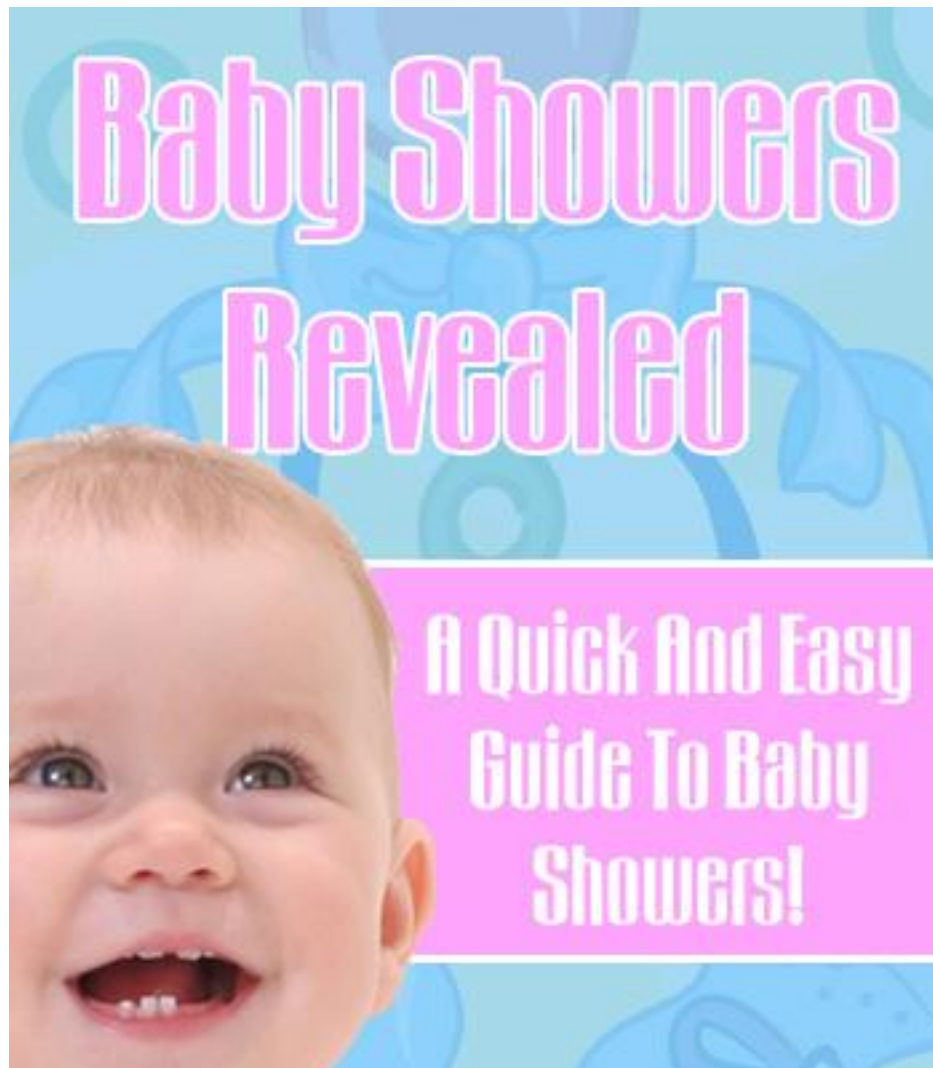


A Quick And Easy Guide To Baby Showers!



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INTRODUCTION

How wonderful! One of your best friends in the whole wide world has just announced that she's pregnant. Naturally, you're delighted, and can't hold back your tears of joy. It's hard to imagine that, in just a matter of time, your special friend is going to be a mother (maybe even for the second or third time...or more!).

As you let the amazing news sink in, your friend is envisioning the journey that will usher in a new life into the world: the gynecologist visits, the morning sickness, the ultrasound testing, the roller coaster of emotions that will eventually culminate in an experience that defies description.

Indeed, despite the frequency of births – tens of thousands a day, all across the world – they remain nothing short of miraculous. It's not hard to imagine, therefore, that your friend is reflecting on issues that are truly hard to put into words.

Your world, however, is rather more pragmatic. You're thinking of the baby shower; or rather, you're thinking that

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you might not know *enough* about planning and managing a baby shower. And that has you worried.

Well, **worry no more!** In your hands (or on your screen) is **The Quick and Easy Guide to Baby Showers.** Within the following pages, you'll learn everything that you need to know to throw a *perfect* baby shower. You'll learn about the elements of:

- **Planning a Baby Shower from the Ground Up**
- **Managing a Baby Shower from Start to End**
- **Other Tips, Strategies, and Suggestions**

Don't worry if you've never organized a baby shower before. And worry even *less* if, in the past, you've tried to organize a baby shower but bumped into some obstacles along the way. This book is designed to be easy, practical, and fun. In fact, if you aren't careful, you may just become a baby shower *specialist*, with people calling you up and asking you for your advice and insights. Now would *that* be fun?

