

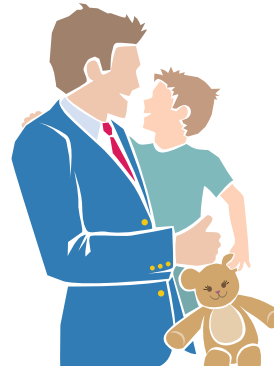
ORGANIZE YOUR LIFE!

IN THIS ISSUE, WE WILL DISCUSS:

5 QUICK TIME SAVING TIPS

10 WAYS TO THROW A BABY SHOWER
WITH STYLE!

SNACKS FOR ON THE GO



Don't forget!
FATHER'S DAY
is Sunday, JUNE 19th.



5 QUICK TIME SAVING TIPS

In my line of work, I collect a lot of time saving tips. Here are five that I've come across recently.



1. Use your phone number instead of hanging onto all of your grocery saving cards

A while ago, I had over ten savings cards in my wallet! You know what I'm talking about—the QFC and Albertsons tracking cards that you have to use when you check out. The over stock of saving cards in my wallet was really getting to me, not to mention taking up precious space. Turns out, you can use your phone number instead of giving them the card. Now I just type in my phone number and toss the cards. I still get the savings, without the hassle of carrying 10 cards around!



2. Use your time effectively by using Mapopolis

The other day one of my clients was late, due to traffic. I decided to find an internet connection to get some work done. I used a map program in my pocket pc, called Mapopolis (<http://www.mapopolis.com/>). There are versions available for Palm devices and even cell phones. I did a search by landmark and scrolled down to library. Within seconds I found a library near her home. I went inside and wrote this very article while waiting for her to arrive.

3. Take showers at night instead of in the morning

A lot of families fight over the use of the bathroom in the morning. By one family member showering at night, you can avoid bathroom wars in the morning.



4. Have someone else do your weeding and gardening

Put a free ad on the bulletin board at your local university. There are always students searching for ways to make extra cash. Be sure to put the ad in the department of horticulture. And here's a quick interview question: show the student a weedy plant bed and ask them to pick out the weeds from the plants. If the person you hire doesn't know how to decipher a weed from a precious plant, it could be a disaster!



5. Scrap your home phone

Go all-cell-phone. With number portability, it's easy. Even if you keep a home phone for emergencies, give everyone your cell number. You get the benefit of caller ID (so you don't waste time on unimportant calls), you can check all your voicemail in one place, and you don't need to deal with indecipherably scrawled messages left by a roommate, spouse, or child. And a last, best benefit—telemarketers don't call cell phones!

10 WAYS TO THROW A BABY SHOWER WITH STYLE!

Spring is here, summer is near and babies are coming out of the wood work. Is it just me, or is everyone having a baby? I have many close friends who are close to being parents, or have already begun. I have been to many a baby shower and I can tell you how to hold one that is fun, meaningful and yummy for your friend and soon-to-be mom!



1. Have the friend put together a list of invitees

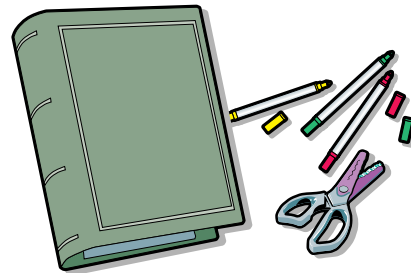
I suggest having her make a large list and then narrowing it down. This is a huge event in one's life – similar to a wedding. We tend to want to invite the world, but that is not realistic. This advice is going to sound a bit crude, but it works. Take the list of 10-50 people that you have invited and rate them. "A" means you have to invite them—say, old friends that you have been with through thick and thin. "B" means you really want to invite them—they may be hurt if you don't, or you really enjoy their company. "C" means you would like to invite them, but it's not the end of the world if you don't. For example, someone you've met recently and enjoy spending time with, or someone you only see occasionally. This system will help narrow down your list and save you from carpal tunnel from writing thank you notes!

2. Figure out the date of when the shower should occur - before or after the baby is born?

Some mothers have family traditions around when to hold a baby shower. Be sure to ask them when they would prefer to have their shower. It is ok to have the shower after the baby is born. Some mothers don't purchase any baby items until after the child is born. This is a great opportunity for them to register – they will know what they need better after the baby comes. If your friend isn't waiting until after the baby is born, find out the due date and arrange the shower 1-2 months before the baby is due.

