Stress

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What is Stress? Stress is the way a person’s body and or mind reacts to feeling, frightened, confused, overwhelmed, irritated or in danger.

Everyone has weird feelings when they are stressed. There are lots of signs of stress — common types are physical (butterflies in your stomach), emotional (feeling sad or worried), behavioral (you don’t feel like doing things), and mental (you can’t concentrate). However, there are ways to manage this stress so that you can feel as best as possible.

WHAT IS LONG-TERM STRESS?
Being a mom and taking care of children, keeping up with the house, and having little sleep all can lead to long-term stress. Things like a headache, eating too much or not at all, tossing and turning all night, or feeling down and angry all the time, are all signs of long-term stress. These signs start when you just can’t deal with any more.

Long-term stress can affect your health and how you feel about yourself, so it is important to learn to deal with it. No one is completely free of stress and different people respond to it in lots of different ways. The most important thing to learn about long-term stress is how to spot it. You can do that by listening to your body signals and learning healthy ways to handle it.

Everyone feels stress at some point in life. Even joyful events like having a baby can be stressful. Postpartum women are usually under mental and physical stress up to 1 year after giving birth. New moms are trying to manage all the things they need to do to take care of themselves, their family and the baby, and their body is still recovering from giving birth. Sometimes stress gives us the get up and go to rise to the occasion and do the things we need to do.

WHAT YOU CAN DO
The most important thing to remember is that the time with your baby will fly. Before you know it, your baby will grow and no longer need you to change diapers or do night time feedings. Enjoy every moment with your baby! As long as your family is safe and healthy, everything else can wait. Don’t worry about things like having a spotless home.

Make a list of people with text and phone numbers that you know and trust will commit to help at a scheduled time to:

- Watch your baby while you sleep or rest
- Prepare meals
- Grocery shop
- Do household chores
- Help with laundry
- Take or pick up your other kids from school or practice
- Help with homework

Review the “Stress Busters” for more tips to help you handle stress. Trying some of these simple stress-busters can help you feel more focused and energized.
RESOURCES:

GETTING TO KNOW YOUR BABY VIDEO THAT FEATURES DR. JANE HENIG (A SPECIALIST IN BABY BEHAVIOR) AND A GROUP OF MOMS AND THEIR BABIES
vimeo.com/58647964

A GUIDE TO YOUR CHILD’S GROSS & FINE MOTOR DEVELOPMENT
brookshealth.org/motor-skills.pdf

HEADING HOME WITH YOUR NEWBORN; FROM BIRTH TO REALITY.

APPS:

THE BEST IPHONE APPS FOR PARENTS
parents.com/fun/entertainment/gadgets/the-best-iphone-apps-for-parents/

10 APPS FOR EASIER PARENTING
pbs.org/parents/childrenandmedia/article-ten-apps-for-easier-parenting.html

BLOGS:

PARENTS.COM: BLOGS A-Z
parents.com/blog/

VIDEO:

MARCH OF DIMES, NEW MOM STRESS
marchofdimes.org/pregnancy/new-mom-stress.aspx

LEARNING NOT TO STRESS OUT AS A NEW MOM
youtube.com/watch?v=Jt8F_iDBfl1

REFERENCES

Taking care of your baby outside of the womb is a lot different than being pregnant. It is normal for new parents to feel scared or insecure about taking care of their baby. Remember you are doing a great job and do your best to enjoy the precious moments with your baby.

**NEW BABY/PARENTING**

It’s normal that if you are a first time parent you might feel nervous or scared about handling the baby or figuring out what the baby needs. Don’t worry; you will get a lot of practice. Its normal that you will take your baby to the Doctor for check-ups (also called well-baby visits) about 6 times during the baby’s first year of life. This is a great opportunity to ask questions and get support for being a new parent.

