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Main Edition

SHOP TALK; Book clicks with busy moms' lists

Changing dirty diapers in your lap. Hauling a stroller up the escalator. Multitasking when you have to use the bathroom.

Shopping with a new baby is not exactly easy.

"I think it is overwhelming, just the idea of everything you have to take with you," said Joyce King, a nurse-midwife at Emory University. She recommends that moms travel with a buddy.

New moms who want to run errands at midnight or squeeze in a little window shopping during baby's nap time, can get a bit of help from **Hillary Mendelsohn**.

With her new book, "**thepurplebook baby**" (Warner Books, \$8.95) Mendelsohn takes moms on a virtual shopping trip from the comfort of home. The guide is part of a series of books designed to make the wide world of e-commerce more manageable. This version is filled with fun and useful Web sites for harried new moms or family friends.

"I wish I had this resource when my kids were little and I was pregnant," Mendelsohn said. "It gives you access to great stuff no matter where you are."

The author began with newspapers and magazines, then moved online. The goal, Mendelsohn said, was to find sites that are exclusive and unique, but reasonable.

"The problem with going on any search engine these days is it is not an objective search anymore," she said. "This is like having a good friend who is a great shopper and knows where to go."

Mendelsohn whittled thousands of sites down to several hundred that made the final cut. Her book also includes helpful lists and tips for what moms need at the hospital and when they bring baby home. Icons with each site entry give information on shipping and gift-wrapping. Sites that made the cut range from the essentials such as the strollers and cribs at Showeryourbaby.com to more eclectic baby announcement cookies at Ediblesinc.com. Others, such as Bellicosmetics.com offer hard-to-find health and beauty products for pregnant and nursing moms, while Elegantbabygifts.com has personalized silver spoons and shawls.

Even when a new mom feels ready to venture outside for the big first shopping trip with baby, shopping online may still offer an advantage, Mendelsohn said.

"I think you have a huge amount of selection online, that no matter what store you are going into, you're never going to have."

SOME FREE WEB- SAVVY INSIGHTS

- * Make a list: "You'll see a hundred things that you love," Mendelsohn said. "Think about what you need first . . . and make choices based on that."
- * Know the policy: Mendelsohn advises all online shoppers to check the return policies of each site before placing an order.
- * Print: Do this when you're still on the order page, before you submit the order. Make sure you have a record of items purchased, instead of just an order number.
- * Don't bargain hunt: Beware of extremely discounted products. There may be a reason for the ultra-low price. Never buy essential items like car seats in used condition because parts may be missing, Mendelsohn said. Used clothing, books and DVDs are acceptable.

Live to shop?

We want to hear your tips and tricks for getting a good deal. Join our shopping blog at ajc.com/shoptalk.