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Duck baby shower cupcakes

This site is not available in your country soon enough, just about everything in your life is going to revolve around your baby. If that's not enough reason for someone to throw you a fabulous mom-to-be bash, consider this: A baby shower can really help you feel less overwhelmed by equipping you with a lot of what you need when the baby arrives, says Jodi Cohen, co-founder of JOWY Productions, a Los Angeles event company. What helps relieve new-parent stress is a very good thing. That's why we answer the most common baby shower questions from expectant mothers. The timing is important; you want to have the party at least four to six weeks before your due date, so you have plenty of time to borrow or buy any supplies for your baby that you still need – and there's also less of a chance you're going to work prior to the party. Alternatively, there is a growing trend of waiting until after the baby is born and then having a welcome baby shower, which can be combined with a bris (ritual circumcision), baby naming, or baptism. RELATED: 10 Wonderful Shower Ideas Exactly who to invite - close friends and immediate family alone, colleagues, your grandmother's friend Helga, husbands and boyfriends - is 100 percent to you and the host. But for the most fun event possible, Cohen suggests to only the people closest to you, so everyone really shares in your joy, rather than feeling obligated to attend. Providing the hostess with a list of names and addresses ensures that everyone you care about gets an invitation. But what if your sister, your colleague and your friend from the dog park all have separate showers for your plans? Having more than one celebration has become commonplace. It's fine to have multiple showers, says Diane Warner, author of Diane Warner's Complete Book of Baby Showers: Hundreds of Ways to Host a Unique Celebration (Career Press, 1998). But the guest lists have to be separate. If someone is invited for more than one shower, they are only expected to bring a gift to the first. Although it used to be considered a faux pas by etiquette experts to have a second-baby shower, it's totally okay these days. A shower is about celebrating the new life - and if people want to celebrate every birth, even if they have 20 children, that's fine, says Cheri Osmundsen, a mother of three in San Clemente, California. If you feel strange about having a big baby bash if you've already celebrated childbirth once or twice before, consider a smaller bowl-get-together or brunch so your friends can sprinkle you with love and token presents instead of showering you with gifts. RELATED: Baby Shower Ideas For The Second Time Around People Love to Have Little Fun and hugs to see - but if the pile is huge, gift-opening can be annoying for guests or make those who brought smaller gifts feel bad. You and your should decide what feels right for you, but it often works best when presents are opened later, says Cohen. Depending on the size of your guest list, the gift opening can go on and on, and a shower should really run out for three hours, she says. And, of course, even if your guests insist that a thank you note is not necessary, you should always send one. (You have to say thank you to the baby's 2 month birthday without being late, according to EmilyPost.com.) Of course, you should be glad someone loves you enough to plan an elaborate party for 50 guests with scads of pink ribbons and silly games. But what if all you want is a nice lunch with your five best friends? Or what if you want to skip the traditional shower altogether and invite your female and male friends for beer (guests only!) and pizza? Fear not: There are ways to gently drop hints about what you want, says Caroline Tiger, author of How to Behave: A Guide to Modern Manners for the Socially Challenged. If the potential party giver is very sensitive or has a strong stubborn streak, ask mutual friends or family members to talk to her, she advises. Let them say, You know Sharon hates being the center of attention, then lets them plant hints about the kind of shower you want. If the host is a good friend and more reasonable, just straight with it and lay out what you do and don't want. RELATED: A Quick Etiquette Guide to Baby Celebrations More and more moms are opting for parties that feel closer to a girls' night out than a standard baby shower. In fact, fancy mom-to-be soirées have become so popular at Stephanie King-Myers' original art-and-wine studio, in Chicago, that she now offers Baby Bump parties at all 13 of her bottles and Bottega locations across the country. Guests come in, have light hors d'oeuvres, drink champagne, look at art – and, if they wish, even create some of their own artists with the help of the studio's artists. Another popular option: The mani-pedi party. Just block out a few hours at your favorite salon, or find a local mobile spa service that will come to you and your guests. And a final idea, not