If you notice yourself not wanting to, or being totally confused about what to do to take care of the baby ask a relative, partner, clergy, friend, trustworthy neighbor, doctor or nurse to help you. Most likely they have had children, and know what you are going through and what will help. If at any time you think the baby is sick, don’t wait until your appointment; call the doctor right away.

**WHAT YOU CAN DO**

- A great way to gain confidence and forge a bond with the baby as a new parent is to learn what your baby’s behavior means. Get to know your baby’s cues. Watch your baby and see if you can figure out how you know the baby is hungry. The next cue to look for is how do you know that baby is full? After you’ve solved those baby mysteries see if you can detect when the baby wants to be close to you.
- Do you feel like your baby is crying non-stop? See the table below for some tips.
- It’s very important to follow safe sleep guidelines for baby. Remember Baby sleeps best on his or her back.
- Remember to wash your hands when handling the baby and have visitors do the same to help keep your baby healthy as his or her immune system develops.
**WHAT DOES YOUR BABY DO TO TELL YOU HE/SHE IS HUNGRY, FULL, WANTS TO BE HELD, TIRED OR NEEDS SOMETHING?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BABY HUNGRY?</th>
<th>BABY FULL?</th>
<th>BABY WANT TO BE HELD?</th>
<th>BABY TIRED/NEED A CHANGE OF SCENE?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Hands in or near mouth</td>
<td>• Turn head away from nipple</td>
<td>• Baby calm &amp; relaxed</td>
<td>• Arch back &amp; look away</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Bend arms and legs</td>
<td>• Fall asleep</td>
<td>• Reach for you</td>
<td>• Stiffen hands, arms or legs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Make sucking sounds</td>
<td>• Push away</td>
<td>• Follow your voice or face</td>
<td>• Frown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Look for nipple</td>
<td>• Relax hands and arms</td>
<td>• Stare at you</td>
<td>• Yawn</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Once you start noticing your baby’s cues, you’ll be surprised at how good you get at figuring out what your baby needs. Building your confidence around how to respond to your baby will help you have a happier calmer baby and should greatly reduce new parent stress. As you get to know your baby, you will start to find ways that work for you to help calm your crying baby. Here are a couple common things people do to calm their baby. However, every baby is different and all of these may not work for everyone. Try a couple different methods until you find some things that work for you.

- **Motion**: Try rocking or gently swinging your baby.
- **Sounds**: Try sushing, humming, or singing to your baby in a soft voice to help calm them.
- **Massage**: Gently stroke your baby
- **Snuggle**: Try placing your baby skin to skin or put baby in a sling so they can feel close to you and hear your heartbeat. This mimics what they heard in the womb and may help soothe them.

- **Swaddle**: Wrapping baby in a warm, light blanket may help soothe them and help them sleep longer.
- **Hold them**: Try comforting your baby by laying him/her over your shoulder, or in your arms in a side or tummy down position. Use this only to calm them, never put a baby to sleep on their side or stomach. The safest sleeping position for a baby is on their back.
RESOURCES:

THE HAPPIEST BABY ON THE BLOCK
happiestbaby.com

A GUIDE TO YOUR CHILD’S GROSS & FINE MOTOR DEVELOPMENT
brookshealth.org/motor-skills.pdf

HEADING HOME WITH YOUR NEWBORN; FROM BIRTH TO REALITY.

VIDEO:
GETTING TO KNOW YOUR BABY VIDEO THAT FEATURES DR. JANE HENIG (A SPECIALIST IN BABY BEHAVIOR) AND A GROUP OF MOMS AND THEIR BABIES
vimeo.com/58647964

BABY MASSAGE
vimeo.com/92296345

APPS:
THE BEST IPHONE APPS FOR PARENTS
parents.com/fun/entertainment/gadgets/the-best-iphone-apps-for-parents/

10 APPS FOR EASIER PARENTING
pbs.org/parents/childrenandmedia/article-ten-apps-for-easier-parenting.html

BLOGS:
PARENTS.COM: BLOGS A-Z
parents.com/blog/

REFERENCES
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OTHER CHILDREN AT HOME

Having a new baby in the house could be hard for your other children to deal with, which will in turn increase your own stress. They may feel the effects of you having less time for them and “act out” by doing things the baby does that take your attention. For example other children may start crying more, forget they are toilet trained, or express anger towards you or the baby.

