a circle of support are less likely to have premature or underweight babies. Having friends is healthy for you and healthy for your unborn baby.

After your baby is born, you will need to think about your friends again. Although you may enjoy being with them, some of them may not be safe for your baby. This would include friends who smoke, or who are always angry, or who demand too much attention. It is also helpful to be around other young mothers who are going through some of the same things you are. Other mothers will help you feel you are not alone. They can also help with babysitting or emergencies.

How can I build a circle of support?

Create a list of people you feel close to. These could be family members, friends, co-workers, agency workers, neighbors or church members. Tell everyone on your list how much you appreciate them. Let them know you are counting on them. Call or visit them often to share news about your pregnancy or new baby. This is a time when friends expect to do more for you.

Go over your list with your agency worker or health care provider, or ask their help in making a list. Talk about people you may feel unsure about. Have the phone numbers for everyone you feel safe around.

In addition to people you already know, look for support groups in your neighborhood. Check newspapers, hospitals, store bulletin boards and “free” baby magazines, or talk with your agency worker. Other good places to find mothers who live nearby are PEPS groups, mother-baby classes, playgrounds, walking paths, or community centers.



Crib Sheets

Health information about pregnancy, parenting and infant care from the University of Washington School of Nursing.

For additional information, email stepup@u.washington.edu