

## **Life Changes & Women**

Some life changes are unique to women, such as the menstrual cycle, menopause and pregnancy. These changes can significantly influence your health and your sleeping habits. If you are experiencing difficulty sleeping, lasting more than a week or two, talk with your health care provider. Scroll down for further information concerning these life changes and sleep disorders.

### **What affects my sleep?**

There are many factors at play that can affect the quality of your sleep. For example the constant demand of being a mother, worker and partner can have an influence how well you sleep. Changes in hormones often cause insomnia, irritability and other problems. You may lie awake at night thinking about what you have yet to get done, along with the daily worries a family can provide. Every man, woman and child needs quality sleep to maintain health and daily life. To learn more about good sleep habits, [click here](#).

### **The Menstrual Cycle**

During the menstrual cycle women often experience emotional and physical symptoms, including cramping, fatigue and irritability. These symptoms can affect how well you sleep. Some women may experience more arousals and sleep disturbances during the premenstrual period. As a result of the increased arousals, some women may sleep longer than their usual time frame. These symptoms usually cease after menstration begins, yet in some cases sleep disturbances may continue or even worsen. Regular exercise and a diet low if salt, sugar and fat can ease your symptoms. See [sleep hygiene](#) for more tips on sleeping better.

### **Pregnancy**

Due to emotional and physical changes, getting high quality sleep can be a challenge in late pregnancy. Listed below are some tips to help you sleep better:

- \* Take a warm shower or bath just before bed.
- \* To relax ask your partner to massage your back, shoulders and neck.
- \* Try sleeping with pillows under your back and stomach, as well as between your knees.
- \* Take short naps if you feel tired during the day.
- \* Limit your fluid intake as it gets close to bed time, this will reduce nighttime urination..

- \* Sleep with your upper body raised 6-8 inches to reduce chance of heartburn. Avoid lying down for two hours after you eat.
- \* A creeping or crawling feeling in your legs may affect your sleep. Try to stretch, walk or massage your legs.
- \* Limit or avoid coffee, tea, sodas and other caffeine products.

## **Motherhood**

Motherhood at times can be stressful, find ways to rest and relax each chance you get. Frequent rest periods can give you the energy you need to take better care of yourself and your family. Listed below are some helpful tips:

- \* New mothers often feel a little down for a while, don't be afraid to share your feelings with your loved ones.
- \* You should talk to your health care provider if your feelings affect your sleeping and or eating.
- \* Try to adjust your baby's sleep to fit a day-night cycle.
- \* During the day try to keep your baby active, then he or she will sleep more at night.
- \* Try and get some outside activity, the fresh air and daylight may help you both sleep better.
- \* If your baby is sleeping, take a break and relax, take a nap if you need one.

## **Menopause & Premenopausal**

In the months or years before menopause, your body produces fewer female hormones. This can cause physical or emotional changes that can affect your sleep. Ask your health care provider about hormone replacement therapy. Also, try these tips:

- \* If you experience hot flashes and night sweats, try avoiding spicy foods and caffeine at nighttime. You may want to keep a window open or have a fan going. Try using cotton sleepwear and sheets.
- \* Mood swings can cause insomnia, fatigue or depression. Share your feelings with another woman your age and or your health care provider.
- \* Make sure you get all the necessary vitamins and minerals you need.