

# USC Center for Work & Family Life

## Sleep Tips for Pregnant Women

1. In the third trimester, sleep on your left side to allow for the best blood flow to the fetus and to your uterus and kidneys. Avoid lying flat on your back for a long period of time.
2. Drink lots of fluids during the day, but cut down before bedtime.
3. To prevent heartburn do not eat large amounts of spicy, acidic (such as tomato products), or fried foods. If heartburn is a problem, sleep with your head elevated on pillows.
4. Exercise regularly to help you stay healthy, improve your circulation, and reduce leg cramps.
5. Try frequent bland snacks (like crackers) throughout the day. This helps avoid nausea by keeping your stomach full.
6. Special "pregnancy" pillows and mattresses may help you sleep better. Or use regular pillows to support your body.
7. Napping may help. A National Science Foundation poll found that 51% of pregnant or recently pregnant women reported at least one weekday nap; 60% reported at least one weekend nap.
8. Learn to relax with relaxation and breathing techniques, which can also help when the contractions begin. A warm bath or shower before bed can be helpful.
9. Talk to your doctor if you develop medical problems and/or insomnia persists.

Once her baby is born, a mother's sleep is frequently interrupted, particularly if she is nursing. Mothers who nurse and those with babies that wake frequently during the night should try to nap when their babies do. Sharing baby care to the extent possible, especially during the night, is important for the mother's health, safety, performance and vitality.