

Tips to Support Sleep for New Moms

1. Make new mother's sleep a priority—she needs it to recover!
 - Discuss with partner the importance of nighttime help and support
 - Devote at minimum 7 hours to sleep
 - Nap when possible
 - Use weekends as a time to catch up on sleep (earlier bed time, later wake time, or nap)
2. Consider “anchor sleep” schedules for both mother and partner
 - Select 4-hour block of time for each caregiver to be on duty to care for baby
 - i. Ideally, mother has a longer block of time to sleep
 - Keep time of anchor sleep block consistent 7 days per week
 - Use earplugs, eye mask during sleep period when not on duty for baby
3. Weigh costs/benefits of breastfeeding/pumping if experiencing significant sleep deprivation related to feeding
4. Pay attention to light
 - Dim light (only enough to see) within 90 minutes of bedtime, during sleep period; keep electronic devices on dimmest setting
 - Consider using orange-red light bulb (from hardware store) if you need light during the night to feed, care for baby
 - In the morning, get as much bright light (for baby and mother) as possible; sunlight is best
5. Have a 30-60 minute “wind down” zone before attempting sleep; engage in relaxing, quiet, activities in dim light
 - Can also be helpful for baby (starting around 3-6 months of age) to have pre-bedtime routine

If you are having trouble sleeping when the baby is not a factor:

1. Don't "try" to sleep
 - a. Lie down to go to sleep only when sleepy
 - b. Get out of bed when unable to sleep; do calm, distracting activity, such as reading in low light or watching TV, until you feel sleepy
2. Use bed for sleep and sex only (feeding baby is OK if you're relaxed when feeding)
3. Keep consistent wake time when possible
4. Scheduled naps are OK; nap in bed if possible and aim for 6 hours after wake time

Insomnia Self-help books

- Quiet Your Mind and Get to Sleep (Manber & Carney)
- The Insomnia Answer (Glovinsky & Spielman)

Online CBT for Insomnia

- Free app: CBT-I coach
- Sleepio
- Shut-I