



BED REST DURING PREGNANCY

- COMFORT MEASURES
- EXERCISES
- IDEAS FOR RELAXATION
- COPING WITH ACHES & PAINS



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REASONS FOR BED REST DURING PREGNANCY:

Your physician will recommend bed rest during pregnancy for your safety and/or the safety of your baby. You may be asked to stay on bed rest at home or be admitted to the Hospital.



There are many reasons why you may have a pregnancy that requires closer monitoring by the medical staff. Some of the more common conditions for a physician to prescribe bed rest are listed in the following table.

SIGNS & SYMPTOMS	POSSIBLE MEDICAL WORDS YOU MIGHT HEAR
Premature contractions	Premature Onset of Labor (POL) or Preterm Labor (PTL)
Fluid is leaking out from the uterus	Premature Rupture of Membranes (PROM)
High Blood Pressure	Pregnancy Induced Hypertension (PIH)
Carrying more than one baby	Multiple Gestation
Swelling and high blood pressure	Preeclampsia
Cervix is not closed and the pregnancy is “falling out”	Incompetent Cervix
The placenta is covering the cervix Some or most of the placenta is detached from the uterus, vaginal bleeding may be present	Placenta previa Placenta abruption

Some other reasons may include vaginal bleeding and/or the possibility of a miscarriage.



THE POSITIVE EFFECTS OF BED REST

- ✓ Bed rest eases contractions and helps to the uterus stay “quiet”.
- ✓ Bed rest reduces the effects of gravity so that there is less pull on the uterus and less pressure on the cervix. Therefore, this lessens the chances of further cervical shortening or opening.
- ✓ Bed rest helps you use fewer calories and saves your energy for helping baby grow
- ✓ Bed rest lowers your blood pressure. Your heart does not have to work so hard to pump blood all over the body when you are lying down.



THE DOWN SIDE OF BED REST

- ✓ Bed rest will weaken your muscles
- ✓ Bed rest may cause your back and neck to feel stiff and sore
- ✓ Bed rest slows down your bowels, you may have constipation
- ✓ Bed rest will lessen the efficiency of your blood circulation. There is a greater chance of blood clots forming in your legs.

You can lessen some of these risks of bed rest with exercise. Your healthcare providers will prescribe exercises that are safe for you. They will also give guidance on comfort measures and bed positioning.

LESSENING THE ACHES AND PAINS OF BED REST

- ✓ **Lie in bed with support to your belly and spine.** See suggestions in this handout.



- ❖ Move in bed from side to side as often as you can (if you are allowed).
- ❖ Get in and out of bed correctly (if you're allowed)
- ❖ Do relaxation exercises as suggested in this booklet

- ✓ **Use heat for aches and pains.** *Do not apply heat to your belly.*

- ❖ If you are **at home**: Fill a cotton athletic sock with 2 cups of uncooked rice and knot/sew the open end. Heat in a microwave for 60 seconds and apply to your back or neck.
- ❖ If you are in the hospital, ask the staff for a heating pad.

- ✓ **Use ice** for **sharp pain**.

- ❖ If you are at home: A sac of loosely packed frozen vegetables can be applied to the painful area
- ❖ If you are in the hospital, ask the staff for an ice pack.

- ✓ **Ask your physician if a family member can massage your neck and shoulders.**

- ❖ You may ask for massage therapy at bedside if this is OK with your physician. Ask you nurse how to set up an appointment. There is a fee for this service.

SAVING YOUR ENERGY

You will need plenty of energy to nourish your unborn baby and take care of yourself. For this time, avoid getting tired. Some suggestions for saving your energy are:



- ✓ **Stay relaxed.** Excitement, tension and anxiety waste energy.

- ✓ Keep the **temperature** of your room comfortable. Avoid showers that that are too hot and rooms that are too cold.

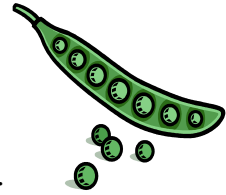
- ✓ Avoid activities that make you "**tense up**" (for example, opening a bottle top that is stuck, or bearing down during a bowel movement.



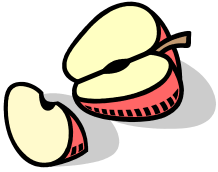
- ✓ Lift objects no heavier than a gallon of milk (**only if you are allowed to lift at all**)

DIET

- ✓ Your physician may prescribe a special diet for you.



