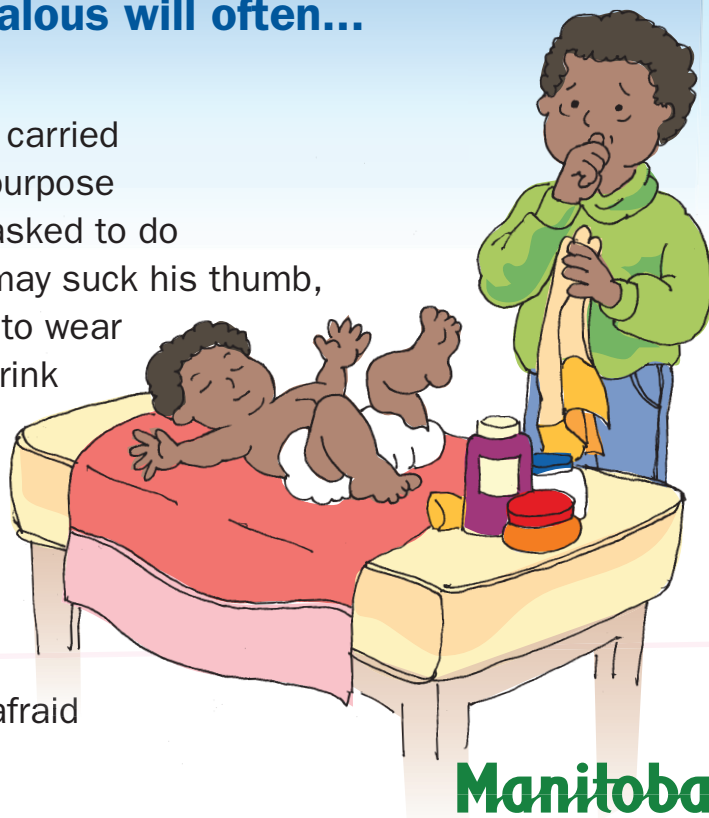


# JEALOUSY AND SIBLING RIVALRY

**Jealousy between brothers and sisters is normal. It is called sibling rivalry. Sibling rivalry can start when there is a new baby in the family. It may last until children are in their teens.**

## **A child who feels jealous will often...**

- try to get attention
- want to be held and carried
- get into trouble on purpose
- not do what she is asked to do
- act like a baby. He may suck his thumb, wet his pants, want to wear diapers or want to drink from a bottle.
- try to hit the baby
- become quiet
- not want to have anything to do with the parents
- become upset and afraid



## How do I deal with jealousy?

### When you are pregnant:

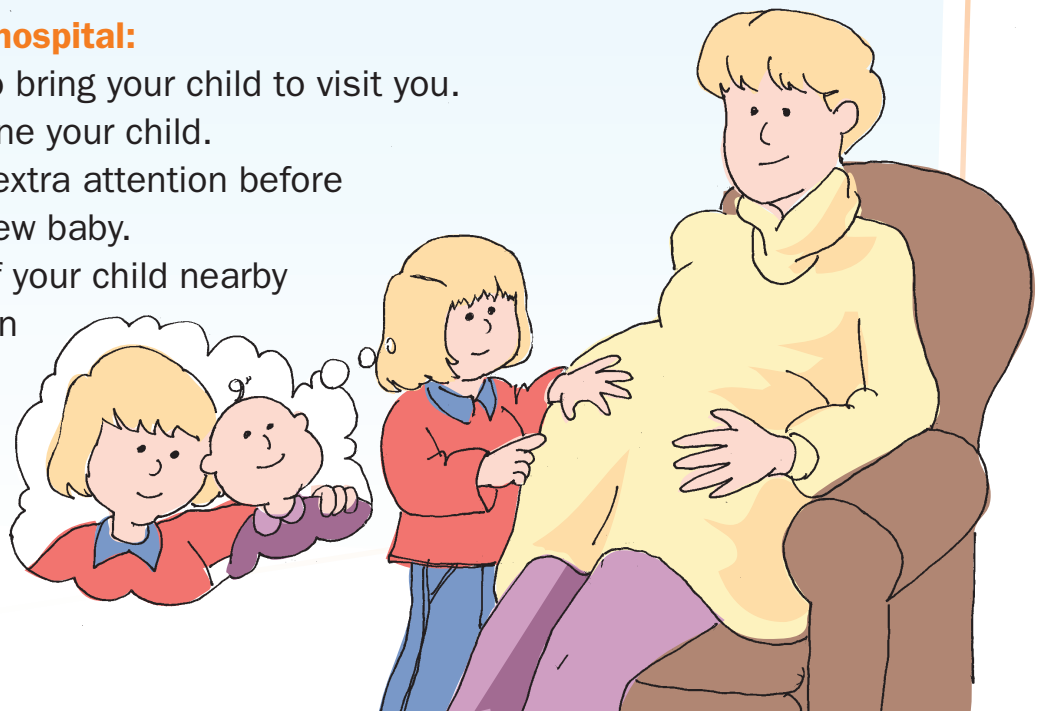
- Talk to your child about families with brothers and sisters so your child learns that many families have more than one child.
- Tell your child that there will be a new baby in the family because you are a growing family.
- Tell the child what the baby will be like. Explain that new babies sleep a lot, cry some of the time, and cannot play and move around. Visit others with new babies. Let her look at her baby pictures and tell her stories about when she was little.
- Answer your child's questions about where the baby is. Let him feel and listen to mother's tummy.
- Encourage your child to help get the baby's room ready.
- Make changes to your child's routine at least three months before the baby arrives. Move your child to her new room or bed (if this is needed). Do not say these changes are because of the baby.