TIPS

• Schedule a nap date with your other children
• Involve other children in the care of the new baby

• Other children’s reaction to having a new baby in the house will vary depending on many different factors such as age, personality, or whether you are a 1 or 2 parent household.
• It is normal that other children might display anger or unhappiness at the changes in their home or that you have less time for them. They also may say things like “let’s take the baby back to the hospital.”
• It is not healthy for them to be physically aggressive towards you or the new baby.

WHAT YOU CAN DO?

There are things you can do to reduce the tension and stress levels of your other children, to reassure them and help them feel secure in their place in the family.

• Looking at photos and videos from when they were babies and talking about what they were like.
• Reading books.
• Having quiet cuddle time with them.
• Preparing and having a healthy snack with them and asking them questions about what was funny or good about their day.
• Allow the child to talk about his feelings regarding having a new sibling.
• You can also involve older children in the care of the new baby and explaining to them how important their help is.
• Ask for support from your adult family, friends, and partner. Ask them to schedule “special time” with other children. Ask them to help reinforce the child’s secure place in the family by engaging in any of the above activities or special outings.
• Look for books in your local library about having a new baby in the family.
RESOURCES:

FOR PARENTING IDEAS FOR CHILDREN OF ALL AGES SEE THE CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL WEBSITE - POSITIVE PARENTING TIPS

cdc.gov/ncbddd/childdevelopment/positiveparenting/index.html

ASK THE PARENT COACH: 7 WAYS TO HELP YOUR CHILD ADJUST TO A NEW BABY

huffingtonpost.com/2012/08/29/7-ways-to-help-your-child_n_1827506.html

HOW TO USE BOOKS TO PREPARE YOUR KIDS FOR A NEW SIBLING

scholastic.com/parents/blogs/scholastic-parents-raise-reader/how-to-use-books-to-prepare-your-kids-new-sibling

REFERENCES


Being a single mom can be very stressful. Single moms have to deal with issues and responsibilities alone that would otherwise be shared in a two-parent household. It’s normal to feel stressed over finances, mental health, and your baby’s needs. However, there are things single moms can do to help relieve the stress felt.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?
- Being active can help reduce stress and improve your confidence in managing whatever comes your way! See Physical Activity & Stress Buster sections for more information.
- Strive to set a regular feeding and bedtime routine with your baby (and other children if you have them). Establishing a regular routine is known to help maintain children’s health, behavior and sleep habits.
- Get help. Remember, it takes a strong person to have the courage to ask for help. Read the “Support System” section for information on where you can find help.
- Check out SingleMommie.com This website covers several topics concerning single mothers. Visit the website today and read this article: Top 5 Avoidable Stresses for a Single Mom (singlemommie.com/blog/top-5-stresses-for-a-single-mom/)
- Single moms often find it helpful to speak with a counselor, to go to family therapy, or to speak with a pastor in their congregation or church. Read the resource guide for more family counseling options.
- Home visitation programs are available to help single moms. To find a program near you, call 2-1-1 or visit 211la.org You can also look through our Resource Section to find other programs.

TIPS
- Form a system of support.
- Being physically active can help reduce stress.
- Establish a routine to help maintain children’s health and behavior.

