simchahs

Shake, Rattle and Ro

The latest must-haves for new moms.

Lauren Geldzahler
Special to the Jewish Times

Your nine months have paid off. You've exited the maternity ward with a new member of your family and you can't wait to show the chubby little guy or girl his or her new home. Keep those blissful new mommy feelings coming with the latest must-haves for 2009.

Mindi Leikin, owner of Bare Necessities in Lutherville, suggests the popular Barefoot Dreams robe. "They're so yummy and cuddly — it's wrapping yourself up in a baby's blanket!" At $130, the robes come in 14 colors. Barefoot Dreams also makes "soft and luscious" throws at $135 and baby blankets for $30 (which come in white, pink and blue, with a bear, a dog or bunny plush attached).

Your body is going to be in a transition period, but there's no reason you shouldn't feel beautiful. Ms. Leikin recommends Hanky Panky underwear ($18) because they stretch and feel good.

She also lists Spanx and Wacoal slimwear (from $28 to $78) (whether the woman has had a C-section or not), for some control. "They're performance underwear that help slim your tummy, your thighs and your rear, to give you a nice smooth silhouette under your clothes," says Ms. Klein.

If you choose to nurse, says Ms. Leikin, save yourself some trouble by getting fitted for a nursing bra two to three weeks before you deliver. "We carry sizes 32A to 44H, and special order for anything higher. … It depends on whether you want lace, underwire or a soft cup, but the average price is $60."

Nobody said nighttime is supposed to be easy for new moms, but hopefully Bare Necessities nightwear can make things simpler. "There are nightgowns with a built-in bra with snaps that can be lowered to nurse, and nightgowns and nightshirts with a front placket deep enough to unbutton for ease with nursing," says Ms. Leikin.

Elaborating on the nursing theme, Kristen Hughes, owner of Lullaby Baby in Columbia, brings up the fashionable trend of baby slings, the cloth wrapping system allowing for a "hands-free baby-carrying experience."

"You can do almost anything while you have it on," says Ms. Hughes.

The same cloth wrap can be situated differently according to six stages of your child's growth. "For newborns, you do a cradle carry," says Ms. Hughes, which creates an ultra comfortable position for nursing.

"When your baby gets longer, you can position your toddler more toward your hip, so their feet are not hanging down and kicking your stomach [unlike the original front carrier]."

When it comes to the particulars, Ms. Hughes "wouldn't recommend one with too much extra fabric — that can get complicated. We carry Hotslings [about $45], which consist of one continuous piece of fabric that you fold in half and slip over your shoulder. It comes with a CD that teaches you how to position your sling at each stage of your baby's development."

Another big seller that Ms. Hughes is eager to mention is the innovative new Orbit stroller system (approximately $900), a three-in-one product consisting of an infant car seat, a stroller and a baby carrier, all of which work off a circular base.

"Since about 2005, all cars have been required to have metal rings in the back seat, which are exactly what the Orbit base easily clips on to. The base is hidden, where the back of the seat hits your rear, and there's a simple knob to tighten the seat on to, so you know it's secure. You can also put the car seat on the stroller base, which includes a removable carrier," explains Ms. Hughes.

"It's the only car seat I know of that you don't need professionally installed. I've had people that don't realize they need to remove their existing car seat base to get the Orbit in, so they get stressed out that they'd have to bring the old thing to the firehouse again if they ever had to re-use it. … [With the Orbit], if you take the seat out to run errands, you don't have to put all your weight on it, pull the straps to force it in place, and then after all that not even know if it's in tight."

Also handy are Moses baskets ($80-$140), which, according to Ms. Hughes, have always sold very well. "It's a woven basket [usually made of wicker or palm], with comfy linens covering the interior and handles for easy carrying. … I recommend tightly woven strong baskets that won't unravel," says Ms. Hughes.

Used for just the first three months of your baby's life, the Moses basket is "convenient, portable and space-saving."

Both practical and stylish are the latest diaper bags that also serve as purses, like Stork Saks (ranging from $120 to $250), for sale at Lord & Lady Bug in Lutherville. Owner Alex Shek breaks down the style: "Leather or canvas … brown, pink or blue … most have front pockets where you can fit your wallet, sunglasses or cell phone. We have a messenger bag style wide enough that it can fit over the handles of the stroller, and a tote bag style, meant to go over your shoulder."

And just for Mom, as a way for her to show her pride in what she nurtures, there is Heather Moore jewelry (from $120), a popular line at Lullaby Baby, according to Ms. Hughes. The custom-designed charm bracelets, necklaces and key chains consist of handmade, little round disks fashioned from gold and silver, coupled with stones. You can spell out the names of your children and their birth dates, choose disks with embossed images that you're fond of, and mix and match the individual trinkets to match your outfit or mood.

Go boldly into the new year, thankful to live in this modern age, where it is as easy and as chic as ever to be a be a new mom. □

Lauren Geldzahler is a member of the art department at the Baltimore Jewish Times.

PHOTO DAVID SINCLAIR

< Kristen Hughes has owned and operated Lullaby Baby since January 2002.

PHOTO DAVID SINCLAIR

^ North American Bear Company's Baby Tweeter mobile.

The Orbit Car Base and Stroller
PHOTO DAVID SINCLAIR

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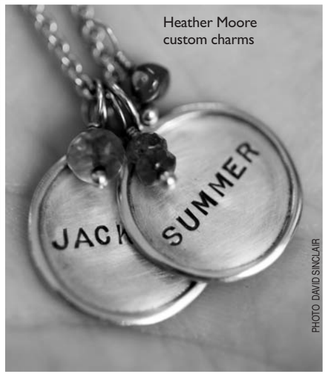
< Angel Dear's giraffe, yellow duck and brown puppy blankies



Heather Moore custom charms
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