

## TIPS FOR POSTPARTUM HEALTH: SLEEP

A new baby brings many changes. Between your feeding schedule, anxiety about the demands of new motherhood, or simple exhaustion, you may find it difficult to get a good night's sleep. Some sleep disturbance is normal, but if you're not getting enough sleep, you may start to feel run down, which puts you at greater risk for developing emotional and physical health problems. The following tips can help.

- Limit visitors in the first few days or weeks after you get home with the baby, to allow yourself time to establish a healthy sleep pattern
- If you're taking a nap, unplug the phone, put a "do not disturb" sign on the door
- Try taking a warm bath or shower to relax tense muscles. If you don't have time, try a hot water bottle
- Listen to some of your favourite relaxing music or nature sounds
- Learn and use relaxing breathing techniques
- If your mind is racing with tasks and ideas, spend a few minutes to write them down and then set them aside
- If you're feeling anxious, don't watch the news or other programs that might upset you—it can worsen your anxiety
- Think positive. When you find yourself worrying, stop and focus on what you have done well today (even small tasks are accomplishments!)
- Make some time for laughter. Rent a comedy video, watch a sitcom or phone the funniest person you know. A natural stress-releaser, laughter really is the best medicine for a good night's sleep!
- Avoid caffeine in the afternoon and evening. Drink decaffeinated products or herbal tea instead
- Talk with someone you trust. Information and reassurance can ease fears and anxieties
- Take advantage of every minute that baby is sleeping by resting, even if it is sitting in an armchair while you breastfeed the baby
- When feeding your baby at night, keep the room darkened and quiet to help establish night time routines
- Arrange for breaks—ask your partner, a friend or a family member to watch the baby while you get some sleep
- Some people find that the sound of a fan or other appliance helps to reduce distractions while trying to sleep
- Use earplugs when you are given the chance to sleep and someone else can listen for baby
- Reserve your bedroom for sleep only, not watching TV or reading
- Create a relaxing sleep environment with a comfortable temperature and minimal noise. This may require going to another room temporarily.

As your baby grows, so will your parenting skills and confidence—self-care strategies will continue to be important part of your parenting career! If you have any questions or concerns talk to your Public Health Nurse, Doctor or healthcare provider.



Winnipeg Regional  
Health Authority  
*Caring for Health*

Office régional de la  
santé de Winnipeg

*À l'écoute de notre santé*