



Suite 200, 1016 – 68 Ave SW Calgary Alberta T2V 4J2
(P) 403-640-0600 (F) 403-253-0124
www.rockyviewmaternity.ca

Pregnancy Sleep Tips

If you're an expectant mother you shouldn't let the potential for developing a sleep disorder scare you too much. For many pregnant women, sleep troubles can be fixed by following a few simple [sleep hygiene](#) practices to minimize the risk of sleep disorders and maximize the amount of nightly sleep. Furthermore, many of the tips for sleeping while pregnant are also very useful sleep tips for just about anybody suffering from sleep loss.

1. **Maintain a regular sleep/wake cycle.** *Prioritizing* sleep is key in *getting* sleep. Making sure that you're going to bed and waking up at the same time every day (including weekends) goes a long way in feeling more awake and alert during the day.
2. **Exercise regularly.** Unless your doctor advises against it, regular exercise should be done at least 30 minutes a day. Getting out any pent up energy through exercise will increase circulation, improve mood, and help you fall asleep easier at night. However, no vigorous exercise should be done too close to bedtime. If you prefer to workout later in the day, some light exercises such as yoga are recommended.
3. **Cutback on fluids at night.** It's very important to stay hydrated during pregnancy, but to help reduce late night trips to the bathroom avoid drinking large amounts in the hours leading up to bedtime.
4. **Avoid Spicy Foods and heavy meals before bedtime.** Eating spicy foods before bedtime can increase the chances and severity of heartburn at night. Don't hurry your evening meal. Keep the pace leisurely. Eating heavy meals before bedtime makes the body work harder during sleep to digest your food, distracting it from working on the repairs your body needs for the next day's activities. If you're feeling hungry close to bedtime, try eating a light snack such as a banana, crackers and cheese, or a small bowl of cereal.
5. **Sleep Position.** New studies indicated that while sleeping on your left side is "ideal" it is not always practical. Studies indicated it is more important for mother to obtain a good night sleep. Mothers may sleep in any position that is comfortable. If you experience any shortness of breath, dizziness, pain or discomfort– simply change to a more comfortable position and go back to sleep. If you are a back sleeper, try sleeping on 2 pillows, or using a wedge pillow.

NOTE: it is still **NOT** recommended to exercise on your back after approximately 16 weeks (4months) gestation. This may limit the flow of blood and nutrients to the fetus, uterus, and kidneys.

6. **Use pillows.** Special pregnancy pillows can go a long way towards nighttime comfort. Another pillow tip to reduce back pain is to lay on your left side with hips and knees bent and place pillows between your knees, under your abdomen, and behind your back.
7. **When having trouble sleeping get out of bed.** If sleep is alluding you, don't lie in bed willing it to come. Get out of bed and do another relaxing activity such as reading, writing, take a warm bath, or any other relaxing activity before returning to bed.
8. **Take short naps during the day.** For the most part, naps are usually advised against as they tend to disrupt regular sleep cycles making going to sleep at night more difficult. However, studies have shown that napping while pregnant can prove beneficial. A poll by the National Sleep Foundation found that 51% of women reported at least one midweek nap and 60% reported napping on the weekends. However, if you choose to nap make sure they're no more than 20-30 minutes long, and don't nap too close to bedtime.
9. **Clear emotional Decks.** Persistent worries can keep one up at night. Talk about them with your partner or a friend. Sort them out during daylight hours. Self guided meditation (there are many apps you can download), Journaling – write it down- thoughts, feelings.
10. **Talk to your doctor.** Your doctor can help you find other alternatives to best meet your needs.

Sources: Alaska Sleep Clinic: www.alaskasleep.com

What to expect: www.whattoexpect.com

AHS- Healthy Parents- Pregnancy & Birth: www.healthyparentshealthychildren.ca