

Sleep in Pregnancy

Patient Information

Five things that may disturb your sleep during your pregnancy

1. Baby's movements
2. Needing to pass urine more often
3. Worrying about different things
4. Hormones making you feel too hot
5. Discomfort such as pelvic pain, backache or restless leg syndrome

What is the best position for sleeping in pregnancy?

A study released in 2017 found that going to sleep on your side in the 3rd trimester of pregnancy reduces your risk of stillbirth. Side sleeping reduces the pressure that a growing baby puts on the main artery through the mother's body, improving blood flow and oxygen to baby. Don't worry if you wake up on your back, just roll back on to your side. The study found that the position you fall asleep in is the one you tend to maintain for the longest.

For more information on this research search for **Tommy's #SleepOnSide campaign**

Improving your sleep in pregnancy

1. Try to go to sleep and wake at the same time each day to regulate your body clock.
2. Have some wind-down time before bed. Reduce screen time, have a relaxing bath or read a book. You could even start to prepare your baby for their own bed time routine by reading to them – this is great for your baby's brain development.
3. Create your nest. A pillow between your knees and under your bump can help relieve aching hips and help you to maintain a comfortable side-lying position. A pillow behind your back can stop you lying flat on your back if you do roll over in the night.

4. Reduce caffeine and limit drinks before bed to prevent too many night time trips to the toilet. Alcohol is not recommended in pregnancy due to the impact on your developing baby. It can also disturb your sleep and increase the need to go to the toilet.
5. Avoid eating 3 hours before bedtime. Heartburn is common in pregnancy but lying down too soon after eating can worsen symptoms. Eating smaller meals and avoiding spicy and acidic food and drink can also help.
6. Exercise during pregnancy is great for regulating sleep and emotional wellbeing. It can also help prevent restless legs and cramp at night. However it's best not to exercise just before bed as the adrenaline may keep you awake longer.
7. Light clothing and sheets made from natural materials such as cotton can help to keep you cool at night.
8. If you find yourself being kept awake by thoughts and worries during pregnancy talking to a trusted person or writing down your worries can help. Some people find antenatal classes will help answer many questions and make them feel prepared for the journey ahead. Mindful activities such as yoga, pilates, meditation and hypnobirthing can also help.

If you're concerned that your mental health continues to affect your sleep please speak to your midwife, obstetrician or GP for further support.

If you need this information in another format or language, please ask a member of staff.

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