3. Choose a theme

A theme is a great way to make a shower come together. It also helps you plan the menu (which we will go into detail later). The theme can be around the motif of the nursery, their culture, or even your friend's favorite foods.



4. Create a guest book with pictures

You will want your friend's guest book to have the following:

- The presents she received – this is a must for her thank you cards.
- Notes from her closest friends – notes from friends is a great way to look back on this life changing event. It is also nice to be reminded of the support your lady friends will give you – especially when you call them to watch the baby, so you can nap!
- Before and after pictures of her stomach - this is a fun thing for the mother to be able to look at. Be aware that some friends won't appreciate you asking – feel her out about it before doing so!
- Pictures of the shower itself

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5. Plan the menu

Girls love to snack. It's nice to create a menu that follows the theme. If you are good at baking and prepping food this will be really fun! If not, figure \$10-\$30 per person for catering. Now, if you are a good baker, I suggest doing the following:

- Determine if you want to make all sweet treats, or if you want savory items included on the menu. This doesn't have to be fancy – it all depends on your friend. If she loves chips and other junk food snacks stick with that. If she loves desserts create a menu filled with desserts. If she loves gourmet food, be creative!
- If your friend has had some odd cravings during her pregnancy, guests will find it funny to serve it. Pickles and ice cream, anyone?
- Purchase cookie cutters in the shape of bears, or something cute – you can either make cookies shaped like bears, finger sandwiches, brownies, or other foods that can be cut with a cookie cutter.
- Have plenty to drink – sodas that are caffeinated and decaffeinated. You could also serve tea or coffee, depending on what you serve.
- The theme will also determine how you set up the food. If it is formal, be sure to have linens, instead of paper. If it is junk food based stick with paper products!
- Follow the mother's rule— you can never have too much food. There is nothing worse than running out of food at a get together!
- No matter what the menu is, be sure to have some healthy and familiar food for picky eaters.

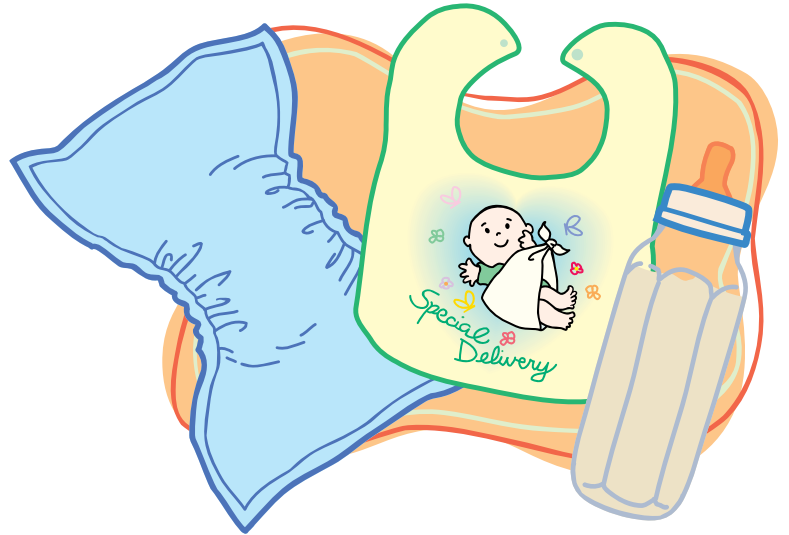
6. Create some games

Games are what will make the shower more fun. I found my game ideas from the following book, Baby Shower game book: *10 party games for as many as 12 people*. You can purchase it at:

<http://www.4showers.com/Store/noahsarkgamebook.html>

Be sure to write the rules ahead of time! Some attendees are sticklers for the rules. Here are some suggestions:

- Baby Pictionary – rip or cut 10 tiny strips of paper. Write the words that relate to a baby on the strips of paper you have created. For example: diaper rash, pacifier, stroller, etc... Place the strips of paper into a hat. Break the attendees into groups of 4-6. Have a member of each group decide who is going to draw. You, the host will pick a word from the hat and pass it to the drawer of each group. The rest of the group will guess what the word is. The winner is the group that guesses the word first. Since you created the words on the scraps of paper, you can determine who guessed first!



