

# How does a lack of sleep affect the health of you AND your child?

Studies have shown getting enough sleep is very important for your health, and your baby's too.



# 95% of parents

with children 0-6 years old report they do not get the recommended 8 hours of sleep.

## Common reasons for poor sleep quality among new moms

- Waking up to care for and feed your baby
- Anticipating a babies cry
- Postpartum depression
- Hormonal imbalances
- Night sweats / other bodily discomforts

## How does a lack of sleep impact your health?

Mothers who suffer from a lack of sleep are more likely to experience:



Daytime fatigue



Post-partum depression



Increased risk of injury



High stress



Anxiety



Forgetfulness



Decreased immune response



Lack of energy

"[Sleep deprivation] affects everything in terms of your personhood: bodies, moods, cognition, stress hormones, cortisol levels, appetite."

- Alexandra Sacks, reproductive psychiatrist and host of the Motherhood Sessions podcast

## Negative Impacts of Poor Sleep Habits on Your Baby's Health

Your baby relies on you to take care of their basic needs. When suffering from a lack of sleep, you are reducing your capacity to give them your full attention.

Conditions like postpartum depression can negatively impact your relationship with your baby, in a critical time for emotional and social bonding.

On top of mental-health conditions, when you don't give your body proper rest, your physical health is at risk as well. Not getting enough rest can reduce your immune response, and if you are breastfeeding, this may change the important immune protection that your child receives through breast milk.

## Sleep Solutions

The good news is, there's lots of things you can do to encourage better sleeping patterns after giving birth, including:

### • Napping when your baby naps

Doctors often recommend napping when your baby is sleeping. It is understandable to want or need to use this time to do other personal tasks, but even a short nap can help reduce the effects of sleep loss.

### • Creating a positive sleep environment

Creating a relaxing space to sleep can be the key to getting the rest you need. A good sleep environment is often cool, dark, and quiet.

A relaxing night-routine with your baby can also help you both get to sleep sooner. Try feeding, bathing, and bonding with your child with activities such as reading or singing in dim light to help calm you both down.

**and most importantly...**

## Ask for help!

Parenting is hard work, and you can't expect to handle it alone all of the time.

- Accept offers for help from family and friends who want to help you.
- Communicate with your partner- ask them to help with the baby at night or during the early morning if possible.
- Connect with a local or online post-partum support doctor/therapist.



## Resources

### • New Parents: Tips for Quality Rest

<https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/health/wellness-and-prevention/new-parents-tips-for-quality-rest>

### • New Parent Sleep Strategies

<https://www.beaumont.org/services/womens-services/maternity/after-pregnancy/moms-health/new-parent-sleep-strategies>

### • Sleep and Tiredness After Having a Baby

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/baby/support-and-services/sleep-and-tiredness-after-having-a-baby/>

### PostPartum.net

Call the PSI HelpLine:

**1-800-944-4773**

#1 En Español or #2 English