

ENTERTAINING IDEAS

Planning The “Perfect” Baby Shower

(NAPSA)—Many mothers-to-be credit their friends and family members for help in navigating the obstacles and sharing the joys of pregnancy. These women often treasure one particular ritual that serves as both a practical lesson in newborn preparation, as well as a time-honored rite of passage: the baby shower.

“Showers are about celebrating life-changing events,” explains Jennifer Jenkins, author of *The Everything Baby Shower Book* and host of a recent chat event on BabyCenter.com. “It can be great fun and doesn’t need to be a lot of work, yet can be so memorable for everyone.”

In fact, showers are nothing new and have been enjoyed by women all over the world for centuries. Despite the cultural differences you’ll find in individual countries, the common theme of welcoming a new baby into the world and supporting the new mother through a selection of special foods, games and gifts remains as popular as ever.

“My friends and family threw me a surprise baby shower that was just a wonderful way to be together and enjoy the special event at hand while gaining some very practical advice and support,” says Lisa Parker, a 32-year-old Baltimore native and first-time mother.

To make sure your baby shower doesn’t end up as a washout, follow some simple guidelines. According to Jenkins, a surprise is always a good option. To keep the new mother guessing, allow her to think you’re planning a party on a designated day, yet secretly arrange for guests to show up on an alternate day.

Another key priority is the mother’s comfort and needs. Presents needn’t be extravagant to be appreciated. A gift certificate for a manicure and pedicure is a great way to pamper the guest of honor. If you really want to score points, however, consider practical ideas as well.

First-time mothers will particularly appreciate you taking care of important details they may not



Baby showers are an important rite of passage for mothers-to-be.

have thought of. A fully stocked baby medicine supply kit, such as JOHNSON’S® Baby Relief Kit, complete with an assortment of newborn-appropriate therapeutic essentials like cold medicine and gas relief products, is always a good choice.

If putting together your own basket of individual items seems like too much of an effort, check out some of the ready-made gift sets now available. A popular choice is the JOHNSON’S® Soothing Bedtime Gift Set, a charming collection of everything a mother needs to establish a successful bedtime routine—including baby toiletries, a cuddly bear, a storybook, a bedtime guide to parent and baby interaction, and a CD of lullabies—all presented in a baby’s keepsake box.

Another popular option is to buy a gift from wherever the mother is registered. Jenkins suggests invitees check with the hostess about where the mother is registered, since volunteering this information on the shower invitation is considered a no-no.

Just remember, a baby shower is the perfect way to shower a mother with love, support and advice—along with some great gifts. So enjoy!