

FOR BIRTH PARENTS:

# ADOPTION DOS AND DON'TS

**Adoption is all about options—and about acting in your and your baby's best interest. Here's a list of things to keep in mind as you go through the process.**

**DO: Look at all alternatives, starting with parenting, before choosing adoption.**

**DON'T:** Underestimate the pain of being permanently separated from your child. Adoption is a loving decision, but it has life-long repercussions. Explore all of your alternatives before you make a decision. At the same time, be realistic about whether you're at a point in your life in which you can provide your child with all of the opportunities he or she needs to thrive, now and in the future.

**DO: Get professional advice.**

**DON'T:** Make an adoption decision based solely on what you read or find online. That includes information and websites like ours. Even if you're 100% committed to adoption and have a plan in place, arrange to have a face-to-face meeting with an adoption professional.

**DO: Inform baby's father or your family about your decision to choose adoption.**

**DON'T:** Keep your adoption plan to yourself. If you don't want to inform the baby's father, have your adoption worker inform him for you. But make sure he knows. If he discovers it later, he could try to block or even sink your plan. Be sure to inform your parents as well. They may be willing to offer you support that could lead you to rethink your adoption plan.

**DO: Find out what financial support you're entitled to as you make your adoption plan.**

**DON'T:** Just look at your present circumstances when making a decision about adoption. For instance, you may have money problems today, but they could be temporary. Adoption, on the other hand, is permanent.

**DO: Consider at least three profiles of approved adoptive parents before making a decision about one of them.**

**DON'T:** Choose the first couple you fall in love with or base your decision solely on their online profile. Speak to them and meet with them, preferably in the presence of an adoption professional or a friend or family member you trust, before you make a decision. Don't be afraid to change your mind, and don't feel guilty if you discover they're not what you thought they were.

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# ADOPTION DOS AND DON'TS

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**DO: Set up a face-to-face meeting with the prospective adoptive parents before making a final decision about them.**

**DON'T:** Contact a family unless you're seriously interested in them. Calling or mailing them out of the blue will only take them by surprise and get their hopes up, which could make things difficult for you and them if you just as suddenly change your mind.

**DO: Be prepared to be asked personal questions and to share personal details about your medical and family history during the adoption process.**

**DON'T:** Feel like you have to share everything about your personal life. Adoptive parents don't need to know everything about you. However, knowing about your medical history can help them make a more informed decision and could be helpful if your baby encounters a serious illness down the road.

**DO: Think twice before you tell someone about your adoption plan.**

**DON'T:** Tell anyone about your adoption plan unless it's important for them to know about it. If you don't want to tell someone, you don't have to.

**DO: Expect that other people, even those closest to you, may not understand your decision.**

**DON'T:** Go through with your adoption plan just because you think adoptive parents are more deserving of parenthood than you are. You may not be feeling at your best as a result of an unplanned pregnancy, but that doesn't mean you shouldn't be a parent. Think of your baby's needs above all else. Don't place your baby for adoption because you want to give an adoptive parent a gift or make their lives complete.

**DO: Feel confident you will be able to find a loving home for your baby.**

**DON'T:** Leave your decision to place your baby for adoption until the very last minute. The more time you leave yourself to find out about the process, the better position you'll be in to make an informed choice and to find the family you're looking for.

Source: AmericaAdopts.com