10 INSURANCE-SMART THINGS TO DO AS YOU BECOME A NEW PARENT

- Find out if your benefits plan includes paid maternity leave. If you think you will need more paid time off than the plan provides, consider a short-term disability policy.

- If both parents work for a company that provides health insurance, compare co-pays, deductibles and co-insurance to determine whose health insurance policy offers the best coverage for your growing family.

- Complications can happen. Make sure you understand how your health plan covers prenatal and neo-natal screenings and emergency procedures such as a C-section. Budget now for unexpected costs.

- Ask your employer about a flexible spending account. These plans allow you to set aside pre-tax dollars for medical expenses and childcare, reducing out-of-pocket costs.

- Before your due date, find out the deadline for registering a newborn with your health insurance company.

- If you’re adopting or becoming a custodial parent, be aware that your new little one typically is entitled to the same health insurance benefits as a biological child. Contact your state insurance commissioner if you have questions.

- Your expanding family may require a different vehicle. Note that auto insurance premiums vary by make and model. Check the rates before you make your final choice.

- A new child may create a need for home improvements. Alert your insurer to a renovation valued at more than $5,000 to avoid being underinsured.

- Contact your insurer before installing backyard play gear such as swing sets, trampolines or swimming pools. You may want to consider increasing your home insurance liability coverage through an umbrella policy to protect yourself should someone get hurt on your property.

- A new life in your hands likely means new life insurance needs. To determine how much is enough, calculate the full cost of supporting a child under age five to adulthood. Adjust assumptions for a child with special needs.