for the faint-hearted or shy of the body: a group of belly dancing for women. Talk about celebrating your baby bump! Get everyone matching tank tops and beach wraps or simple pareos, and let the hip shake and belly shake begin. We're all going to boring baby showers where the games are dorky, embarrassing for the mom-to-be, or gross (guess the candy squashed in the diaper? No thanks!). A few great tips from moms and party experts: Give everyone dust paints and a plain white one-piece and bibs to decorate. The best part This messy-but-brilliant baby-shower activity is that it's not only fun for guests, but the mom-to-be ends up with handmade mementos that she'll actually use. Leave it casual, or put it in a contest by letting guests vote for their favorite piece and give the winner a bottle of wine. Another option: Have each guest write a message or draw a picture with permanent markings or dust paints on a square of dust; Then, post-party, mom's cutest friend can sew the squares together in a cute game blanket or quilt. My favorite shower game is when every guest brings a picture of him or himself as a baby and you have to guess who's who, said Nicole Zeman, a mother of two in Portland, Oregon. Another matching game to try: Pairing weird celebrity baby names with their famous parents. Give small prizes to the winners of both. (Anyone who knows that Bear Blu is Alicia Silverstone's son and Kal-El – Superman's real name – belongs to Nicolas Cage deserves some sort of reward for her trivia knowledge.) Yet another fun option from mom Tracy Saelinger, of Lake Oswego, Oregon: Under my shower someone made a list of properties and had me write down in advance or I wanted the baby to get those attributes from me or his dad. The guests had to guess what I chose - eyes, daddy; IQ, me, of course! It was hilarious, and we all had a good laugh about both my quirks and my husband. Serve chic cocktails and mocktails. A signature specialty drink is always fun and it's an easy way to amplify the theme of the party if you have one, says Cohen. For a shower with a nursery rhyme theme, the drink could be called the Itsy-Tipsy Spider; If it's a book-themed party, guests can drink Tequila Mockingbirds. Yum! RELATED: 20 Fun Baby Shower Cocktails and Mocktails Recipes Plans to Host a Baby Shower? Add an element of charity to the fun! These ideas make it easy for you and your guests to give back. Baby showers are a nice way to celebrate a mommy-to-be (and, of course, a great way to help her stock up on all the necessities she needs for her impending arrival!). But not every pregnant woman is lucky enough to throw people around her with the means to throw a gift-giving bash. So if you're planning a shower for a friend or family member, why not find a way to help other moms-to-be in the process? Not only will spreading the wealth make a huge difference in the lives of struggling families, you even see it as your little one's first lesson in generosity! Here are some ways that make it easy for you and your guests to give something back. RELATED: The Modern Baby Shower: 6 Things You Need to Know The Good+ Foundation does important work in partnership with a national network of programs to help end the cycle of family poverty with donated goods and Ask your shower guests to donate to Good+ in honor of your new baby instead of giving a gift. 2. Donate to Operation Shower Welcoming a new baby can be a stressful time for our armed service members. Operation Shower hosts baby showers for military families across the de giving overextended moms-to-be permission to celebrate! Guests can give money to Operation Shower or buy gifts in their Amazon registry, which is then sent to families who need them. Instead of specific items, ask gift cards to places like Amazon, Babies R'Us, Target and Walmart–then pass them on to those in need. Sites like Donate Your Card you use your gift cards as a charity donation, and you choose from over 1,000 charities! 4. Throw a Community Baby Shower Partner with a local organization such as the March of Dimes to host a community baby shower to benefit pregnant women in your area. Hang flyers, create a public gift registry, and put out a call for volunteers to help organize, decorate, and bring refreshments for an event that is sure to be a huge hit (and a huge help!). 