

BECOMING A MOTHER - THE JOYS AND CHALLENGES

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Motherhood can be incredibly rewarding and fulfilling, but it also brings demands and responsibilities that new mothers may, at times, find overwhelming.

During pregnancy, women undergo dramatic physical changes, as well as profound shifts in their emotional lives, and they must redefine their sense of identity, body image and role in relation to others. The general expectation that mothers-to-be are happy and excited about giving birth makes it difficult for them to express the ambivalence, fears and feelings of inadequacy that are also a normal part of this unique and important period in their lives.

After giving birth, women are confronted with a number of challenges as they get acquainted with their infants and learn to juggle the new demands of motherhood. While recovering from labor and delivery, they may experience lack of sleep and anxiety about being a good parent. They may find that they have little or no personal or couple's time, and husbands and partners may feel "left out of the loop" due to the intense bond between the mother and baby. All of these changes can have a profound impact on their adjustment to this new role and on the baby's growth and development.

Most soon-to-be and new parents find they need help and advice during this important stage of their lives. Some turn to family

and friends while others read books, search the Internet or take birthing and parenting classes.

CHC offers a variety of services for parents seeking information and guidance to support the healthy growth and development of their children from infancy through adolescence. We offer parent education classes that provide basic information about the physical, social, emotional and intellectual growth of children as well as advice and strategies to meet the parenting challenges posed by each stage of development. For parents wanting help focused on their particular areas of concern, CHC clinicians are able to provide individualized assessment and treatment services.

Dr. Stern specializes in working with pregnant women, new mothers and families with very young children. She works closely with parents to address the stressors and challenges they face to promote their emotional adjustment and the family's overall well-being.

