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Baby in the middle

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Do babies really cement relationships or do they drive a wedge? A new survey of 3,000 dads across the UK carried out by Colief Infant Drops has revealed that 42% of dads say they argue more with their partner since the birth of their baby, with money being the top topic for arguments.

It's a Crying Shame

The combination of lack of sleep, crying babies and coping with problems such as infant colic can quickly lead to frayed tempers. Money topped the stakes as the number one topic for arguments, with parents in their 30's most likely to let their finances lead to a row. Sleep was also high on the list of niggles, with nearly a quarter (24%) of dads regularly arguing with their partner about it. So who does get the most kip then? Older dads get the most sleep with 70% sleeping more than their partners, while a quarter (26%) of dads in their early 20's felt they were getting less sleep than their partners.

Ringin' the Changes

Having a baby inevitably brings about major changes as parents adapt to their new role. 28% of dads felt their relationship with their partner was the biggest change to their life since becoming a dad, however the changes were not necessary for the worse as 10% said they were more in love with their partner now they have a baby together.

Are modern dads really hands on?

According to Colief's survey, nearly half (49%) of dads say they often get up in the night to feed the baby, while 47% regularly change nappies, however 21% often argue with their partner over who does the chores. Older dads are the best at getting up in the night, with 53% doing it on a regular basis. However, dads in their early thirties are by far the most hands on when it comes to baby care with 61% regularly changing nappies, 58% regularly feeding the baby and 56% regularly calming their baby when he/she cries.

Cry Baby

Despite the fact that dads are seemingly becoming more hands on when it comes to baby care, 43% admitted they feel a bit helpless when their baby is crying. Dads in their late 40's struggle the most with crying babies with over half (52%) sometimes feeling helpless when their baby is crying while 9% feel completely helpless. Over half (55%) of dads in their thirties felt they didn't get enough support and information about being a dad, while over 45% of dads felt that dads needed more support, indicating that more emphasis needs to be placed on dads as well as mums in pre-natal information.

Sex & Relationship Psychotherapist, Paula Hall commented "Having a baby has a massive impact on pretty much every aspect of a couple's relationship, from the practical things like money, running a home and maintaining a social life through to emotional issues like maintaining intimacy and adapting to the responsibilities and roles of parenting. Having a baby can be the most bonding experience a couple can ever experience, but be prepared for the trials as well as the euphoria.

"The arrival of a new baby undoubtedly brings about major changes to relationships which take time to adapt to, however, when babies suffer from problems such as infant colic, which causes them to cry excessively, relationships can be stretched to the limit," commented Mary Buckley, founder of Colief Infant Drops.

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Paula Hall, who experienced colic herself with her second child, recommends parents "Recognise that colic is a very common problem but one that can be doubly exhausting. The lack of sleep is bad enough, but if you're having to console a crying baby for hours on end as well it can feel torturous and leave your nerves ragged. Support each other, be extra patient and tolerant if you're crabby with each other, and again, remember that this is just a phase that will pass".

For further information on coping with colic and crying babies, and further expert relationship advice from Paula Hall, visit Problemshared.info.

Colief Infant Drops

When babies show symptoms of colic, ruling out milk sensitivity is one of the first recommended steps. Colief Infant Drops contain the naturally-occurring enzyme lactase, which when added to the babies 'usual milk' (whether breast fed or formula) breaks down most of the lactose and makes the feed more easily digestible and helping to reduce the hours of crying. Priced at £9.99, Colief is available from Boots, Alliance, Lloyds and most major Supermarket pharmacies as well as many independent chemists.

For help and advice, visit Colief.com.

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