



# 8 Tips for EMOTIONAL & SOCIAL before, during, & after pregnancy

Sometimes when we think of self-care we think about pampering ourselves, like getting manicures or massages. Basic self-care, though, is different; it's really more like brushing our teeth – something small we do every day that's preventative. There's no time like before, during, and after pregnancy to do the little things needed to take care of our physical, emotional, and psychological well-being. It's not just good for you, but it's great for your baby also! Here are 12 tips for prioritizing your emotional and social self-care before, during, and after your pregnancy.

- 1. Making rest a priority** helps you get it every chance you can. If you are tired, you're not thinking clearly and your mood as well as decision-making skills will likely suffer. When the baby sleeps, you should sleep. The other things you think you *must* do...they *must* wait. Rest comes first.
- 2. Eating can make or break us** as the foods and drinks we consume affect our bodies, brains, and moods for good or bad. Sugary snacks or treats give a quick high and sense of comfort, but quickly leave us exhausted or jittery. Eat as colorful a meal as you can with veggies, fruit, and protein to help you heal and recover.
- 3. Training our bodies heals as our minds** as both are intricately connected. You don't have to be a pro-athlete. And really, you don't have to do anything big. Just moving your body helps you recover from childbirth and rewires your brain and hormones as they try to get back to normal. Walk the dog, dance to the radio, or do some gardening.
- 4. Making fun plans gives you something to look forward to** while you're working to manage all the other hassles and tasks that keep you so busy. Even the smallest of things like planning for a cup of tea and watching Netflix, meeting a friend for lunch, or going to a local game or play gives you something to keep you motivated.
- 5. Bonding with your partner and not just the baby** is both helpful in keeping you grounded, and also in ensuring the baby is developing a healthy relationship with *both* parents. This kind of engagement with *both* parents during infancy makes your child more likely to be physically and mentally healthy and resilient.
- 6. Talking with your partner on how you plan to parent** can prevent all kinds of stressors and identify areas that you might need to think about differently or make a plan to address ahead of time. Seek out a counselor or therapist if you don't know where to start or find it difficult to have the conversation in a healthy way.
- 7. Asking your community for support is worth it**, even if you feel strange or guilty reaching out. Friends, family, church members, and even neighbors often want to help but don't know how. You're actually offering those who love you a meaningful way to help and even provide you some grown-up company in the process. Ask for help with the laundry or making a few meals, and use it as a chance to give them time with the baby and time with you.
- 8. Talking to your doctor about your mood around your pregnancy** is very important. Everything you are feeling has been new and unusual, so you may not realize what you are feeling is outside the norm. Experiencing intrusive panic, racing thoughts, desires to either completely ignore or harm the baby or yourself—these don't mean you're a bad mom; they mean you are dealing with pregnancy-related mental health issues and your doctor can help.

Call us. Help is here. 1.800.372.8297

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