- ✓ To avoid constipation, drink 6-8 glasses of **water** per day.
 - Water at room temperature is better than icy water. Icy water tends to slow down the bowels.
 - Suck on ice chips if you like the feeling of cold in your mouth.



- ✓ Eat fresh fruits and vegetables and cereals that are high in **fiber**
- ✓ If your appetite is less than usual, eat 5 or more **small meals/snacks** per day. You need the calories for to help your baby grow.

- ✓ Drink **warm liquids** (without caffeine). Warm liquids tend to keep the bowels active. Some examples are herbal tea, broth, decaffeinated tea or prune juice.

- ✓ **Limit coffee**, it tends to irritate the bladder. However, coffee does sometimes help with constipation. Ask your physician for advice.



MEDICATIONS:



Please discuss any possible **side-effects** of medications with your caregivers. You may recognize the side effects before anyone else. Some of the common medications that are used to lower your blood pressure or slow/stop your contractions have the side effects of tremor, weakness, anxiety, constipation or you may feel dizzy when you try to sit up.

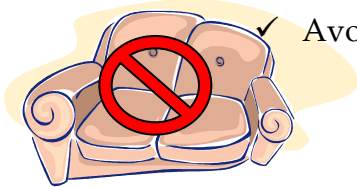
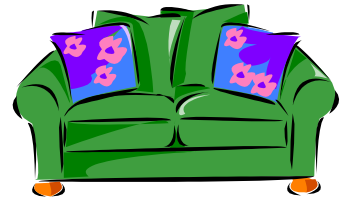
If the effects of your medications make your exercises difficult, please inform your therapist.

RULES FOR GOOD BODY POSITION

Lying and sitting with good alignment of your spine will lessen aches and pains and help to make bed rest more comfortable.

BEDS AND COUCHES: should be **firm**, you should not sag into the bed or couch

- ✓ Place a ¼ inch thick piece of plywood between your mattress and the box spring to make the bed firmer.
- ✓ Add an egg crate mattress or lambs wool cloth for softness. These will lessen the chances for skin irritation.
- ✓ Avoid sitting on soft couches



SUPPORT THE NATURAL CURVES OF THE SPINE:

When you lie on your back, side or sit up, ask yourself:

- ✓ Is my spine supported in its natural curves or does it look like I am in a hammock?
- ✓ Am I placing pillows and rolls correctly in the small of my back and neck and under my belly?



KEEP THINGS YOU NEED NEARBY

- ✓ Reading materials
- ✓ Phone
- ✓ Water
- ✓ TV remote control
- ✓ Bell to call someone.

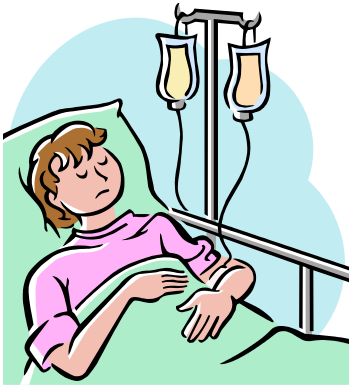
PLANNING YOUR DAY

It is best to keep some sort of schedule. A planned day will give you a sense of purpose and you may feel less bored. Plan to do only those activities that are medically safe and match the level of bed rest your physician has prescribed for you.

- ✓ Plan hours of work, social activity and rest. Suggest a specific time for friends to visit you so that you can have your rest and work times also.
- ✓ Work at a slow pace, rushing uses up too much energy
- ✓ Take frequent breaks. Working fast and long takes blood from your internal organs to your arms and legs.
- ✓ Arrange to have the things you will need that day close to you and within easy reach. This will minimize the need for you to stretch or bend unnecessarily.



SUGGESTIONS FOR RELAXATION



Experiencing a complicated pregnancy will be stressful both physically and emotionally. Even though “stress” seems to be an *emotional* word, it has *physical* effects. The possible physical effects are **muscle tension**, **headaches**, **constipation** and an increase in **blood pressure**.

Relaxation exercises can help you lessen the effects of anxiety and worry. These simple exercises help your body to slow down, become quiet and recharge. If you already have a favorite way to relax, use it. Or we have some suggestions for you.

If you are not used to doing relaxations exercises, start with the goal of being “quiet” for 5-7 minutes. As you gain experience, increase the time gradually to 20 minutes.



