

## **How to Get Enough Sleep in the First Weeks After Birth**

by Penny Simpkin

To get enough sleep you must take your need for sleep seriously, which many parents fail to do. They wind up sleep deprived and after several days or weeks, fall apart. Baby care and everyday tasks become much more difficult than they should be. The following approach will help you get as much (or almost as much) sleep as you need. It does not work as well if you have other children, unless you have help with them.

- Calculate how many hours of sleep you used to need regularly before pregnancy in order to function well. Six hours? Eight hours? That is the amount of sleep you now owe yourself everyday.
- Since you cannot get this amount of sleep in one stretch because of interruptions for feedings and baby care, you will require more hours in bed to get your allotted amount of sleep.
- Plan to stay in bed or keep going back to bed until you have slept your allotted number of hours. This means that with exception of trips to the bathroom, you do not get up. You do not brush your teeth, shower, or dress early morning. Make a mental note of approximately how many hours you have slept since you went to bed. You may have to stay in bed from 10pm until noon the next day to get eight hours of sleep. If that's what it takes, do it. Then brush your teeth, take a shower, dress and greet the day.
- Many parents find it easier to follow this regime if their baby sleeps with them or nearby.
- As your baby grows and begins to sleep longer stretches, it will take you less time to get enough sleep.

Take your need for sleep seriously in order to prevent sleep deprivation.  
Sweet Dreams and Happy Parenting- Penny