

Baby love: Hormone changes can affect new dads

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Fluctuating hormones don't only affect brand new moms. First-time fathers also experience elevated levels of both prolactin and oxytocin, according to research reported in the Daily Mail.

Lactose is associated with milk production in mothers, while the so-called "cuddle

hormone," oxytocin, is released into a mom's blood during labor. Now that hormone, which aids in the bonding process between parent and baby, has been detected in men. These hormones might help both parents bond with their newborn.

"This seems to be evolution's way of helping men turn into good parents as soon as they have a baby," researcher [Ruth Feldman](#) told the Daily Mail. "These hormones seem to have a powerful role in helping men bond with their newly born children."

Feldman, a professor at [Bar-Ilan University](#) in [Israel](#), looked at levels of both hormones in new first-time fathers. The men also were filmed as they cuddled with their children. Researchers saw a strong correlation between hormone levels and a father's expertise at interacting with his baby.

"It is possible that, as the father's daily encounters with his infant increase...the prolactin and oxytocin systems reorganize and create new connections," wrote Feldman in the journal *Hormones and Behavior*.

The theory could explain why some guys, once they have a child, seem like a new man.

However, as [Dr. Michael Craig](#), who works at the Institute of Psychiatry at King's College, [London](#), points out, oxytocin also becomes elevated when a person is stressed out. "Oxytocin is also known to rise in response to elevated levels of stress," Craig told the Daily Mail. "So this could also be part of the explanation."