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As you make your way through this book, bear in mind that the suggestions in here are meant to be applied – and they *do* work – but there’s always an element of uniqueness to every baby shower.

So instead of putting together a baby shower in the way you might put together a recipe – adding ingredients exactly as they’re listed and ending up with a predictably tasty dish – you’re gently advised to approach your baby shower project a little differently. Use the advice in here as a guide for creating a magical day for the mother-to-be, and the caring people who attend the baby shower.

Some of the ideas in here you’ll want to take to the bank; others might not fit with what you’re trying to do, or what can be done (such as some of the baby shower games we talk about). Don’t worry if you apply only some of what you read here.

Use your common sense, and remember: baby showers are supposed to be *fun* and *special* events. They aren’t meant to be stressful, and the last person who should feel overwhelmed is you.

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Now that you have this book, pulling together an excellent and memorable baby shower might be the easiest thing you do all year (or course, you don't have to *tell* people it was so easy...☺).

PART 1: PLANNING THE SHOWER

Who'll Throw the Shower?

There's an ongoing debate – that can actually become quite emotional and vocal – that tried to determine whether or not a relative should throw the baby shower. Traditionally, the view has been that a relative should *not* throw a baby shower, because it can appear that the relative is requesting gifts. Yet traditions change, and there are times when a sibling, or a cousin, or an aunt might be the ideal and somewhat convenient choice.

So what should you do? To answer this, we can respond with the best, and sometimes most unsatisfying answer of them all: *it depends*.

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Sorry, but it really *does* depend. If you hail from a rather traditional or conventional background, it may be wise to see that a non-relative is in charge of the baby shower. In addition, even if you, personally, are comfortable with a relative throwing the baby shower, some of your guests – who may be less comfortable with it than you – may object (or just whisper about it behind your back).

Use your judgment here. Perhaps the most practical advice is this: if you can conveniently and pleasantly *not* have a relative run things, then that will likely be the best route to go. However, if that's just not possible, plausible, or preferred, then don't feel like you're someone from outer space because you're related to the mother-to-be. More and more people are breaking with tradition; especially since they feel that the perception of a relative "*asking for gifts*" arguably doesn't exist anymore.

Gifts (which we talk about further on in this book) are rather integral to baby showers; it's quite hard to imagine one *without* gifts. Since that is the case, whether a relative requests them from those attending the baby shower, or a non-relative requests them, arguably isn't important to those attending. They're likely focused on what the baby

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shower *should* focus on: the mother-to-be, and a wonderful opportunity to share in her joy.

Now, there's an amusing (at least from our current detached perspective) on this that you should know about. Some people may not *want* to run the baby shower. It's assumed that if you're reading this, that you're quite happy with the assignment, and you'd like to do some quality – and easy! – research so that everything goes off without a hitch.

Yet if you aren't the one whose holding the baby shower, but perhaps the mother-to-be who is about to hand over this book to a relative or friend who *will* hold the shower, then we should take a little time-out to talk about something important.

A baby shower is a wonderful event that is filled with laughter, love, and perhaps a few tears (of happiness). Yet putting one together can require an investment of time. Not *a lot* of time; not compared to, say, planning a wedding or for some people, planning a vacation.

Yet it's fair to simply note that putting together a baby shower *does* require some focus, and some time. If you're

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about to nominate someone to take on this task, then please bear this in mind; that person should understand that they'll need to do a little bit of work (but it's *fun* work, of course).

And if you've been asked to put together a baby shower – or if it's just been assumed that you'll do it – and you're a little worried about your own lack of time available, then *don't worry*. This book will help you immensely. Furthermore, *nothing* is stopping you from recruiting a deputy or two to help you with the details, such as preparing food, refreshments, and helping with decorations and games.

When Should the Shower Happen?

This is an important question to ask, and of course, to answer. And as usual, there are a few different viewpoints on when to hold the baby shower. Fortunately, however, these views aren't as *debatable* as they sometimes are when it comes to whether a relative or non-relative should hold the baby shower (as we discussed above). So don't worry; this is a rather easy and straightforward challenge to solve.

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Now, the real problem here is simply that there *isn't* a clear answer to the question: *when should the shower happen?* The answer to this will almost always depend on factors that are specific to the mother-to-be, the guests, and other issues.

So rather than providing a "one-size-fits-all" answer here – which is something that we *can't* do without knowing the details of your particular baby shower – let's just look at the variables. Once you know these, you'll easily be able to determine when the baby shower should be held.

The Mother-to-Be

Let's start with mother-to-be. She may have a preference about when the shower should be held; and this preference should be heeded. The father-to-be might also provide input here, which is wonderful and should be part of the overall decision-making process (we take a closer look at "couples" baby-showers later on in this book).

