

# *Sleeping for Two*

## Tips for Better Sleep During Pregnancy and Postpartum

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We recommend 7-9 hours of sleep in a 24-hour period, and we also understand that poor sleep is a common challenge during pregnancy and the postpartum period. Fortunately, there are strategies that may help you sleep better.

<b>GENERAL SLEEP TIPS</b>	
<b>Only use the bed for sleeping</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The goal is for your mind and body to equate the bed with sleeping and not with anxiously waiting for sleep to come.</li><li>• No TV, working, or reading in the bed – only sleeping (and sex)!</li><li>• If you're awake in bed for longer than 20 minutes, get out of bed and do something relaxing in dim light. Get back in bed when you're sleepy.</li><li>• Sleep should only happen in bed (not on the sofa).</li></ul>
<b>Avoid media use</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Avoid using the computer, phone, television, or tablet in the hour before bed and in the middle of the night.</li><li>• Anxiety and blue light both make it harder to fall asleep.</li><li>• Silence the sound and vibration on your phone; ideally store it in another room when you sleep.</li></ul>
<b>Make the room dark</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• An eye mask (also called sleep masks) may be helpful.</li><li>• If an eye mask isn't comfortable, use blackout curtains. You can even tape dark garbage bags or tinfoil on your windows. It might look funny, but it does the trick!</li><li>• Place nightlights in the path to your bathroom so you don't need to turn on bright lights when walking to the bathroom in the middle of the night.</li></ul>
<b>Make the room cool</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Warm temperatures can disrupt sleep.</li><li>• If you have window shades or blinds, close them during the day to keep out the sun.</li><li>• If possible, use fans and light bedding at night.</li></ul>
<b>Make the room quiet</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Reduce disruptive noises by using earplugs or a white-noise or nature-noise machine or app.</li></ul>
<b>Wind down</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Prepare your mind and body for sleep an hour before bedtime.</li><li>• For example, get in your pajamas and try a mindfulness practice.</li></ul>
<b>TIPS FOR SLEEP DURING PREGNANCY</b>	
<b>Keep snacks nearby</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To help with hunger or queasiness.</li></ul>
<b>Manage pain and discomfort</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Use supportive pillows or a body pillow to improve comfort and relieve pressure on aching muscles.</li><li>• Yoga may help with pain and improve sleep.</li><li>• Get regular exercise (but not right before bed).</li></ul>
<b>Treat heartburn</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Avoid foods that may contribute to heartburn (citrus fruits, spicy foods, caffeine).</li><li>• Sleep slightly upright.</li></ul>
<b>Reduce frequent trips to the bathroom</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Drink plenty of water during the day, but try cutting back before bed.</li></ul>

<b>TIPS FOR SLEEP DURING THE POSTPARTUM PERIOD</b>	
<b>Enlist others to help with infant caregiving at night</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discuss with your partner or family how they can help with infant feedings, diaper changes, and soothing as much as possible.</li> <li>• Night doulas can be extremely helpful (especially 2-3 nights per week for the first 2 months), though pricy.</li> </ul>
<b>Make it easy to care for infant in the middle of the night</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For example, have your infant sleep in a bassinet nearby.</li> <li>• Store infant caregiving supplies nearby.</li> <li>• Place nightlights or dimmable lights near infant care areas.</li> </ul>
<b>Feed with breastmilk, if possible</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parents who feed their infant exclusively with breastmilk sleep longer than those who supplement with formula.</li> </ul>
<b>Improve infant sleep</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Sleep when the baby sleeps” makes the most sense in the first month or two after birth.</li> <li>• After that, you can find helpful suggestions for improving infant sleep in the following resources:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Babysleep.com</li> <li>○ <i>Sleeping Through the Night: How Infants, Toddlers, and Their Parents Can Get a Good Night’s Sleep</i>, by Jodi Mindell</li> <li>○ <i>The No-Cry Sleep solution: Gentle Ways to Help Your Baby Sleep Through the Night</i>, by Elizabeth Pantley</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Talk to your provider if you are experiencing more severe sleep problems, such as:

- Insomnia symptoms including difficulty falling asleep, staying asleep, or waking much earlier than wanted
- Sleep apnea symptoms including snoring, breathing pauses, or gasping, and daytime sleepiness
- Unpleasant, restless feelings in legs that are worse at night and that can be relieved with movement

Please know that there are treatment options – including those that don’t involve medication.

Bay Area sleep clinics:

- UCSF Sleep Disorders Center, (415) 885-7886
- UCSF Neuro/Psych Sleep Clinic, (415) 353-2273
- The Stanford Center for Sleep Sciences and Medicine, (650) 723-6601
- Stanford Sleep Health and Insomnia Program, (650) 498-9111 option 2
- The Clinic, [www.theclinicca.org](http://www.theclinicca.org)

Other helpful resources:

- Sleepio ([www.sleepio.com](http://www.sleepio.com)): Digital therapy for insomnia
- SHUTi ([www.myshuti.com](http://www.myshuti.com)): Digital therapy for insomnia
- *Quiet Your Mind & Get to Sleep* by Colleen E. Carney and Rachel Manber

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