RELAXATION IN SITTING

Arrange to be undisturbed for 15-20 minutes

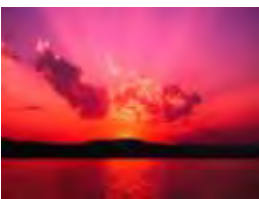
If you are allowed to sit up in a chair, think of all the things you might do to put a fussy baby to sleep – keep baby warm, rock gently and sing quietly.

- ✓ Wrap yourself in a soft blanket and rock gently
- ✓ Listen to quiet music or sing softly to your unborn baby
- ✓ Take this time to talk to your baby, massage your belly and slow down your breathing.

DAYDREAMING

Arrange to be undisturbed for 15-20 minutes

- ✓ Get into a comfortable position, using your pillows and supports
 - ✓ Clear your mind and leave the cares of the day behind
 - ✓ Close your eyes, slow your breathing and start your favorite daydream.
 - ✓ Think of a place that you have been to (or would like to go) to that is calm and peaceful.
- Here are two suggestions.



BEACH THEME

You are lying on a warm sandy beach. Listen to the sounds of the surf lapping at the shore, see the colors of the sunset, smell the salty ocean breeze. Feel your muscles let go.



WINTER WONDERLAND

You are sitting by a warm fire on a cool day with your hands wrapped around a warm mug of hot chocolate. The snow is falling quietly outside the window, everything is quiet and you are cozy in your warm cottage. Listen to the hissing of the pine cones as they burn. Smell the burning cones, feel the warmth of the fire and your hot chocolate.

CONSCIOUS MUSCLE RELAXATION

Arrange to be undisturbed for 15-20 minutes


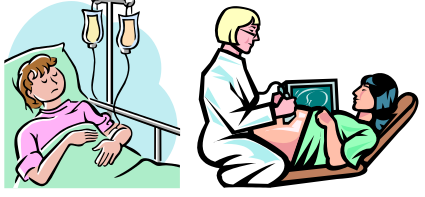





- ✓ Position yourself comfortably with pillows and supports. Clear your mind and take 2-3 slow, deep breaths.
- ✓ Feel your body getting “quiet”.
- ✓ If your mind is wandering, or thoughts keep running through your head, let them pass through and bring your mind back to your body.

- ✓ Let your eyes close, feel your forehead and face relax.
- ✓ Let your head sink and feel heavy on the pillow
- ✓ Tune in to your breathing. Each time you breathe out; feel yourself sink further into the bed.
- ✓ Feel your arms and hands sink into the bed and feel heavy.
- ✓ Feel your legs and feet sinking into the bed and get heavier.
- ✓ Move your attention to your buttocks and pelvis and feel them relax.
- ✓ Think and feel heavy and warm
- ✓ Stay quiet and enjoy this time as long as you like
- ✓ Stretch and “wake” slowly when you are finished.

LEVELS OF BED REST

Your physician has determined what level of bed rest is appropriate for your condition. These levels may change during your pregnancy depending on your condition.

	<p>TRENDELENBERG</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ This is the strictest form of bed rest. The head of the bed is tilted so that your head is lower than your feet ✓ Bed pan for toileting, bathe in bed ✓ Roll to the side, prop up on elbows to eat ✓ Social life/hobbies: reading, visiting, crafts, phone calls, TV with the head lower than the feet
	<p>STRICT BED REST</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ No activity in sitting or standing ✓ Bed pan for toileting, bathe in bed ✓ Raise the head of the bed to eat ✓ Sleep on your left or right side, avoid being on your back for long periods of time ✓ Social life/hobbies: reading, visiting, crafts, phone calls, TV, work on lap top with your head flat on the pillow
	<p>BED REST WITH BATHROOM PRIVILEGES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Use toilet or bed side commode ✓ May eat sitting ✓ Physician may allow a shower ✓ Social life/hobbies: reading, visiting, crafts, phone calls, TV, working on a lap top with head propped on pillows or head of the bed raised up.
	<p>LIMITED ACTIVITY (you may be at home or at the hospital)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Toilet and shower in the bathroom ✓ Sit up for meals ✓ Visit with friends or family sitting up ✓ If you are home, ask your physician if you may prepare a small meal/snack for yourself, if you can drive short distances to your physician or a friend, how many hours you can work (describe the physical demands of your job) or what you can do at home.
	<p>UP – AD LIB</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ This activity level means that gravity is not expected to have a negative impact on your pregnancy. ✓ No restrictions on bathroom privileges, shower, sitting up for meals or watching TV, visiting with family or friends. ✓ “Normal” activity is not appropriate. You will need to ask your physician specific questions on what activities you are allowed to do. For example: How far can I drive? Can I do light housework? Can I walk 5-7 minutes? Can I cook? How much can I lift?