Check out SingleMommie.com This website covers several topics concerning single mothers. Visit the website today and read this article: Top 5 Avoidable Stresses for a Single Mom (singlemommie.com/blog/top-5-stresses-for-a-single-mom/)
RESOURCES:

Home Visitation Programs:

HEALTHY FAMILIES AMERICA
healthyfamiliesamerica.org/home/index.shtml

NURSE-FAMILY PARTNERSHIP
nursefamilypartnership.org

PARENTS AS TEACHERS
parentsasteachers.org

BEST BABIES COLLABORATIVE/LA BEST BABIES NETWORK
staging.labestbabies.org/healthy-births-collaboratives/what-are-best-babies-collaboratives

PARENTING PROGRAM: TRIPLE P (POSITIVE PARENTING PROGRAM)
triplep.net/glo-en/home/

INFANT HEALTH PROGRAM
cdph.ca.gov/programs/BIH/Pages/default.aspx

LOS ANGELES CHILD GUIDANCE CLINIC
FIRST STEPS PROGRAM:
lacgc.org/programs_firststeps.htm

WELCOME BABY!
mchaccess.org/index.php

10 SIMPLE SOLUTIONS FOR THE TIME-STARVED SINGLE MOM
huffingtonpost.com/kerri-zane/10-tips-for-single-moms_b_3710201.html

APPS:

INTUITION+: MOM’S PERSONAL ASSISTANT
download.cnet.com/Intuition-Mom-s-Personal-Assistant/3055-2124_4-75829493.html?hlnkr=1

HOME ROUTINES
itunes.apple.com/US/app/id353117370?mt=8

WHAT’S FOR DINNER? RECIPE COOKBOOK AND SHOPPING LIST
itunes.apple.com/us/app/whats-for-dinner-recipe-cookbook/id376564038?mt=8

BLOOM
itunes.apple.com/US/app/id471389306?mt=8

EASY BUDGET APP
brainz.org/10-best-time-saving-apps-for-single-parents/

GAS BUDDY
play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=gbis.gbandroid&feature=related_ap
wiZ2Jpcc5nYmFvZHZvaWQiXQ
REFERENCES


BLOGS:

7 SURVIVAL TIPS FOR SINGLE PARENTS
babycenter.com/0_7-survival-tips-for-single-parents_10331331.bc

TOP 6 TIPS FOR SINGLE PARENTS
webmd.com/parenting/features/single-parents-tips

MS. SINGLE MAMA
mssinglemama.com

VIDEO:

PARENTING TIPS FOR SINGLE MOMS
youtube.com/watch?v=49a_rrBz5aQ

SINGLE MOTHERS CLUB
singlemothersbychoice.org/blog/

10 SINGLE MOM SECRETS
parenting.com/gallery/help-single-mothers

SINGLE MOMS SHARE THEIR STORY
incitesinglemoms.com/thehistoryofincite.htm
Getting enough sleep and having a good sleep schedule is as important to maintaining good health as eating healthy and being physically active. It is recommended that adults get 7-8 hours of sleep each night. Moms with newborns don’t usually sleep 7-8 hours straight because the baby needs to be fed every 2-3 hours. Studies show that even if you get 7-8 hours of sleep in every 24-hour period, broken sleep (such as sleeping 3 hours at a time) can leave you feeling sleep deprived, it can make it harder to lose weight, and it may increase your risk of having diabetes.

It’s normal to be tired and have your sleep interrupted with a new baby in the house. It’s NOT wise to refuse help with the baby. Having help will help you get enough sleep and to set a good sleep schedule.

WHAT YOU CAN DO
• If you are breastfeeding you can pump your breast milk one night per week and have your partner, friend, relative, or babysitter take over the night feedings. That way at least once per week, you can get 6-7 hours of uninterrupted sleep.
• Ask a friend or relative to come over in the day and watch the baby so you can nap.
• You can nap when the baby naps.
• Drink water, eat healthy foods, and walk throughout the day to get the energy you need to take care of yourself and the baby.
• Prep your bedroom to get you in the “mood” to sleep – make sure your bedroom is quiet, dark, and relaxing, with temperature that is not too hot or too cold.
• Only use your bedroom to sleep. Try not to watch TV or listen to music. Remove all TVs, computers, and other gadgets from the bedroom to avoid distractions.
• Avoid large meals before bedtime.
• Nap when the baby naps.
• Ask for help watching the baby so you can rest.
• Drink water, eat healthy foods, and walk throughout the day to get the energy you need.
RESOURCES:

