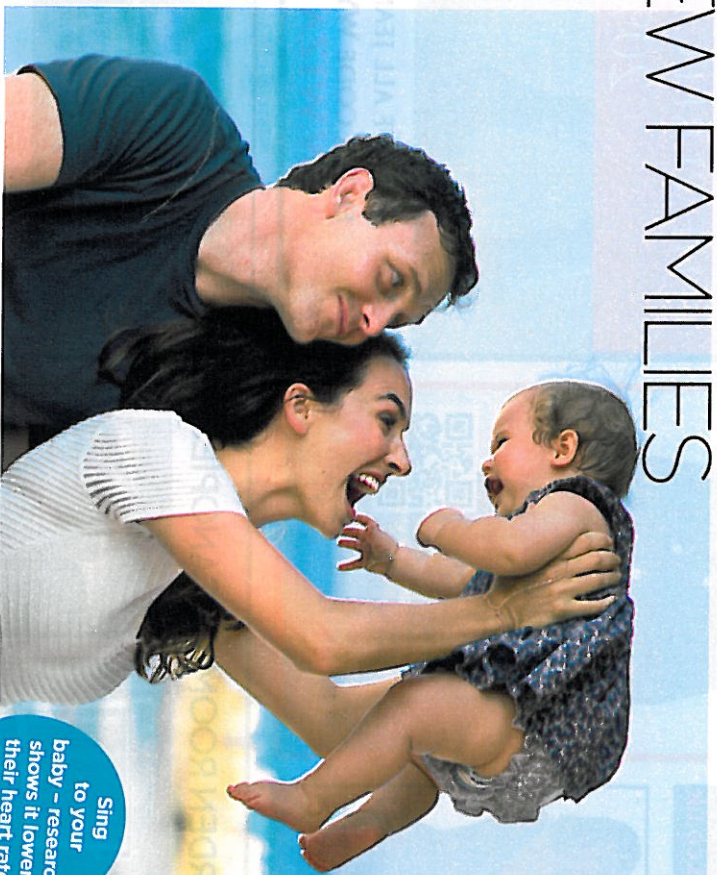




# health

This week's issues and advice. By Sarah Stacey

## HAPPY NEW FAMILIES



### AMBS FROLICKING, BLOSSOM BLOOMING

- and this morning alone I opened three emails announcing new babies. I am directing them to nutrition and fitness expert James Duigan's new *Clean & Lean Pregnancy Guide* (Kyle Books, £12.99), which he wrote with his wife Christiane after their baby Charlotte was born in November 2012 (pictured right).

As well as detailed advice on diet and exercise for fertility, pregnancy and early motherhood, James (whose fans include Rosie Huntington-Whiteley and Holly Valance) gives advice on helping your baby to sleep, including swaddling (see right) and adjusting your sleep routine. Plus there's an enlightened section on surviving the day as a new mum. Here are a few thoughts, which are also relevant to anyone going through life changes or feeling under pressure.

**DO FORGET THE HOUSEWORK.** This can be hard if you're house-proud, but in the first weeks of having a new baby, don't worry about the chores. Do the bare minimum (or get somebody else to do it) until life is a bit calmer.

### DON'T TRY TO BE A SUPERWOMAN.

If your mother-in-law offers to do the ironing, a friend offers to take your baby for a walk so you can have a bath or nap,

or visitors offer to bring food and drink, just say yes please.

**DO KNOW ITS OK TO CRY.** The first few weeks of new motherhood can be overwhelming. Even if you're in love with your new baby, it's normal to feel overcome at times. It's often due to tiredness, hormones or just the huge life changes you're undergoing. It's important for many women to talk through their birthing experience with their partner and

midwife, especially if it's been traumatic. If you feel tearful most days, ask your midwife for help, as it could be an early sign of postnatal depression. (More information on [netnurns.com](http://netnurns.com), search for PND.)

### DON'T FEEL BAD ABOUT BEING RUDE.

If you're exhausted after being up all night with the baby, cancel visits from friends and family. And if you're desperate for visitors to go so you can rest, say so.

**Sting to your baby** - research shows it lowers their heart rate and calms them.

### SWADDLE UP

Swaddling is a wrapping technique that creates light pressure around your baby's body, so they feel as if they're still in the womb, says James.

- Lay out a cot sheet or cellular blanket and fold in half to make a triangle.
- Lie your baby on her back with her neck on the centre of the fold, feet facing the point.
- Pull one top corner across and tuck under the opposite arm. Pull bottom point up and over the baby, folding it back if necessary, so it doesn't cover her face.
- Hold your baby's free arm against her, then pull the other corner of the blanket firmly over her body before tucking it under her back.
- Make sure your baby is comfortable and can breathe freely.

### SOAK STAR

There is nothing like a long soak in a scented bath and YOU testers recommend fragrant Lavender Hill Bath Soak by Soapsmith, containing coconut milk powder, Dead Sea salts, Epsom salts, oat powder and cocoa butter. 'It's deeply relaxing, leaves my skin wonderfully soft, is luxurious yet very affordable,' comments one tester. £12, from [victoriahealth.com](http://victoriahealth.com).

### KEEP COLITIS ON TRACK

About 100,000 people in the UK suffer from ulcerative colitis, a painful condition that causes inflammation and ulceration of the inner lining of the large bowel. The charity Crohn's and Colitis UK ([crohnsandcolitis.org.uk](http://crohnsandcolitis.org.uk)) is supporting the free You...Track app, developed by Dr Falk Pharma UK, which helps patients to remember medicines and control their condition. Available from the Apple App Store. NB Do run this past your doctor first.

### HOW TO EASE EXAM STRESS

Exams are about to get underway and the pressure can affect even confident youngsters, leading to symptoms that may include sleep problems, reluctance to go to school, feeling negative in general, eating too much or too little and withdrawal from friends and family. Find useful advice from psychotherapist and former teacher Lynda Hudson on [axppphealthcare.co.uk](http://axppphealthcare.co.uk); search for Help Your Child Beat Stress.

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