SUGGESTIONS FOR RESTING COMFORTABLY IN BED



On Your Back

- Pillows under the back (optional)
- Neck in good position – a rolled up towel may help support your neck
- This position may not be comfortable after the second trimester and you may prefer to lie on your side
- If you feel dizzy or short of breath, roll on to your left side

Most physicians advise sleeping on the side after the second trimester of pregnancy.



On Your Side

- Pillows between the knees
- Small pillow under belly after second trimester
- Neck in good position
- Hug a pillow to support arms and upper body.



$\frac{3}{4}$ Supine

- Body pillows behind you to position you halfway between lying on back and on side.
- Pillows under the bottom knee for support
- Small pillow under the belly



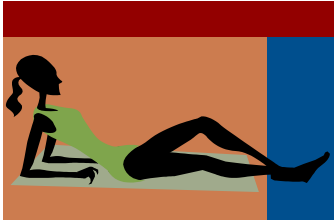
$\frac{3}{4}$ Prone

- Body pillows in front of you to position you half way between lying on belly and side
- Pillows between your knees
- Small pillow under the belly
- Neck in good position

GETTING OUT OF BED

If you are allowed to get out of bed, make sure you roll on to your side first. Drop your legs, push up with your arms.





RULES FOR EXERCISE

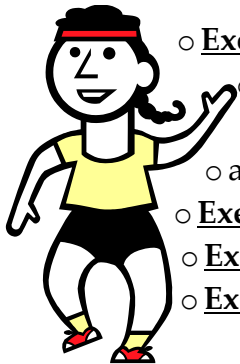
- ✓ Do not push or bear down during exercise
- ✓ Do **ONLY** those exercises prescribed by your health care provider
- ✓ **STOP** if any of the exercises increase your discomfort or pain, increase your contractions or



bleeding. Report these symptoms to your health care provider immediately.

- ✓ Breathe normally during exercise. If you find yourself holding your breath, count out loud or sing while you are exercising.
- ✓ Do each exercise to your levels of comfort and as you can tolerate, up to 10 repetitions for each exercise 2-3 times per day
- ✓ Avoid the “all or nothing” mode. Do a few exercises everyday rather than doing none
- ✓ Remember the goal of these exercises is to lessen the effects of bed rest on your muscles. They are not meant to give you a “work out”.
- ✓ Do the exercises as you lay on your side or back. If you are on your left side, do the exercises with your right arm/leg and switch when you roll on to your right side.
- ✓ To prevent boredom, choose a different combination of exercises every day. Choose exercises from each group.

POSITIVE EFFECTS OF EXERCISE



- **Exercise will improve your blood circulation.**
 - Blood is pumped back to your heart by the pumping action of the legs. When you lay in bed, the blood tends to “pool” in your legs. Exercises for the feet and ankles in particular will help the blood get pumped back to your heart.
- **Exercise will ease the feeling of stiffness in your joints.**
- **Exercise will lessen muscle cramps and muscle weakness.**
- **Exercise will help you relax.**

Do Only Those Exercises that have been taught to you by your healthcare provider

GROUP I: Exercises to Improve your Circulation

GROUP II: Exercises to lessen muscle weakness/joint stiffness in your legs






GROUP III: Exercises to lessen muscle weakness/joint stiffness in your arms

GROUP IV: Exercises to lessen stiffness in your neck and shoulders

GROUP V: Exercises in sitting for patients who are allowed to sit for brief periods.

GROUP I: EXERCISES TO HELP WITH BLOOD CIRCULATION

Choose these exercises in the order in which they are listed, starting from the ankles and pumping blood up towards your trunk.

<p>ANKLE PUMPS Move your ankles up and down in a strong rhythmic motion <i>Lie on your back or your side.</i> <i>Do 1 minute for every hour that you are awake.</i></p>	
<p>ANKLE CIRCLES Make circles with your ankles in a clockwise and counterclockwise direction. <i>Lie on your back or your side.</i> <i>Do 1 minute for every hour that you are awake.</i></p>	
<p>ANKLE ABC's Pretend you are holding a pen in between your toes. "Write the alphabet" with your feet. <i>Lie on your back or your side.</i></p>	
<p>KNEE SQUEEZES (Quad Sets) Push your knees down into the bed to tighten the muscle on the top of your thigh. <i>Lie on your back.</i></p>	
<p>BUTTOCK SQUEEZES (Glut Sets) Squeeze your buttocks together gently. <i>Lie on your back.</i></p>	

GROUP II: EXERCISES to DECREASE WEAKNESS AND STIFFNESS IN YOUR LEGS

Repeat each exercise _____ times. Choose _____ exercises for each session.

