

by Beth Wilson

Pregnancy and birth are half the challenge (and joy) of becoming a new mother. The other half is learning how to deal with unsolicited advice (even if well intended), relentless offers and disapproving glances from friends, family and strangers. Etiquette expert Peggy Post, great granddaughter-in-law of Emily Post and a regular contributor to *Good Housekeeping* magazine, provides tips for those common sticky social situations that new mothers are likely to experience.

Everyone has an opinion



Unfortunately the likelihood of strangers and family offering advice to new mothers is high. Those who think they know better may ask, “Shouldn’t she have on a sweater? It’s cold outside.” A polite rebuttal: “We’re just fine, thank you” or “Thank you, but she’s always warm.” Post warns, “Don’t get into a big discussion.” **To hold and handle**

To avoid the hands-on approach, control the number of visitors and then let them know your comfort level. Post advises a direct, but kind response, “We don’t want everyone handling him” or “We’re just not having kids hold him yet.”

When and where to breast-feed

“This is not a black or white issue,” claims Post. It depends on the place, the people around you and their feelings, what you’re wearing, and your own comfort level. “The key word here is discrepancy,” says Post, who once saw a woman sit on the floor in the middle of a long airport line to breast-feed. According to Post, the woman should have moved to a chair away from the crowd. Likewise, at a mall, Post suggests moving to someplace out of sight. “Be considerate of

other people.”

In public with your child

There’s a difference between taking an infant to a family restaurant (one with other small children) and an intimate restaurant. In a family restaurant, if your child starts screaming you’ve got more time to calm him or her down. In a quiet place, such as a nice restaurant, library, or church, Post suggests leaving. “It’s best not to drive others crazy.” How much time do you have to quiet your child? “You can tell from how many glares you get,”