COPING WITH STRESS

[link]

HANDLING STRESS

[link]

8 WAYS FOR NEW PARENTS TO GET MORE SLEEP

[link]

NEW PARENTS: GETTING THE SLEEP YOU NEED

[link]

YOUR SLEEP CYCLE REVEALED

[link]

HOW MUCH SLEEP DO I NEED?

[link]

10 TIPS TO IMPROVE SLEEP FOR NEW MOMS

[link]

APPS:

SLEEP CYCLE ALARM CLOCK

[link]

SLEEP

[link]

RELAX AND SLEEP WELL

[link]

SLEEPMAKER RAIN

[link]

SLEEPBOT

[link]
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BLOGS:

HELPING BABY SLEEP THROUGH THE NIGHT
pregnant.thebump.com/new-mom-new-dad/sleep-problems/articles/helping-baby-sleep-better.aspx

I READ ALL THE BABY SLEEP BOOKS
huffingtonpost.com/ava-neyer/i-read-all-the-baby-sleep-advice-books_b_3143253.html

VIDEO:

CAN POSTPARTUM DEPRESSION CONTRIBUTE TO A LACK OF SLEEP?
empowher.com/mental-health/content/can-postpartum-depression-contribute-lack-sleep-dr-bennett-video

THE SCIENCE OF MOM – SLEEP DEPRIVATION, THE DARK SIDE OF PARENTING
scienceofmom.com/2013/05/14/sleep-deprivation-the-dark-side-of-parenting/

YOU JUST NEED TO SLEEP! (OR IS SOMETHING ELSE WRONG?)
psychologytoday.com/blog/isnt-what-i-expected/201201/you-just-need-sleep-or-could-you-be-depressed

SLEEP RECOMMENDATIONS FOR A GOOD NIGHT’S REST
cbsnews.com/news/national-sleep-foundation-new-recommendations-for-good-nights-rest/

REFERENCES


INTIMATE RELATIONSHIPS

Having a new baby in the house may mean you have less time for your partner. If you are in an intimate relationship (have a spouse, partner, boyfriend or girlfriend) this may cause some stress between the two of you. Your partner may talk about feeling like you don’t spend enough time with him/her, or that all your attention is going to the baby.

A new mom may find herself not wanting to have sexual relations with her partner, even if she is medically cleared to do so. Some women are still experiencing pain and soreness from giving birth. Sometimes women have trouble balancing the roles of adult lover and mom. It’s important to talk with your partner about these issues and seek support from friends, family, or your doctor.

- It’s normal to try to discuss these issues with your partner and expect that each of you may have to compromise.
- It may be hard to find time to talk about these things, or to discuss them when you are tired and still experiencing physical discomfort. Do the best you can to carve out some time for your relationship, even a few minutes a day can make a difference.
- It is also normal to do things together as a family with the new baby such as walking in the park. This will help both of you enjoy being a family and get used to your new roles as both parents and partners.
- Also, if you live with your partner, family, or you are in an intimate relationship with someone who is around a lot it is normal to want them to help with chores around the house, even if before the baby you did it all.
- It’s normal to disagree about these things with your partner during this period of adjustment.
- It’s normal to wait a few weeks to have sex after having a baby. It’s important to wait at least 6 weeks for a vaginal delivery and 8 weeks for a c-section before having sex to give your body time to heal. You can have sex again when you’re ready.
- It’s not normal for the mother or child to be subject to physical, emotional or sexual abuse by a partner or family member.
WHAT YOU CAN DO

• It’s important to talk about how having a new baby in the house can disrupt relationships.

