Staying in touch during maternity/paternity leave

As you sit amidst the rattles, diapers and revolving musical mobiles of your new life, your workplace may seem as far off and foreign as Mars. A small effort on your part, though, can help you feel less isolated, keep you up to speed on workplace issues and give you an enjoyable break from your daily routine.

Call your boss weekly or bi-weekly. Not only will it help you keep on top of situations at work, it also lets your boss know that you're committed to the company and that you're planning on returning to work.

Meet colleagues for lunch. It will give you a chance to get out of the house, indulge in adult conversations, and keep you in the loop about what's going on at work.

Consider doing a little freelance work. Looking after your child is demanding, time-consuming work. But some mothers enjoy the focused mental stimulation of the odd contract.

Keep abreast of news in your industry. Order the latest trade publications or search online for updates.

Learn to let go a little. Realizing that work can and does go on without you can feel a little uneasy. Don't counter this by calling into your organization every hour. Trust that you've properly prepared your replacement and instead, take the time to focus on the most important task at hand: getting to know your new baby.

Attend or call in for important meetings (if you want). If there's a ground-breaking meeting you feel you just have to be apart of, go ahead. It'll help you stay connected to important issues at work and maintain a strong connection with colleagues.

While some new parents have trouble shutting out work time to make room for baby, others feel just the opposite: work seems insignificant compared to the daily wonders a new bundle of joy provides. Whatever you're feeling, know that it will change and evolve over time. Accept that it will take you weeks or months to find a happy medium and balance the world of pacifiers and strollers with the adult sphere of deadlines, colleagues and work.

Materials for this article have been collected from a variety of sources. Primary sources include:

Douglas, Ann. ***The Mother of all Pregnancy Books***, Macmillan Canada, 2002.

Websites:

- Babyworld
- Today's Parent