



How to Cope with Bedrest

- Treatment for some complications of pregnancy includes limited activity or bedrest.

Here are some ideas to help you manage your stay in bed:

- **Remember that you will not be in bed forever, even though sometimes it feels that way!**
- **Set up your bed for comfort.**
 - Add extra pillows, 1 for under your stomach, and 1 for between your knees while lying on your side.
 - Use a wedge or “pillow chair” for sitting up in bed to eat.
 - Use lamb’s wool, foam, or artificial fleece as a mattress overlay to prevent your elbows and heels from chafing.
- **Set up your bedside with things you will need throughout the day.**
 - A telephone, reading lamp, picnic cooler for your lunch and snacks, water jug or carafe, cleaning wipes in a pop-up container or washcloth in plastic bag for personal cleansing, tissues, moisturizing lotion for face and hands, comb, hairbrush, mirror, makeup, cologne, deodorant, and powder.
 - Organize these items on a nightstand or TV table so they are easy for you to reach.
- **Plan activities to help pass the time.**
 - Read books and magazines.
 - Do puzzles.
 - Have a TV with remote control.
 - Plan some small craft projects.
 - Pay your bills.
 - Have catalogs so you can shop by phone.



- **Structure your day by making a routine.**

- Wake up.
- Eat meals.
- Get ready for sleep with your family.
- Shower and dress in comfortable clothes even though you will spend the day in bed.
- You may find that the total time you are allowed to be out of your lying down position must include meals and use of the bathroom and shower.
- You will learn to balance your time during your bedrest days.
- By bathing while lying down one day, you can *save* your time to have dinner with your family.



- You may want to eat your meals while lying down to *save* your time to stand up for a shower.
- At the start of each day, you can plan the best use of your sitting or standing time.

- **Accept help from family and friends.**

- Ask people to help by making meals for you, running errands, doing laundry, and caring for your children.
- Make a list of things people can do for you so that when they ask, you have a task ready.

- Do not be afraid to let others know you need their help.
- Every day you complete bed rest really does help.

- **Spend time with your children.**

- Read books with them, play games with them, color, do crafts or schoolwork, and talk about the new baby.
- If possible, get a sitter to watch over your children’s daily active playtime such as bike riding and playground activities.

- **You may have feelings of confusion, turmoil, and ambivalence.**

- Share these feelings, actively seeking help, and get involved with the healthcare team as they are treating you.
- Find a friend to listen as you talk about your feelings. Find a bedrest support group (refer to the *Resources* section).



- **After being on prolonged bedrest, you can expect to have some muscle weakness.**
 - You may tire easily.
 - After delivery, it may take you a little longer to get back on your feet.
 - Try doing bedrest exercises. This may help lessen the muscle weakness and tiredness.
 - Check with your doctor before attempting any exercises while on bedrest.
- **Next to you, the person who goes through the most changes while you are on bedrest is your partner.**
 - Many times friends ask only about you and not about your partner.
 - Your partner’s concerns may include less family income, more medical bills, and new and different duties added to an already stressful day.
 - Keep your partner involved as a part of your healthcare team.
 - Discuss your doctor’s advice, test results, and changes in your status with him.
 - Encourage your partner to take up or maintain some regular physical activity.
 - Walking
 - Jogging
 - Running
 - Biking
 - Encourage him to take care of himself so he will have the energy to take care of you.
 - Focus your efforts on doing all tasks as a team.
 - Figure out together what you can do while on bedrest, and what your partner needs to do. For example:
 - You make the menu and grocery list.
 - Your partner does the food shopping.
- **Your doctor can answer any of your questions about the progress of your pregnancy.**
 - The doctor can explain how staying on bedrest is helping your baby.
 - Ask about support groups in your community.
 - Your doctor can refer you to a professional counselor if you need extra help.

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