



## Leaving Baby for the First Time

The moment is here. Your partner has been not-so-gently hinting that you need a date night out. You agree but are reluctant to leave your new baby. Your couple relationship is important to you and you really would like a break too, so you decide to go for it. How can you make the separation easier?

### **Tips for Mom**

Have a trial run with your caregiver

Ask someone you are super comfortable with leaving your baby, such as another Mom, or a relative that you trust.

Phone home as much as you need to in order to feel secure.

Say a quick good-bye, hug and leave fast.

Leave a shirt or receiving blanket that smells like you.

Go to something you can focus on such as a movie or show. Dinner is too unstructured and your thoughts may turn to worry.

Post a list on the fridge of what helps calm babies' crying, positions she likes, food and bath preferences, sleep routine and individual quirks.

Make sure your caregiver and you share the same philosophy. Ask questions such as "How long do you think baby should cry before you pick her up?" to gauge suitability.

Don't do it again unless you feel ready.

Don't worry if you only last half the time you planned. It's natural to feel that way.

### **Tips for Partner**

Recognize this is huge for her

Allow her to do what she needs to do in order to feel comfortable. If she needs to cling to her phone, don't tease her!

Acknowledge her feelings of guilt, worry and anxiety; she is being pulled two ways between wanting to go out and wanting to stay with baby.

Let her phone home as much as she needs to.

Let her talk about the baby as much as she wants to.

Let her go home if she is overwhelmed. This is still a very natural and healthy attachment at this stage. If her baby is going to university and she still can't

bear to go home, then it might be a problem! She will love you all the more for your understanding to her needs.

As the famous quote by Elizabeth Stone says, "Making the decision to have a child is momentous. It is to decide forever to have your heart go walking around outside your body." Leaving your "heart" for the first time is a huge step of many toward interdependence for you and your child.

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