

Post Partum Stress Management

Being a new mom can be a rollercoaster of emotions. One minute you're beaming with happiness and love, while the next minute you're sobbing. Sleep deprivation, exhaustion, recovery from delivery, managing a household, and dealing with a new family dynamic are common "stressors" during the post-partum period. These stressors may affect everyone in different ways. Some may suffer from headaches and stomach aches while others become irritable, depressed and anxious.

"Without stress management, all too often your body is always on high alert. Over time, high levels of stress lead to serious health problems. Don't wait until stress has a negative impact on your health, relationships or quality of life. Start practicing a range of stress management techniques today."

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Tips for Controlling Postpartum Stress:

- ✓ **Reach out for help!** Often new moms feel like they need to do it all. This frame of mind will only get you so far. Know there is nothing wrong with asking for help. When visitors come over put them to work - they want to help! Don't be ashamed to ask your friend to do the dishes, fold laundry, or simply hold the baby while you shower.
- ✓ **Stay organized** to prevent from becoming overwhelmed. Falling behind on errands and daily chores can bring about stress. Make a list of tasks that need to be accomplished and chip away at them when you have time. Set up a grocery delivery / pick up service or ask a family member to do the shopping for you. Have diapers and wipes delivered directly to the house via online shopping. Schedule bills to be paid online and keep a visible calendar of appointments as a reminder.
- ✓ **Be kind to yourself!** Do not put added pressure on yourself to lose the baby weight in record time. Give thanks to your body for growing and delivering a new life into this world. Do not cut calories during this post-partum period. Instead, focus on eating a wholesome diet of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, dairy and lean protein. A balanced diet will keep you energized and feeling capable!
- ✓ **Schedule alone time**, even if it's only for a few minutes! Taking a break to read, walk, shower or simply breathe will help you relax and recharge. Baby's naptime is a great time for you to get time for yourself. The chores can wait! If possible, ask friends or family to stay with baby for a short period of time so you can be alone.
- ✓ **Begin light exercise** with your doctor's approval. Low-impact exercise such as walking or stretching will help alleviate stress that may be building up. Putting the baby in a stroller to walk around the neighborhood or taking a mommy & baby yoga class are great ways to relieve stress.

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- ✓ **Sleep when you can!** Being sleep deprived is a major stressor for new moms. Even if you are lucky and have a baby that sleeps well, many new moms find it hard to relax and fall asleep. Lay down when the baby is napping during the day and have your partner help with the late night feedings. If you're having trouble winding down, try playing soothing music, reading, or taking deep relaxing breaths.
- ✓ **Set yourself up for success.** Adjusting to life with a new baby becomes easier when you have everything you need around you. Keep easy to grab healthy snacks nearby for both yourself and older children. Set up a comfortable spot to nurse and keep the phone close by to prevent having to get up during a feeding. Bring out a "treasure box" filled with books, special toys and healthy snacks to keep older children occupied when the newborn needs your full attention.