

Chubby baby, workaholic husband & gift overload By Denise Schipani



that exclusively breastfed babies are at a lower risk for being overweight or obese later in childhood. And if you're nursing, it's next to impossible to overfeed. So if your baby is content, you're fine. Finally, if your baby has always been big, that should further ease your mind; doctors worry only if there's an abrupt change, up or down, in a child's weight between visits.

Feeling better? Now, in terms of those unwelcome comments, try to disarm with something simple and sweet—and that quashes further discussion. When someone says, "My, your baby is big!" you say, "Yup, he is!" Then the commenter has nowhere else to go.

Q Since having our son, I left my job and am staying home. My husband always seems to get stuck at work with a project or a last-minute meeting. The evenings are especially difficult for me, and I need him to help me with the baby—but he says his boss won't understand. Help!

I'm wondering if your husband's boss *really* wouldn't understand, or if your husband hasn't broached the subject for fear of appearing less of a team player if he dashes out the door at five? This situation requires that both of you put aside resentments and sit down together to discuss what's really going on. The subtext of accusing your husband of "always" getting caught up in work is likely "you do

Q My 4-month-old is chubby—he has those big legs and cute baby rolls! I'm breastfeeding him exclusively and plan to introduce solids soon. People constantly comment on how fat he is—and, I think sometimes, judge me. But he's *not* fat! What should I say next time someone chimes in with her opinion?

Like you, I got comments about my older boy's size, but they mostly sailed over my head. Sure, my biceps bulged when I hefted my big boy. But he was just a healthy boy. That said, I know how unwelcome comments can get under your skin. As for whether some people are

judging you, they may simply be making harmless observations (the baby's so big, what big blue eyes...). Consider whether the remarks are triggering a worry in *you* about the number on the infant scale. If so, here's some reassurance: all evidence shows

Need a comeback for an unwelcome comment? Try something simple and sweet to clam people up!

this on purpose because you don't realize how much I need you at home"). Instead, you'll get better results if you explain to him how much you look forward to his arrival home so you can all be together as a family. See what he says. He could very well be in a high-pressure situation at work, and while he's honestly doing his best to clear out on time, he just can't. In that case, you'll have to cut him a bit of slack. But still make it clear to him that your job is tough, too, so you need a

break and some help when he gets home in the evening.

It could also be that your husband is skittish about talking to his boss. If so, help him brainstorm ways he can present his boss with options that streamline his day: maybe he can take a project home or come in earlier some days. Although there are a few bad bosses who don't understand, most good managers are pleased with proactive workers who want to make their workdays more efficient.

Q My daughter's birthday is two days before Christmas. Some of our relatives give her combo gifts, some give her two gifts—either way, she gets so much at once, and then a year of nothing. How should we handle this?

Everyone's birthday has to fall *somewhere*, right? Which is why my first piece of advice is this: don't complain about double- or dual-gifting around your daughter, who should feel her birthday is special no matter when it falls. It would *not* be good for her to feel overwhelmed by gifts or, worse, entitled to them. My second suggestion: establish some rules with relatives and close friends. Request that they not give your daughter combined gifts. No one has to go crazy,



but two separate gifts (with the birthday one not wrapped hastily in holiday paper) isn't too much to ask.

Now, as for the issue of too-much-at-once, I admit that's harder, but it's not impossible. If she's younger than 5,

she won't know if you spirit away a bunch of gifts and stow them in a closet. Then pull out a present later in the year.

And try to make it clear to your child that getting deluged with gifts is a privilege and a lucky break, not a right.

Denise Schipani's formerly fat baby is now a lean 7-year-old without an ounce of chub in which to bury her face. She blogs at Confessions of a Mean Mommy (confessionsofameanmommy.com).