

Common Sleep Issues During Pregnancy and Postpartum

- Mood is severely affected by lack of sleep.
- Women who lack sleep during pregnancy and postpartum are more *depressed, irritable and anxious* when they have interrupted sleep.
- *Nighttime sleep* is the most valuable sleep in helping you feel better during pregnancy and recover postpartum.
- Sleep is necessary to restore brain health and the *brain needs eight* hours of *uninterrupted* sleep each night.
- *Six hours* is still not ideal to think and respond clearly, but it is probably a more reasonable goal for new parents.
- A new mom should be “off duty” for a few hours per night – physically, emotionally and psychologically. The partner can split the night by giving a bottle of breast milk or formula or alternate taking a full night on or off.
- If you don’t have a partner, find a support person to help during the first couple of weeks.
- When “off”, sleeping in another room with earplugs or using “white noise” such as a fan, white noise machine or soft music can help block baby noises.
- Taking care of yourself is essential. Even a few nights of sleep a week helps. Naps are good but do not replace nighttime sleep.
- If you are unable to sleep at night, talk to your health care provider.
- Some helpful tips for inducing sleep – warm bath, massage, herbal tea, white noise and relaxation with diaphragmatic breathing.

*Adapted from [Beyond the Blues: A Guide to Understanding and Treating Prenatal and Postpartum Depression](#) by S. Bennett and P. Indman