

HANDLING STRESS



Both short- and long-term stress can affect your body. In fact, stress can make you more likely to get sick. It can also make problems you already have worse. It can play a part in a range of issues, including trouble sleeping, stomach problems, headaches, and mental health conditions.

Having a new baby and learning to breastfeed can be stressful. But it is important for new mothers to take care of themselves. Try to listen to your body so that you can tell when stress is affecting your health.

Take these steps to help ease stress while breastfeeding:

RELAX.

Try and find a quiet, comfortable, relaxing place to nurse. This will help make breastfeeding more enjoyable for you and your baby. Use this time to bond with your baby, listen to soothing music, meditate, or read a book.

SLEEP.

Your stress could get worse if you don't get enough sleep. With enough sleep, it is easier to cope with challenges and stay healthy. Try to sleep whenever possible.



SURROUND YOURSELF WITH SUPPORTIVE PEOPLE.

It really does take a village to raise a child. Let family and friends help you with housework or hold your baby while you rest or take a bath.

GET MOVING.

Physical activity improves your mood. Your body makes certain chemicals, called endorphins, before and after you exercise. These relieve stress and improve your mood. If you are a new mother, ask your doctor when it is okay to start exercising.

DON'T DEAL WITH STRESS IN UNHEALTHY WAYS.

This includes drinking too much alcohol, using drugs, or smoking, all of which can harm you and your baby. It is also unhealthy to overeat in response to stress.

GET HELP FROM A PROFESSIONAL IF YOU NEED IT.

A therapist can help you work through stress and find better ways to deal with problems. Medicines can help ease symptoms of depression and anxiety and help promote sleep. But not all medicines are safe to take while breastfeeding. Talk to your doctor or pharmacist before taking any medicine.

DID YOU KNOW?

Breastfeeding can help mothers relax and handle stress better. Skin-to-skin contact with your baby has a soothing effect.