

Dealing With Bedrest

Most women are able to continue their usual activities while pregnant. For some pregnancy conditions, bedrest is a recommended treatment. Bedrest, either at home or in the hospital, can be challenging.

Tips for coping with bedrest and restricted activity

- Find out what your provider means by “bedrest.” Can you spend any time on your feet? If so, how much? Do you need to stay in a certain position, such as on your side or propped up? Can you use the bathroom, take a shower or be up for meals? Can you do some work from bed? What other activities can you do?
- Make arrangements. You may need to go on leave from your job, arrange childcare or check into disability pay.
- Call in extra help. Depending on what you can and can’t do, you might have to line up full-time childcare and find someone to fix meals, clean house, run errands and so on.
- Set up your room so things are in easy reach. This way, you won’t have to get out of bed to answer the phone or hunt for the TV remote, books, magazines, prescription medications, paper and pen, toiletries and hobbies such as crossword puzzles.
- Stick to a daily routine. Wake up at the same time each day. Plan activities to help you feel more in control.
- Eat right. Be sure to eat fruits and vegetables and drink lots of fluids. Lack of activity can bring on constipation. A healthy diet will help your body and your baby.
- Exercise. If your provider says it is OK, flex your muscles while in bed. It will help you relax and avoid stiffness. Ask your provider if it’s safe to try deep breathing, pelvic tilts, neck circles and Kegel exercises. If you can’t exercise, take some deep breaths every 20 minutes and wiggle your fingers and toes to help your blood circulate. Ask your provider for exercises that are safe for you.
- Let your family come to you. If you can’t join your partner at the table, for instance, have a “cozy” picnic in bed. If you have an older child, plan quiet activities that you can do together on the bed. Reading books, cutting out shapes and doing puzzles will help you spend quality time with your children.
- Shop from home. You can’t hit the mall to outfit your baby’s nursery, but you can stock up on items your little one will need. Send friends and family out with lists of items to pick up for you. Look through catalogs. If you have a computer or smartphone, you can buy baby gear online.
- Get some support. There are groups that put women on bedrest in touch with others who have had to do the same thing. Check with your provider or the case manager at the hospital.
- Accept your situation rather than fight it. Allow your partner, family and friends take care of you. Don’t feel guilty about the things you can’t do. Instead, focus on what you can do to help your baby.
- Keep your eyes on the prize. Staying in bed for days, weeks or even months is not easy. Think of the sacrifices you are making as an act of love for the child you are carrying.