### A few days before the baby is expected:

- Tell your child that you will be going to the hospital to have the baby.
- Show your child where the hospital is.
- Tell your child who will look after him when you are in the hospital. Make sure he knows the caregiver.
- Let your child know that you may have to go to the hospital when she is not around or is sleeping. Wake your child to say goodbye or leave a note that can be read to her.

### While you are in the hospital:

- Get someone to bring your child to visit you. If possible, phone your child.
- Give your child extra attention before he meets the new baby.
- Have a photo of your child nearby so your child can see you are thinking of her.



### Once you and the new baby are home:

- Give your child extra attention while someone else looks after the baby.
- Let the child look at and touch the baby when he is ready. Don't force the baby on your older child.
- Maintain your child's routine as much as possible when the baby arrives.
- Let the child help you care for the baby. She can get diapers, clothes and toys. Do not force your child to help. Praise your child when she does help.
- Never leave your child and baby alone together. The older child may accidentally hurt the baby.
- Try to spend small amounts of time together such as when the baby is sleeping.
- Show affection for your baby and your child. Let your child hold and cuddle the baby.

### If jealousy problems occur:

- Be prepared for your child's reactions. If your child slips backward in something he previously accomplished (such as being toilet-trained or sleeping in his bed all night), do not punish him. Give your child praise and attention when he is showing positive behaviours.
- Recognize your child's feelings. If your child says that she does not like the baby, agree that it is not always fun to have a baby around. Talk about how you love the baby but also find it hard sometimes. Do not make your child feel guilty for how she feels.
- Be consistent with your approach to discipline. Use the same rules you used before the baby was born.
- Ignore babyish behaviour if your older child starts to do things like using a baby voice or saying he wants to use a bottle. When the babyish behaviour stops, praise your child.



**Children may fight or become aggressive when they are frustrated or angry that things are not going the way they want. They may also fight because of jealousy – especially with brothers and sisters.**

## **How can I prevent fighting and arguing?**

- Explain to your child that there are “no hurting” rules. Let them know that you do not hurt anyone in the family.
- Encourage your child when she is playing well, sharing and co-operating with others.
- Let children try to work things out by themselves. Do not take sides, blame or try to find out “who started it.”
- Step in and help children solve problems before fights start.
- Teach your child how to solve problems by asking them what the problem is, what each child wants, and what can each child do to be fair to everyone.

### **When a fight starts:**

- Tell the children that you want them to stop arguing. Praise the children if they do as you ask.
- If the children do not do as you ask, use a reasonable result. For example, remove the activity or toy and explain why you are doing it.
- Return the activity or toy after five to 10 minutes to give the children a chance to practice playing. Praise sharing and taking turns.

### **If the problem happens again within the next hour:**

- Tell your child what to stop doing and then tell him what to do instead.
- Back up your instruction with quiet time (time-out) if your child does not stop fighting.
- Take your child away from the situation and to an uninteresting but safe space.
- Tell your child she must be quiet for one minute.
- Remove your child from time-out once he has been quiet for one minute and set him up in an activity.

