

Parents-to-be: Where does the father fit in?

During pregnancy, a sense of **becoming a parent** develops differently in each partner. This is normal and should not alarm you. In fact, because they carry the baby, pregnant women feel a sense of motherhood from the very beginning of the pregnancy which then grows stronger over time.

For certain men, awareness that they are soon to become a father is gained more indirectly, and starts with a period of “**mental gestation**”^{1,2}. Real events such as ultrasound exams, discovering the baby’s gender and ultimately meeting one’s child in the flesh turn fatherhood into an increasingly tangible role¹.

It is nevertheless very important for **the father to get involved** from the earliest stages of the pregnancy. This will reassure the mother-to-be, strengthen the couple’s relationship and help them prepare together for their imminent role as parents. Providing **support** – both **physical** (household chores) and **moral** (comfort and self-confidence) – to the future mother is crucial to creating a peaceful environment to welcome the baby¹. With the consent of his partner, the future dad may choose to participate in medical appointments, childbirth and parenthood classes and the birth itself. Through these different steps, he will be more confident and reassured about the coming changes and able to fully take on his new role as a father.

¹ <http://inpes.santepubliquefrance.fr/CFESBases/catalogue/pdf/1310-3t.pdf>

² Bolzinger, E. *Sur le chemin de la paternité, les premiers pas du père. La parole donnée aux hommes*. Mémoire promotion 2008-2012. École de Sages-femmes de Metz - Université Henri Poincaré, Nancy I. http://docnum.univ-lorraine.fr/public/BUMED_MESF_2012_BOLZINGER_ELISE.pdf