- Baby pins – purchase baby pins that are used for cloth diapers. Have the pins in a bowl. As each attendee arrives have them place a baby pin onto their clothes. Tell each person who arrives the forbidden word that they cannot say. Be sure to tell them the rules: if they say it and another one of the attendees hears it, they take their pin away. Whoever ends up with the most pins wins!*

*if the person says the word, all of the pins go to the person that heard them say the forbidden word.

- Baby food taste test – my good friend did this one at a baby shower and it was really a hit – even the guys got into it! Purchase the 10 most disgusting baby foods you can find. Take the labels off of the baby food jars and affix them to a piece of paper and number them 1-10. Take a sharpie and write the number on the bottom of the jar – trust me you will not remember which is which! Be sure to have enough spoons for each jar (one spoon per person), so that each person has their own spoon to taste each baby food. Have a piece of paper numbered 1-10 and enough pens or pencils for each attendee. The attendees will go around and try every baby food and write down a guess of what each food is. Be sure to have a camera handy to take pictures!

- Baby tee shirts – purchase the following:
 - White onesies (<http://tinyurl.com/9zb2g>) ranging in size 0-3 months, 3-6months and 6-9months. Be sure to purchase one for each attendee.
 - Fabric paint in all the colors of the rainbow
 - Stencils with baby or cute animal themes and one with letters – so the artist can sign their name at the bottom of the onesie!
 - Paint brushes – they don't need to be expensive

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7. Purchase the invitations

Invitations will announce the theme. I love invitations. They really represent the person. I find the following stores to have really cute and thoughtful inexpensive invitations:

- Target
- Tuesday morning
- Online: <http://tinyurl.com/dx2qf>

Here is a great article on choosing a baby invitation - it can be tricky!

<http://tinyurl.com/7u4xr>

<http://tinyurl.com/7ws9o>

8. Determine the time of day and the amount of time the shower will take

Be sure to take into consideration gals gabbing time. We love to talk shop, snack and just hang out. If you limit the shower to only two hours, you may have a disappointing end to your shower sooner than you had anticipated. Keep in mind too, the guests may have other showers to go to in the same day. I would add an asterisk at the end of the time frame with a note at the bottom saying, "if you need to leave early, please let me know ahead of time."

9. Determine the location

Keep in mind that if you have it at your home, you will need to plan extra time to clean and prepare for your guests. You will also need to decide if you want disposable dishes, or china. It depends on how much work you want to give yourself after all the guests leave. You can be as loud and silly as you want if you have it at your home, not to mention cost. It may be easier to have it at an establishment for the following reasons:

- It could be closer the honoree's home – remember she is fully pregnant and will appreciate a fast getaway.
- Less clean up
- Less preparation
- More of a special event atmosphere
- More attention on the mom to be

I suggest taking into consideration your friend's personality and your time as well. If she loves to be the center of attention, an establishment is a great idea. If she is shy and wants to be with only her close friends, stick to your home. If you have limited time, consider co-hosting the shower. Whatever you decide have fun!

10. Don't leave any work for your friend

Take notes about who gives what gift to make the thank-you cards easier. Clean everything up. Arrange transportation of the gifts home. Give her an excuse to leave early if she's feeling uncomfortable. And do everything you can to make this her special day!

SNACKS FOR ON THE GO

Being an organizer, I am in my car constantly. I practically live in it. I tend to eat fairly healthy, so going to a fast food restaurant is a very last resort – especially since I am a strict vegetarian! As a result I have been labeled as the "protein/fiber bar queen". My job as an organizer can get physical with the moving of boxes, unpacking of boxes and reorganizing of spaces. I tend to get pretty hungry and sometimes those fiber/protein bars just don't cut it. They are also loaded with sugar and chemicals. I tried a large soft lunch box that just got in the way and the ice packs would melt and then leak. I ended up back to a bag of nuts in my car and protein bars. Recently I went into one of my favorite organizing supply stores and found a great solution to my dilemma. It was a conveniently small lunch box which held the ice pack in a separate compartment: <http://tinyurl.com/8xygv>

Now all that was left was finding the time to prep my lunches and make things I would actually eat. I found a great website that helped me do so:

Food tips for car travel: <http://tinyurl.com/9aqrg>

Healthy fast foods for people on the go: <http://tinyurl.com/9z3z8>

For a diabetic: <http://tinyurl.com/cl7ks>

For vegetarians: <http://tinyurl.com/7b5bm>

