

# Happy families GOLDEN TIPS FOR FIRST-TIME PARENTS

When you're newly pregnant, or have given birth, just what are the key pieces of advice that will make greatest difference to your life and that of your baby? *By Una Rice*

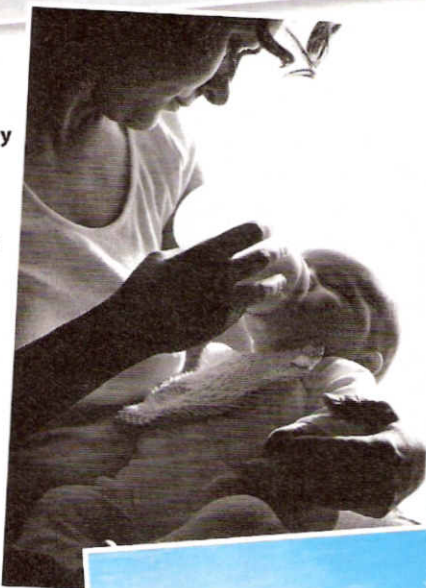
**W**e asked experts from the newly launched SMA Every Step Parenting Advisory Panel for their top tips to promote harmony in all areas of your family life in these challenging financial times....

**THREE GOLDEN TIPS** for new mums and parents from family and child psychotherapist John Sharry. The acclaimed teacher, lecturer and author has over 15 years' experience in child mental health

**1** "Look after yourself. In the joy and busyness of being a new parent, it's easy to get caught up in only thinking of the needs of your baby, when it's important to prioritise your own needs as well in order to prevent stress and exhaustion and to ensure you're happy and positive. Make sure to include in your routine each day a few moments of 'me' time when you can relax to do something enjoyable."

**2** "Having a baby brings huge changes to your life (some good, some very challenging). The parents who do best go with the flow and try to enjoy every minute of the adventure. Even the stress of a night feed can be thought of a precious moment to be enjoyed – especially when you remember that in a few months your baby will have moved on."

**3** "They say it takes a village to raise a child. Don't take on the challenges alone – seek support from friends and family. Don't be afraid to ask for practical help when you need it and to let people know how you are feeling."



time. Classes in aqua aerobics, yoga and pilates are popular choices, but if you who don't want to commit yourselves financially or time-wise, walking and swimming are either free/less expensive options which you can do at times that suit you."

**3** "Relieve stress. Talking to other

**THREE GOLDEN TIPS** from mum-of-three Susan Mac Nicholas, who is a qualified midwife and founder of 2As1, an ante-natal education resource

**1** "For pregnancy, nutritious foods don't have to cost a fortune and a good diet will help you control weight-gain. Iron, calcium, omega 3 and fibre rich foods are essential for you both throughout your pregnancy."

**2** "Take exercise. It's essential during pregnancy to maintain your physical and mental well-being, prepare you for childbirth and also to speed up your recovery

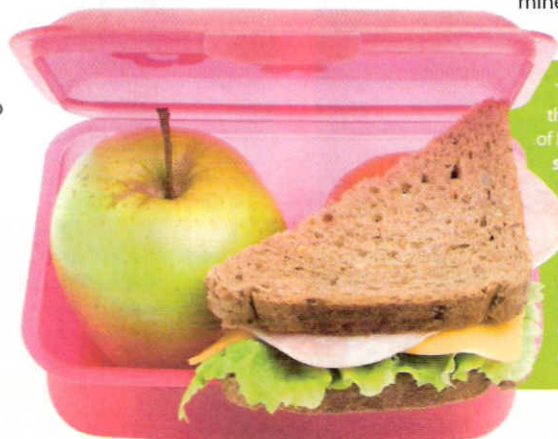
parents-to-be and experienced health professionals in your antenatal classes and hospital visits relieve a lot of tension. Education is key to making informed choices and relieving stress when it comes to thinking about the birth and parenthood."

**3 GOLDEN TIPS** from Anne Sidnell is Nutrition Manager for SMA Nutrition and a registered nutritionist

**1** "Right from birth, good nutrition is key to helping infants reach every developmental milestone. To help you when your healthcare professional isn't available, explore SMA Nutrition's new-look website at [www.smanutrition.ie](http://www.smanutrition.ie) to watch 'How To' videos on a range of baby care topics."

**2** "Iron is a particularly important nutrient for the second six months of life. Babies are born with a store of iron but this starts to decline after four to six months, plus their iron intake needs are about three times higher in proportion to their size than yours. In the first stages of weaning, fruit and vegetables are easy to purée and for your baby to swallow, but they are not a good source of iron."

**3** "From 6-12 months, foods become more important but babies still need about 500-600ml (about a pint) of breast or formula milk each day. Cows' milk is not suitable until your baby is at least 12 months due to its low vitamin D and iron content. Follow-on milks contain more vitamins and minerals than first milks."



To find out more about the SMA Every Step Panel of Experts, visit: [www.smanutrition.ie](http://www.smanutrition.ie) or [www.rollercoaster.ie/smaeverystep](http://www.rollercoaster.ie/smaeverystep). For booklets or fact sheets on topical aspects of infant nutrition and parenting issues, call the SMA Careline on 1800 931 832, (Mon – Fri, 8am – 6pm, calls charged at freephone rate).