5. Get Gifts That Give Back Here's a way to have your cake and give some away, too: Sign up for baby gifts from companies that donate a portion of each purchase to charity. For example, if you buy a Smitten crib from Pip & Grow, the company gives a way to a family in need; toy company Cuddle + Kind feeds 10 hungry kids for every doll purchased. This playful, clear theme turns the party into a circus. Credit: istock/Bryan McCay Bring the Big Top to your party with a circus-themed shower that's seriously big on style. Bright colors, party pennants, giant lollipops, and individual portions of cotton candy will help you create The Greatest Baby Shower on Earth! Ad Ad Set the mood with bright, festive invitations with colorful party streamers or circus-themed illustrations such as show elephants and big-top tents. (Toss a few tickets in the envelope along with the invitation to give it a playful touch.) Ad Credit: istock Create your own pennants using scrapbook papers that match the party colors. Purple, lime green and yellow, or red and white striped papers are nice choices. What you need 12-inch sheets of card stock or scrapbook paperYarn, cut to the desired lengthGlue stickStep 1 Cut the 12-inch card stock into two 6-x-12-inch strips. Fold each piece into a 6-inch square with the folded side at the top. From the bottom of the bottom edge, cut diagonally at the right edge of the folded side at the top. Do the same for the left side, and you should be left with a triangle or pennant shape. Step 2Over the inside of the triangle with glue, fold it over part of the yarn so that the yarn lies directly in the crease and the two sides of the triangle are attached together. Repeat until you have a pennant pendulum at the desired length. Step 3Af away after the pendulum is done, beautify some of the individual With glue felt letters to spell words and phrases like baby, mother, big top, step straight up, family, or baby's name (if you know). Another fun Watch a few how-to video clips (YouTube is your friend) and whip up some homemade balloon animals – then use them as cute, colorful centerpieces for food and gift tables. Credit: Bryan McCay Forbidden Word Ticket StubsColorful carnival tickets serve as both napkin holders and props for a game. Tear a series of 10 tickets, walk it tightly around a roll of napkin, and secure it with tape or a staple. Then take another set of five tickets, ripping the first ticket along the perforated line halfway up the top and ripping the fifth ticket halfway from the bottom on the other side. Link together over the taped ring of tickets, making a ticket bow, and place a napkin at each place setting. Once all guests have arrived, announce a list of words that partygoers are not allowed to say during the shower - even during the current opening time. Make them common shower words like baby, cute, and the name of the mother-to-be. If one guest hears another expressing one of the forbidden words, she gets to steal a ticket. Give prices at the end of the shower to the two guests who have collected the most tickets during the festivities. Credit: Jupiter Images As a nice surprise for guests, hire a fortune teller to come to the party and tell guests fortunes as they mingle. Ad Ad Credit: Marty Baldwin Offer guests a buffet of popular carnival dishes, but with an adult twist. Good choices include things like crunchy, fried chicken strips made with cornflakes and boneless chicken breasts, fries with spicy ketchup or garlic-like aioli for dipping, veggie skewers, cocktail-size pigs in a blanket (instead of hot dogs), corn on the cob, and apple slices served with mini cups of caramel dipping sauce. Before snacking beforehand, set out large bowls of popcorn and let guests choose their toppings -- plain butter, a spiked chili butter, a sweet butter, etc. Crunchy Chicken FingersMakes: 4 servings Credit: Bryan McCay For a sweet treat, serve individual portions of cotton candy in simple white cups. Make sure to buy the candy no more than a day in advance because cotton candy deflates over time. Put a plastic bag over your hand and use a knife to separate the cotton candy into small bunches to place in the cups (the bag prevents the heat of your hand from satisfying the candy). Serve immediately. Credit: Bryan McCay A major top party calls for b-i-g deals. Giant lollipops are the perfect grab-and-go favor for a day in the circus. Decorate the treats with a bright tag with the text Thank you for coming and follow our instructions for an oh-wow way to display them. What you needSStyrofoam or floral foamToothpicksLarholy lollysPlain popcornSpray-on glueStep make a serrated knife, cut two circles out of Styrofoam or flower foam, one centimeter or two smaller than the other. Push a pair of toothpicks into the middle of the larger circle to hold it firmly, and the smaller round on top (like a wedding cake), push down so that the layers are flush. Step 2Push the lollipop sticks in the foam evenly around the bottom round. Step 3Spray the entire structure with spray glue, then cover entirely with popcorn to create the illusion of lollipops standing in a cascade of popcorn. Voila - you have a great favor display that can also be used as a centerpiece. Ad Credit: Michael Marquand Treat guests to this easy-to-make punch, packed with delicious juices. Use candy or cherries as a garnish. The cocktail variety adds triple sec and rum for a boozy option. Credit: Jupiter Images Jennifer Sbranti is the co-founder and editor-in-chief of HostessWithTheMostess.com, and author of the HWTM Daily Blog.Copyright © 2008 Meredith Corporation.Add these tunes to your iPod for the party: party:

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