HEEL SLIDES ON YOUR BACK

Slide your heel up to bend your hips and knees. Keep your heel in contact with the bed. Repeat with the other leg.



HEEL SLIDES SIDE TO SIDE

Lie on your back. Slide your heel to the side keeping it in contact with the bed. Bring it back to the center and repeat with the other leg.



ROLLING HIPS ON YOUR BACK

Keep your legs straight and roll hips in and out



EXERCISES FOR YOUR LEGS WHEN YOU LIE ON YOUR SIDE

Do these exercises when you lying on each side.

Keep your back straight and a pillow between your knees

ROLLING HIPS IN SIDELYING

Lie on your side with hips and knees slightly bent and feet together. Roll your upper knee towards the ceiling.



KNEE BENDING IN SIDELYING

Lie on your side with hips and knees bent. Bend and straighten knee keeping hip still.



Make sure your knee is Supported by a pillow

Pull your toes towards your Face for greater stretch to your calf muscles

KNEE TO CHEST IN SIDELYING

Lie on your side with a pillow between your legs. Drag your knee up towards your chest as far as you can comfortably.



GROUP III: EXERCISES TO LESSEN STIFFNESS AND WEAKNESS IN YOUR ARMS

Do each exercise _____ times. Choose _____ exercises for each session.

WRIST CIRCLES

Turn wrist clockwise then counterclockwise

Do not do this exercise if there is an IV at your wrist.

Lie on your back or your side



ELBOW BENDS

Bend and straighten your elbow

Lie on your back or your side

At the advice of your therapist, you may advance this exercise by using an elastic band tied to the bedrails to provide resistance.



Start with your arms in a "W" position and slide them up to make a circle over your head

ARM CIRCLES OR ARM ABC'S

SHADOW BOXING

1)



2)



3)



- 1) Starting with your arm in front of you,
- 2) Make a wide circle with your arm
- 3) Move your shoulder through its full range.

Do not do this exercise with the arm that has IV attached.

To provide some variety to this exercise, you can pretend you are holding some chalk in your hand and writing the alphabet on a blackboard with each letter being more than 4 feet tall.

- 1) Start "boxing" with your fists pointing towards your feet.
- 2) Continue "boxing" with your fists pointing towards the ceiling.
- 3) Finish towards the head of the bed.

Do not do this exercise with the arm that has IV attached.

1)



2)



3)



GROUP IV: EXERCISES FOR NECK AND SHOULDERS

Tilt your neck so your ear moves toward your shoulder



Turn your head from side to side



CHIN TUCKS

Tuck your chin in to stretch the back of your neck. This is not the same as bending your neck forward but more as if you were trying to back away from something coming towards you.



SHOULDER SHRUGS

Rotate your shoulders front to back, then back to front



ROW YOUR BOAT

Start with your arms in the position shown and pull back as if you are rowing a boat; bending your elbows and bringing your shoulder blades together.

GROUP V: EXERCISES IN SITTING

Do these exercises only if your healthcare provider advises you that you can sit up for short periods.



Tilt your head from side to side



Turn your neck to look over left/right shoulder



Tuck your chin in to stretch the back of your neck



Bend your neck to move your chin towards your chest



Squeeze shoulder blades together



"March" in sitting position

	date	date	date	date	date	date	date	date	date	date	date	date	date	date	date
I. For Circulation															
Ankle Pumps															
Ankle Circles or ABCs															
Knee Squeezes															
Buttock Squeezes															
II. For Your Legs															
Heel slides															
Heel slides to the side															
Rolling Hips															
Rolling Hips															
Knee bends															
Knee to chest															
III. For Your Arms															
Wrist Circles															
Elbow bends															
Elbow bends + theraband															
Shoulder W's															
Arm Circles or ABC's															
Shadow boxing															
IV. Neck and Shoulder															
Tilt head side to side															
Turn head side to side															
Chin Tucks															
Shoulder Shrugs															
Row your Boat															
V. Sitting															
Head tilt															
Head rotation															
Chin tuck															
Chin to chest															
Shoulder blade squeeze															
March															

The Exercises and all the suggestions in this handout should be used under the supervision and advice of your physician and/or your licensed physical therapist.