

Sleep in pregnancy is essential for your health and your baby's development, but pregnancy-related changes to hormones, physical and mental stress can disrupt sleep during the three trimesters.

Waking through the night

Waking to use the toilet is a well-known part of pregnancy, and may well start during your first trimester.

You may be tempted to stop drinking before bed, but hydration is essential during pregnancy, so little drinks throughout the day are better. If lying awake and struggling to fall asleep becomes frustrating, use relaxation or distraction techniques like deep breathing, progressive muscle relaxation, and visualization to help you fall asleep. See our website for examples.

sleepaction.org/sleep-support/pregnancy/

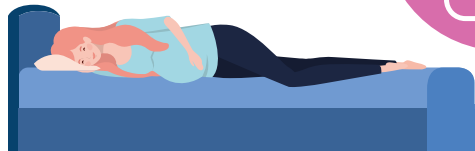
Sleep Position

NHS Scotland recommends sleeping on your side from 24 weeks¹, as sleeping on the back has been found to increase risk of stillbirth.

If you are a front or back sleeper, practice side sleeping several weeks before then to find a comfortable position. If you wake up on your back, simply reposition yourself back onto your side.

Side sleeping position from

24 weeks



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Sleep and Pregnancy

This resource can also be used after your baby is born.



Sleep Discomfort

Pain or difficulties getting comfortable as your baby grows are common.



Pain

If you experience pain in the hips or pelvis, a pregnancy pillow may help.

If there is still pressure on the hip, use a rolled-up towel or flat pillow to cushion your waist.



Heartburn²

Heavy meals too soon before bed can make this worse.

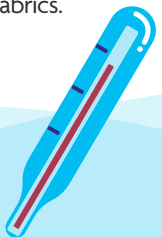
Eat earlier and avoid going to bed too soon after eating. Propping yourself up when you sleep can help too.



Temperature

When we sleep, our body expects a temperature drop.

If you wake feeling overheated, open a window, swap to a lighter cover, or wear looser bedclothes made of natural fabrics.



Restless Leg Syndrome (RLS)

You may experience an uncontrollable urge to move your legs while in bed, particularly during the third trimester. If you experience RLS pre-pregnancy, it may be exacerbated.

To alleviate symptoms, avoid going to bed unless you feel ready for sleep, exercise earlier in the day, avoid caffeine, and ensure adequate iron intake.³

Caffeine

NHS Scotland recommends limiting caffeine intake during pregnancy to 200mg per day³.

Limit caffeine consumption (including tea, coffee, hot chocolate, cola etc.) to earlier in the day as it can affect your ability to fall asleep.



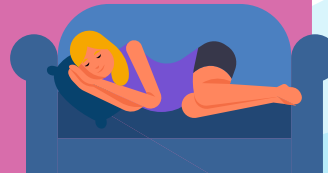
Naps

Napping can help manage fatigue during different stages of pregnancy.

Naps may be necessary during the first trimester due to fatigue, nausea, and sickness, but may be less needed during the second trimester.

Napping may become necessary again during the third trimester towards the end of your pregnancy.

Listen to your body; if you need a nap, have one. If you have your nap earlier in the afternoon, it is less likely to affect your night time sleep.



Snoring

Snoring can increase during pregnancy, impacting sleep quality.

Hormonal changes, swollen nasal passages, and weight changes from your growing body and baby can affect breathing during sleep.

Ask your bed partner to take note if a change in sleep position helps, for example: Pregnancy pillows include a pillow for your head, but if using that exacerbates snoring, removing it may help.



Sleep Apnoea

If you are gasping for a breath or snorting through the night, speak with your midwife as it could be an indication of a more serious medical condition called sleep apnoea.



1. NHS Scotland guidance around bump-friendly sleep <https://www.parentclub.scot/articles/going-sleep-your-side>
2. NHS Scotland guidance on common symptoms <https://www.nhsinform.scot/ready-steady-baby/pregnancy/health-problems-in-pregnancy/common-problems-in-pregnancy/>
3. NHS Scotland guidance on foods to avoid <https://www.nhsinform.scot/ready-steady-baby/pregnancy/looking-after-yourself-and-your-baby/eating-well-in-pregnancy>