



Tips to Improve Sleep



Finding an opportunity for sleep may feel quite elusive to you right now. And, depending upon your individual circumstances: whether or not you're breastfeeding on demand), if you have a partner at home with you at night, the needs of your baby, and so on, there will be particular challenges to getting that badly needed elixir of sleep.

It's impossible to list all the various practical suggestions here. I strongly suggest you read through pages 204 through 208 in *Postpartum Depression For Dummies* for a thorough discussion of ideas that might fit your particular situation. Ideally, if you can manage even a few nights per week of 5-6 uninterrupted hours of sleep, you will support the serotonin level in your brain (a good thing!), and help to prevent sleep deprivation, which lowers serotonin and can lead to depression and other problems.

Do the best you can to get sleep and enhance its quality. Here are a few tips:

- If you're not experiencing anxiety, you may be able to nap during the day when your baby is sleeping. (Remember that nighttime sleep is much better for you than daytime sleep, but you've got to grab what you can these days.)
- If you're breastfeeding, lie down in bed while your baby nurses.
- Nap when your baby is safe and watching an interesting educational baby video.
- Sleep in the parking lot as you wait for an older child at school.
- Put your baby in a front carrier and nap while you're in the doctor's waiting room.
- Ask a friend, neighbor or family member to watch your child while you take a nap.
- If you cannot hire a doula or nanny, hire a babysitter or a mother's helper to watch your child while you take a nap.

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