

Oh baby! Look what you've done to your mommy's brain

You expected your brain to be a little foggy. After all, you're on call 24/7 for feeding, diaper change and response alert to the first sounds of a crying about to erupt into a full blown wail.

However, that little godsend of yours has been ingeniously at work manipulating your brain in ways that you can't imagine.

In the current July/August 2011 issue of Scientific American Mind are featured articles on infant brains and their effects on motherhood and fatherhood. Research indicates that besides the normal hormonal changes that occur in pregnancy a mother's brain is being primed for changes initiated by her baby.

Just prior to birth the smell center is hyper activated along with the emotional center so that mother is bonding with her baby by smell.

Mothers report calmer nerves and mood swings that occurred during and after pregnancy decrease when accompanied with breastfeeding which is another brain stimulator.

The ability to think and make decisions becomes stronger because of competing demand of babies – such as greater attentiveness, holding multiple thoughts in mind, preplanning and having to make quicker decisions.

It seems that human mothers and rat mothers respond alike in that after giving birth their brains and behavior become more adventurous and willing to explore new territory and take more risks.

Finally, best of all is the brain's pleasure center is increasingly activated with a greater release of feel-good dopamine when a mother sees and plays with her baby.

Watch Scientific American's video *Motherhood:Your brain on kids* below to see first hand this brain changer.

