# TAKING CARE O F Y O U R S E L F

**DURING C O V I D - 1 9**

Resources for Pregnant and Postpartum Women

## FEELING WORRIED, DOWN OR O V E R W H E L M E D?

These feelings are common after giving birth and can be made worse by the current health crisis.

You may notice:

Feeling scared, angry, overwhelmed or sad. Changes in your sleep, energy, appetite or mood.

Share how you are feeling with your family and friends. If you feel overwhelmed, talk with your health care provider about support options.

**H O W T O SEEK S U P P O R T**

It is important to remember that we all feel anxious sometimes. If you are struggling to care for yourself or your baby, please reach out.

Talk to your health care provider to be connected with mental health and well-being resources. <https://www.postpartum.net/>

If you need help with:

**SO M E T I P S**

**MINDFUL BREATHING**

Try mindful breathing every day. Breathe in for 4 seconds, hold for 7 seconds, and breathe out for 8 seconds (4-7-8).

**MAINTAIN A ROUTINE**

Keeping to a routine can help to create a sense of normalcy and break up long days at home.

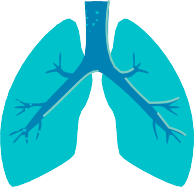
**MOVE EVERY DAY**

Activity helps with stress reduction. After discussing with your doctor, try to get outside every day. Remember to keep a six-foot distance from others and follow CDC/local guidelines for wearing a mask.

**GET INVOLVED**

Helping others can make you feel connected. Checking on a neighbor, sewing masks or donating canned goods to a food pantry can help give the feeling of control.

* Financial assistance



* Housing
* Childcare
* Food

Adapted by MCPAP for Moms. Author: Hathaway G.

**LIMIT NEWS INTAKE**

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Pick one time in the day to read/listen to the news, limit to 30 minutes orless.

**STAY CONNECTED**

Isolation can make you feel lonely and overwhelmed. Reach out to family and friends via video or phone calls.

**Self-Care Plan**

**Your life may feel drastically changed during this time, and feeling overwhelmed, stressed, or sad are very common andunderstandableresponses. Itcanbehard tocopewithproblemswhenyou’refeelingsad and havelittleenergy. Aself-care plan can bea useful tooltohelp you attend toyourownwellness needs, and those ofyour baby.**

##### Make time for pleasurable activities. Commit to scheduling some simple and enjoyable activity each day.



Things I find pleasurable include:

During the week I will spend at least minutes doing (choose activities to try in the comingweek)

##### Stay physically active. Make sure you make time to do some activity, evenafew minutes of activity can be helpful.

During the week, I will spend at least minutes doing (write in activities)

##### Ask for help. Look to those in your life you can ask forhelp-forexampleyourpartner,yourparents, other relatives, your friends.

People I can ask to help me:

During the week I will ask atleast person/people for help.

##### Talk or virtually spend time with people who can supportyou.Explaintofriendsandlovedoneshow you feel. If you can't talk about it, that is okay too.

People I find supportive include During the week, I willcontact

(name/s) and try to

talk to them times.

**Sleep is a very important part of self-care.**

* + **Watch how much caffeine you take in.** Caffeine stays in the body for 10-12 hours. Consider limiting coffee, tea, soda, chocolate, and energydrinks.
  + **Set a routine.** Setregular times for going to bedand waking up, even ifyou slept poorly thenightbefore. Set up a relaxing routine 1-2 hours before bed and limit your exposure to electronics and light.
  + **Keep the bedroom mellow.** Only use your bed for sleep and sexual activity. Keep your bedroom dark and cool and move your clock to prevent constantly checking it through the night.

#### Belly breathing triggers your body’s natural calming response.

* + 1. Begin by slowly bringing your breath to a steady, even pace.
    2. Focus on breathing in from the very bottom of your belly, almost as if from your hips/pelvis.
    3. See if you can breathe in a way that makes your belly stick out on the in-breath and deflate totally on the outbreath. Your chest and shoulders should stay quite still, it’s all about breathing with your belly!

##### Any amount oftime youcanfind to do this canhelp. Aim to practice 10-15 minutes atleasttwice daily.

**Simple goals and small steps.**

Break goals down into small steps and give yourself credit for each step you finish.

Adapted from the Lifeline4Moms Toolkit. Copyright © 2019 University of Massachusetts Medical School all rights reserved. Revision 10-08-19. Lifeline4Moms Perinatal Mental Health Toolkit. Funding provided by CDC grant number U01DP006093.

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