What kinds of things might influence a mother-to-be's preference on when the shower should be held? Some of

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them prefer to have the shower when they're *showing*; they may feel that there's something more *appropriate* (for lack of a better word) about holding a shower when people can actually see that a baby is on the way.

In practical terms, this means that a shower might be held well into the second trimester, or into the third.

The Guests

As we all know, December is a season for parties and events; both business, and personal. As a result, it may be polite to *not* hold the baby shower during "party season", as it may influence whether people would be able to attend (or be able to *relax* when they attend, because they don't have three more "*get togethers*" to go to after the baby shower!).

Furthermore, if you live in a wintry climate, it may be a pleasant idea to *not* have the baby shower in the dead of winter. True, life does go on in the middle of January and people go to work and do many of the things that they want to do (go shopping, go to restaurants, and so on), but if it makes absolutely no difference to you and the mother-to-be

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(and/or the father-to-be) whether the baby shower is held in late January or late April, then it may be advisable to choose the latter; simply for climate concerns.

The Gifts

This is one that most people don't think about until someone brings it up, and then they say to themselves: *ohhhh, yes, that makes sense!* Fortunately for you, you're getting a sneak-peak at that thought well before someone at the baby shower asks it!

As we all know, some people prefer to give gender-specific gifts. While, indeed, times have changed and makers of baby-related items are creating more gender-neutral items, there's still a large contingent of people who want to give baby blue gifts to an impending son, or pink gifts to an impending daughter.

In light of this, if the parents-to-be have decided to learn the baby's gender via ultrasound, and further decided to share that information with the world-at-large, then it may be very appreciated by the baby shower guests if you hold

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the shower *after* the baby's gender information has widely disseminated. In other words: some people will be grateful that they know whether a boy or girl is on the way *before* they buy their gift.

Ultrasound gender diagnostic tests typically happen around the 9 week mark of gestation (though it can be later in some cases), and so this factor may influence whether you hold the shower early on, or wait until this information is known (assuming, of course, that the parents-to-be want to know!).

Post-Birth Baby Showers

Some people are surprised to learn that many baby showers happen *after* the baby has been born. Actually, this is quite common because, in addition to having the shower itself, this timing affords guests the wonderful opportunity to actually see the baby (and make all kinds of *goo goo gaa gaa* noises that we all love to make!).

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Holding a post-birth shower may also work out better in light of other factors noted above, such as climate, and preferences of the parents-to-be.

Sending out Invitations

Okay, here's where things can be a little bit awkward. Scratch that; here's where some people *dread* being in charge of a baby shower, because at issue is: **who to invite?**

A good rule of thumb here is to work with the mother (and ideally, the father) to-be in order to decide who should attend, and who should be left off the list. This is a delicate scenario and can cause a number of minor headaches (even some major ones).

The problem is, simply, that while it would be ideal to invite everyone who would want to attend, that's just not practical; either economically, or simply in terms of planning. Ultimately, decisions will have to be made, and if you can work with the parents-to-be to make these decisions, the chances of making wise ones will increase.

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Once you've figured out who to invite – and this process can take a few days of thinking and re-thinking – the next step is to send out the invitations. Ensure that you do this *well* in advance of the baby shower. There are two major reasons for this.

Firstly, you want to give your invitees enough lead time to that if they *do* have something planned on the baby shower date that they can, if they wish, move those plans in order to attend. If you don't provide them with enough notice, even if they *want* to change their existing plans, they might not be able to.

Secondly, you want to give people enough time to RSVP (i.e. confirm their attendance). Some people are not *the most organized people in the world*, and as such they might not RSVP right away. As such, you want to give them a bit of time to get to this on their ever-growing *TO-DO* list.

Now, there's another issue here that we should discuss. Some people think, or just assume really, that if you *don't* RSVP, that means you aren't attending. That's actually not technically correct. RSVP doesn't mean (even in the French language from where it comes) that someone is going to attend. It simply means: *please get back to me on this*.

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So what's the issue? It's that it can be a little disastrous to assume that if you *don't* get an RSVP, that people won't attend. Because some people will simply show up, and when you say that you assumed they weren't coming because they didn't "RSVP", they may frown and say what we're pointing out here: RSVP, itself, doesn't mean *yes or no*. It just means: please respond.

Naturally, of course, people *should* RSVP and let you know if they're going to attend. It's the polite thing to do, without question. But *polite* is one of those *eye of the beholder* terms; and people who haven't invested several days of their life to putting a memorable baby shower together may not realize how *impolite* they are being by just showing up, unannounced.

So how do you solve this problem? Well, like all good solutions: you head it off before it *becomes* a problem! While you want to have all of your invitees RSVP, you should make it utterly clear that you'd like a response *regardless of whether they will attend*. To that end, depending on the size of your baby shower guest list, you should include a self-addressed stamped envelope and a self-typed note with each invitation that says something like this:

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