

When you're on your own

If you're single or if your partner can't be with you, you may feel isolated without someone to share the burdens and the joys with. You may find it difficult to be the only one handling all the information and decisions. Here are some ways you can manage these difficulties:

- Ask for and accept help. You may worry about how you'll manage everything on your own and may feel bad about asking for help. Decide what's most important and have others help with the rest so you can spend more time with your baby.
- Involve a family member or friend in your baby's care. Find a family member or friend to spend time in the NICU. After being part of your baby's NICU stay, this person will be better able to help you care for him when he is at home.
- Talk with your employer about your benefits. Ask about benefits that may help pay for your time away from work.
- Find support. It can be tough not having someone to share your thoughts and worries with. When you don't have a partner it is important to find someone to talk to.

“The idea of parenting as a single mom seemed almost impossible when my son, Joey, was born at one pound. Without a partner to lean on, it was so hard to receive scary information and see him struggle. I would be with him at the NICU all day then go home and cry until I fell asleep. My strength was challenged regularly.

I created a scrapbook of Joey's milestones and looked at it every night to remember who I had to stay strong for. I also had to learn to take care of myself. Each day when I came home from the NICU, I did something for myself. I had to remind myself that I deserved it and I needed to stay strong for Joey.”

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MOM OF A PREMATURE BABY