

Optimizing sleep as a new parent



Welcome to a whole new world!

As any new parent will tell you, getting proper rest can feel like an impossible feat when you've just welcomed a new baby into your home. During this exciting time, you might find your routine has been thrown off-kilter thanks to late nights, early mornings, and lots of busyness in between.

Indeed, research shows that new parents are prone to fatigue and sleep disturbances during the postpartum period, and moms in particular have a greater chance of developing postpartum depression when they are not getting enough sleep.

But never fear! Here are some ways to get more rest while caring for your newborn.

Sleep when the baby sleeps

It might feel like you need to catch up on work or get chores done, but the best thing to do while your baby sleeps is prioritize rest for yourself. Take advantage of the peace and quiet to lie down for a nap and get some much-needed sleep. One word of caution: don't share the bed with your baby since that carries many safety risks. However, you can keep the crib next to your bed or use a baby monitor so you'll know how your baby is doing.

Create a cozy sleep habitat

Both you and your baby will benefit from having a comfortable, dark, and quiet sleep environment. Use curtains or a white noise machine to keep it cozy, clearing your space as much as possible so you feel relaxed when you're in your bedroom. You can also wind down prior to bedtime by taking a warm bath or lighting candles.



Get started with the Sleep Checkup at sleepcharge.com/sefl

Don't do it alone

You and your partner can take turns being “on-call” during the night. On nights when you're off-duty, feel free to wear earplugs or even sleep in a separate room to ensure you get quality sleep.

Whether you're co-parenting or a single parent, don't be afraid to ask friends and family for help! Even a 20-minute nap can work wonders, and you can ask someone you trust to watch your baby while you get some shut-eye.

Be mindful with substances

While it might be tempting to chug coffee all day (or even all night), caffeine can interfere with your sleep and make it harder to fall asleep at night. Instead, try decaf tea or water to stay energized without all the side effects.

On the same note, be sure to consult with your doctor before taking sleep meds, since they can have some not-so-great effects. Melatonin can be a good substitute to help regulate your sleep cycle and get more REM sleep, your doctor is a great resource to help advise which options might be right for you.

Why sleep matters

As a new parent, you want to be as energized, attentive, and alert as possible while caring for your child. Building a routine and creating an environment that's conducive to good sleep health will make a huge difference in your mood and day-to-day activities.

Be sure to treat any underlying sleep disorders such as sleep apnea, and know the signs of sleep deprivation like forgetfulness, blurred vision, trouble concentrating, and changes in appetite. With these tips in mind, you're on your way to waking up feeling better, brighter, and ready to take on all the challenges that come with having a new baby.

Sources:

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