

# Showered with gifts

**BABY SHOWERS** GIVE FAMILY AND FRIENDS THE CHANCE TO CELEBRATE AND WELCOME A NEW ARRIVAL INTO THE WORLD. THEY HAVE LONG BEEN A TRADITION IN AMERICA, BUT THE OPPORTUNITY TO SPEND TIME AMONG FRIENDS AND A MOUNTAIN OF GIFTS IS ALSO BECOMING INCREASINGLY POPULAR ON THIS SIDE OF THE ATLANTIC



## History

It is believed that the Egyptians and Romans gave gifts to newborn babies or parents after the birth. Baby showers, however, did not become popular until after the Second World War. Traditionally they were enjoyed only by the new mother and her closest friends after the birth as it was considered presumptuous to hold a baby shower before the baby was born. Nowadays it is not uncommon for couples to hold baby showers to which men are invited.

## Planning

Although baby showers are a celebratory occasion they also take a great deal of planning and preparation, of which the mum-to-be should not be responsible for. It used to be considered unacceptable for a family member to throw a baby shower, in case it looked as though the family were asking for gifts. Nowadays it is common practice for a friend, colleague or relative to throw one for the mother

The first thing to do when planning a baby shower is to ask mum-to-be for a guest list and then decide on a time and place. The best time to hold it is in the last trimester so the mother has something to look forward to in the latter stages of pregnancy. Ideally the baby shower should not be at her home so she doesn't worry about cleaning up before and after.



**THE NEXT STAGE IS TO BUY ALL THE ESSENTIALS FOR THE BABY SHOWER. LISTED BELOW ARE A FEW IDEAS:**

- Invitations
- Food
- Decorations
- Prizes for games
- Goody bags to take home
- Presents for mum and baby

## Gifts

It is a good idea to get the parents-to-be to write a list of what they need when it comes to buying presents. However, if in doubt see below for the safest and most reliably needed options.

### Present ideas for mum:

- Beauty products to pamper herself with after the birth
- Subscription to her favourite magazine

### Present ideas for baby:

- Classic books
- Clothes
- Toys
- Bedding

Flying Start spoke to one soon to be new mum who has just been through her first baby shower and wanted to express just how much she enjoyed her experience and attention.

Rachel Wycherley is a 25-year-old mum-to-be from Cheshire who is in the last trimester of her first pregnancy. Her friends decided to hold a baby shower for her after seeing one on television. They liked the idea of throwing a shower as it gave them all an excuse to get together and because she is the first in her group of friends to expect a baby. Rachel says: "Baby showers are quite an American thing so I had never thought about having one, but when my friends approached me with the idea I wasn't adverse to it."

The shower was held at Rachel's home, a decision she made herself in order to avoid travelling the long distance to her friend's homes. Fortunately she had husband Mark on hand to help with the cleaning afterwards. Traditionally only women attended baby showers, however, it is becoming increasingly popular for men to catch a glimpse of the action too. Rachel says: "Mark wanted to join in and get some of the attention."

Guests were asked to bring party food along so mum-to-be didn't have to worry about preparing food. Rachel, whose cravings have included toothpaste, says: "Everyone brought nibbles such as olives, crisps, dips and pizza. We had too much food in the end but nobody complained."

After snacking and catching up with each other, the attention turned towards the presents that guests had brought with them. Rachel says: "All the gifts were greatly received and it certainly made it all the more real for me, that is in a few weeks time we will have a baby that fits in the baby gro that all the guests kindly bought." Other presents included teddies, hanging mobiles and chocolates for mum.

In preparation for the shower, Rachel's friends ordered a party

pack from a company called Shower My Baby who specialise in all aspects of baby showers. The pack included invitations, banners, balloons, candles, gift bags and games. After the present opening the focus turned to the games, which included pin the dummy on the baby, a questionnaire that tested how well guests know mum-to-be and guessing the baby's sex, weight and birth date. Rachel says: "The games included were a real laugh and made the conversation flow too."

The night drew to an end with a slice of chocolate cake and guests were left feeling broody, or maybe they just liked the glam idea of having a baby shower for themselves. Rachel's friends all agreed that they loved the idea of hosting a baby shower for their "yummy mummy-to-be" when it was first suggested, but all admitted they were clueless when it came to the planning, which is where the party pack came in use.

Rachel and Mark would definitely recommend any parents-to-be to partake in a baby shower for their new arrival. She says: "We thoroughly enjoyed the evening, it was nice to catch up with friends and have a chat about baby things. It might be the last time we get together before I become a mum and so it allows me to be totally selfish and think about myself."



Shower My Baby party packs are available from:  
[www.showermybaby.co.uk](http://www.showermybaby.co.uk).

There is a selection of packs available at various prices that can be customised to your personal taste.  
**Call: 01257 482554** for more details.

## READER DISCOUNT

Kittysash are offering Flying Start readers a ten per cent discount on their ultra chic and stylish baby shower invitations. To claim your discount email [info@kittysash.com](mailto:info@kittysash.com) with the reference **Flying Start** before October 31. Once your discount has been claimed it will be valid until February 28.