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Sleep and tiredness after giving birth

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Sleep and tiredness after having a baby

Looking after a baby can be really tiring, especially in the first few months after the birth, when your child is likely to wake several times during the night.

Most parents cope with a certain level of tiredness. But if you're feeling low, bad tempered and unable to cope or enjoy things, you need to find a way of getting more sleep, or at least more rest.

Here are some tips that may help you feel more rested.

Sleep when your baby sleeps

Try to rest when your baby sleeps. It might be tempting to use this time to catch up with housework or other chores, but sometimes getting rest is more important. Set an alarm if you're worried about sleeping for too long.

Get an early night

Try to go to bed really early for, say, 1 week. If you can't sleep when you go to bed, do something relaxing for half an hour beforehand, such as soaking in a hot bath.



Share the nights if you can

If you have a partner, ask them to help. If you're formula feeding, they could share the feeds. If you're breastfeeding, ask your partner to help with nappies or dressing in the morning so you can go back to sleep.

Once you're into a good breastfeeding routine, your partner could occasionally give a bottle of expressed breast milk during the night.

Ask a relative or friend

You could ask a relative or friend to come round and look after your baby while you have a nap.

If you're on your own, you could see if a friend or relative could stay with you for a few days so you can get more sleep.

Understand your baby's sleep patterns

The phase when your baby wakes several times a night won't last forever. As babies get older, they sleep for longer periods.



Try to do more exercise

When you're feeling tired, doing more exercise may be the last thing you feel like doing. But regular exercise can help you feel less tired.

Walking is one of the easiest forms of exercise. Try to get out for a walk every day with your baby, even if it's just to the shops.

Don't let stress get on top of you

Sometimes you can feel tired because you're stressed. If you can do something about the stress, you might find it easier to cope, even if you can't get any more sleep.

Be aware of the signs of postnatal depression

If you can't sleep at night even when your baby is asleep or you feel tired all the time, these could be signs of postnatal depression.

Other signs include feeling down or hopeless and not enjoying the things you normally enjoy.

If you think you may be depressed, talk to your GP or health visitor as soon as possible so you can get the help you need to make a quick recovery.

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