



## You can't "snooze" your baby

"Have a child," they said, "...it will be so joyous and magical." Well, they weren't wrong. Becoming a first time parent has been joyous and magical...and overwhelming and has made me feel like I have absolutely no clue what I'm doing and what exactly did I just sign up for? ...and I really haven't slept in a while, but I'm thankful for this coffee in front of me, and did I just write the world's longest run-on sentence?

Our daughter, Renley, is almost four months old, so we've finally adapted to a solid routine. Babies do not come with manuals. You can take all of the classes, read all of the *What To Expect* books, and talk to all of your parenting friends, and I can assure you that you will never be completely ready before you're thrown in. In addition, I'm still not convinced that each type of cry means something different.

Before your little one arrives, you will have many conversations filled with words of encouragement, advice, and cliché tales. The following include words of advice that I wish I had taken more seriously, along with things I've learned over the past four months:

- 1) **You can't "snooze" your baby:** I know what you're thinking... "Kristin, this is very obvious." And, I'm here to tell you, "Yes, I know." Before children, I was the poster child of hitting the snooze button for at least a half an hour. It was my morning certainty. I revolved my first alarm around the fact that there was no way I'd actually get up at that time. I'm happy to report that, within a few short weeks of training, I mastered the "awake and alert in a moment"...although I long for the day when I can swipe my snooze again for a solid nine minutes of flop-around time.
- 2) **There is no ONE way to do anything:** It didn't take long for me to have a laundry list of questions. "How many diapers do I need? What supplies do I need for an outing? How do I make sure my baby doesn't vomit all over herself in her car seat? How many times do I have to microwave this piece of pizza before I get five minutes to eat it while warm? Is any of this normal?" If you seek advice from others or Google Search any questions, just know that you will never get one cure-all answer to any of your questions. Be prepared to get contradicting advice and come to terms with that reality. Whatever the problem, it is going to take some trial and error, and something that worked last week may not work today.
- 3) **Babies are disgusting and you will be oddly ok with it:** I was very worried that my weak stomach would not be able to stand all the necessary clean-up skills required by a little one. The conversation of a booger would actually make me gag. This is not a stretch of the truth. One holiday, my sister-in-law started discussing how our nephew had recently decided to start a booger collection and she happened to stumble upon it. I lost it. I had to stop her story right in its tracks. This made me wonder if I'd ever be capable to stomach the smells, the spit, and the blowouts.

I'm not quite sure if it's just nature kicking in, but suddenly, I'm superwoman on all things gross. Do you know what a NoseFrida is? If not, let me explain. You do know those snot suction bulbs that have been around forever? Well, it's that concept. Now, add a long straw to insert in the nose and your mouth providing the suction. The thought is repulsing. The functionality is game-changing. I never pictured myself being able to put my mouth on the end of such a contraption and put so much trust into a very small sponge filter... the only thing between you and your baby's nose drippings. And yet, here I am using one on the regular. I hear we have quite a few more stomach churning moments in our future, but I've never been more confident that my husband and I will be able to adapt.

- 4) **You're doing just fine:** It's easy to get caught up in trying to be perfect. This is especially true for the things you care most about. This rings true to your work, your family, your fortune and everything in between. Becoming a parent has been a good reminder that I'm not going to be perfect. I'm going to learn as I go. I'm going to fail at things and learn from things. And, that's all just fine.

However, I think the most mentioned and the most helpful advice has been to try and enjoy all of the moments, even if they don't seem so enjoyable at the time, because you will miss these days eventually. I have already developed a new respect for all the work that goes into the "parenting" job and a whole new understanding of the struggles that come along with it. So CHEERS to those that raised us and those who are currently raising the parents, doctors, teachers, builders, business owners and investors of the future. We've got this.

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