

TAKING CARE OF YOURSELF

Resources for Pregnant and Postpartum Individuals



ask masi

FEELING WORRIED, DOWN, OR OVERWHELMED?

These feelings are common after giving birth and can be made worse by external stressors. You may notice:

- Feeling scared, angry, overwhelmed, or sad
- Feeling just not like yourself, down, blue, low, or drained
- Changes in your sleep, energy, appetite, or mood

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

HOW TO SEEK SUPPORT

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

Contact your health care provider, your public health unit, The Mental Health Helpline at 1-866-531-2600 (24 hours a day, 7 days a week) or www.accessmha.ca/ for information about local mental health services.

You can also contact Postpartum Support International (PSI) at 1-800-944-4773 or www.postpartum.net for mental health and well-being resources.

If you need help with:

- Financial assistance
- Housing
- Childcare
- Food

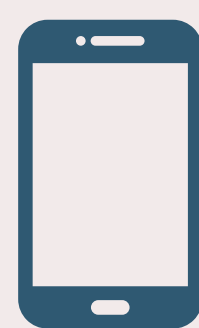
Dial 2-1-1 or visit <https://211ontario.ca/>

SOME TIPS



MAINTAIN A ROUTINE

Keeping to a routine can help to create a sense of normalcy even if it means picking one small, enjoyable activity each day.



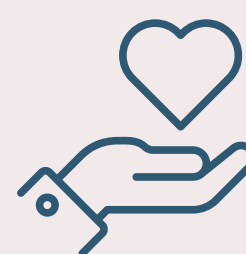
STAY CONNECTED

Reach out to family, friends, and other supports.



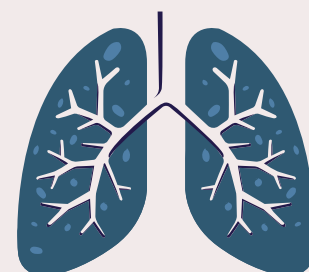
MOVE EVERY DAY

Activity helps with stress reduction. After discussing with your doctor, try to give yourself the kindness of moving your body some every day, and do not forget about fresh air.



GET INVOLVED

Doing things that feel in line with your values can make you feel connected. Checking on a neighbor, volunteering, or donating canned goods to a food pantry can help give the feeling of control.



BREATH WORK

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



LIMIT NEWS INTAKE

Pick one time in the day to read/listen to the news; limit to 30 minutes or less.

Self-Care Plan

Your life may feel drastically changed during this time, and feeling overwhelmed, stressed, or sad are very common and understandable responses. It can be hard to cope with problems when you're feeling sad and have little energy. A self-care plan can be a useful tool to help you attend to your own wellness needs, and those of your baby.

1

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

Things I find pleasurable include:

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

2

Stay physically active. Make sure you make time to do some activity; even a few minutes of activity can be helpful.

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

3

Ask for help. Look to those in your life you can ask for help - for example your partner, your parents, other relatives, your friends.

People I can ask to help me:

During the week I will ask at least _____ person/people for help.

4

Talk or virtually spend time with people who can support you. Explain to friends and loved ones how you feel. If you can't talk about it, that is okay too.

People I find supportive include_____

During the week, I will contact _____ (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 energy drinks.
- **Set a routine.** Set regular times for going to bed and waking up, even if you slept poorly the night before. 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 bring 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 breathe in a way that makes your belly stick out on the in-breath and deflate totally on the out-breath. Your chest and shoulders should stay quite still; it's all about breathing with your belly!

Any amount of time you can find to do this can help. Aim to practice 10-15 minutes at least twice daily.



Simple goals and small steps.

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