• It’s important to talk with your partner/family about how you can divide responsibilities to keep the household running. Having a daily list on the fridge with who is doing what today can be helpful when adjusting to new routines.

• Although having a new baby is tiring, it’s important to make small amounts of time to send a love text to your partner or family member, plan a date night, and discuss ways you can help each other have time together, and don’t forget to enjoy the baby together as well.

• Sometimes letting family members choose chores or rotating them helps reduce stress about getting things done.

RESOURCES:

SO CUTE, SO HARD ON A MARRIAGE, AFTER BABY, MEN AND WOMEN ARE UNHAPPY IN DIFFERENT WAYS; PUSHING PRE-EMPTIVE STEPS

online.wsj.com/news/articles/SB10001424052748704099704576288954011675900

HOW BECOMING PARENTS CAN AFFECT YOUR RELATIONSHIP

kidshealth.org/parent/positive/family/becoming_parents.html#

VIDEO:

MOMS SHARE INTIMACY STORIES AFTER HAVING A BABY

webmd.com/sleep-disorders/excessive-sleepiness-10/sleep-deprived-new-baby

HOW TO RESUME POSTPARTUM INTIMACY AFTER HAVING A BABY

kidsinthehouse.com/baby/health-and-fitness-mom/sleep-deprived-new-baby

REFERENCES


NEW MOM STRESS BUSTERS

If you are feeling stressed and overwhelmed from all your responsibilities as a new mother, try a couple stress busting techniques so you can feel better. Lowering your stress levels can help you feel more alert and energized while taking care of your baby.

1. LET IT GO - Realize that you don’t have to do everything. Don’t be afraid to ask for help and know how to recognize when you need a break. Don’t be afraid to leave some tasks for later and take a much-needed break. It’s ok to ask someone to help watch the baby for an hour so you can do something that makes you feel better.

2. DEEP BREATHING OR MEDITATION.
   • Take 5 minutes to yourself, set up a quiet uninterrupted space for yourself where you are comfortable.
   • Focus on your breathing
   • Try different meditating positions and choose the best one for yourself
   • Choose one object to focus on. Many people turn on a candle and focus on the flicker of the light. You can download meditation apps (healthline.com/health-slideshow/top-meditation-iphone-android-apps#16) on your smartphone or watch meditation video (youtube.com/watch?v=xoYnqvadurg).

3. YOGA. You don’t need any new equipment to do yoga. Just put on some comfy clothes and make a small space on the floor so you can have space to stretch completely. Check this out to see how to begin. You can also download apps (healthline.com/health-slideshow/top-meditation-iphone-android-apps#16) or watch this video (youtube.com/watch?v=xoYnqvadurg) to learn how to begin doing yoga to reduce your stress.

4. SHOWER. Put your baby in a swing by the bathroom door or shower while they are napping. Showering will help you feel refreshed, energized, and it can help reduce stress.

5. SUPPORT GROUP. Find a group near you. This is a great way to meet other moms with babies close in age with yours. They can relate to what you are feeling. Exchange advice on your stress busting techniques.

6. EXERCISE. Something as simple as a walk around the block or walking in place for 5 minutes can help clear your mind, give you energy, and reduce your stress level.

7. LAUGH A LITTLE. Laughing can help reduce your stress, watch something funny on TV or call a friend who you know always makes you laugh.

8. TALK ABOUT IT. Just telling someone that you are feeling stressed can make you feel better. Call someone you trust and tell them how you feel.

9. KEEP YOURSELF HEALTHY. Drink water, eat nutritious meals, and exercise. Living a healthy lifestyle can help reduce your stress and allow you to feel good.

10. PAMPER YOURSELF. Take some time to polish your nails, do your hair, or give yourself an at-home facial. This will help you feel more confident and energized.

TIPS

• Lowering your stress levels can help you feel more alert and energized.
• Deep breathing, meditation and yoga can help you relax.
• Keep healthy by drinking water, eating nutritious meals, and exercising.