

# ask the EXPERTS

## Oh baby, you might feel **lonely** after giving birth



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**H**AVING a baby brings about many changes, all of a sudden your life revolves around this new little person and your old routines and friendships alter.

For many parents the first few weeks and months of raising their baby are surprisingly lonely as all of a sudden they are away from the adult contact of work and seeing friends.

The charity Parentline Plus recently reported that almost half the parents calling their helpline — a staggering 45,000 parents — had problems with loneliness and isolation.

Here are some ideas for meeting others once the first rush of visitors is over and partners have returned to work or study.

Before your baby is born make the effort to talk to other expectant parents, maybe at antenatal classes or while you're waiting for a check up. Other parents to be will probably be as interested as you in setting up some friendships for after their baby is born. Aquarobics for pregnant mums can be one source of new friends, for example call Sure Start Blurton on 344 910 for details of their aqua natal group.

Once your baby is born getting out and about is important both to your child's wellbeing and your own. Find out about new mums groups or toddler groups where babies are welcome by talking to your health visitor, contacting your

local SureStart, children's centre or churches. The Childcare Information Service is helpful too.

It can sometimes be hard going when other parents already know each other. However you will soon be included as members get to know your face.

If you are seeking some adult contact then helping others can raise your confidence and get you in touch with other parents.

Local organisations such as SureStart, are always on the look out for parents to become volunteers, phone or visit them for more information.

If you feel stuck in your own home you can get some contact with others through the internet. Reputable sites such as [www.mumsnet.com](http://www.mumsnet.com) let you register with them free and chat online or post messages, this can help you feel connected to others.

● Useful contacts, The Childcare Information Service 0800 015 1120, Parentline Plus 24 hour helpline 0808 800 2222.

#### Parents' tips

Jaime, mother of Charlie, aged four months, says "Be prepared that you might feel lonely and find out what groups, events or activities are in your area.

"Phone around to your health visitor, health centres, SureStart, churches, children's centres and the Childcare Information Service who were really helpful."



● Parentline Plus reports a staggering 45,000 parents had problems with loneliness and isolation after giving birth

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