

Taking Care of Yourself

Looking after a baby or babies, can be a very exhausting, relentless and thankless job, especially following a difficult pregnancy, difficult road to pregnancy or problems in labour. The first few weeks are particularly tough for parents as not only have you got a small baby to take care of around the clock, you have also had to adjust to the changes that parenthood creates. Tiredness, worry and stress tend to increase in a way that you may not have experienced before.

In order to be able to look after your little one as best as you can, it is also important that you take care of yourself!!!! A baby needs a parent or carer to survive and develop, so it is important that you are there for them as much as you can be. It is perfectly normal to feel tired and unable to cope. However, there are certain things you can do to help alleviate these feelings.

So what can you do? In order to help your baby, it is vital that you help yourself also...

- Get some extra sleep when you can, whether this is when your baby is napping or if your partner or someone else can take over for a while.
- Make sure that you wash/shower/bath every day, so that you feel clean and refreshed for the day ahead.
- Try to avoid spending every day in pyjamas!
- Make sure you eat regularly and healthily. Try to drink up to 2 litres of water a day.
- Talk to others. Tell people around you if you are struggling or if you feel you need help. It's OK to ask others for assistance.
- Take some regular exercise. This might be as simple as daily walks with your baby or being able to join in an exercise class. Being active helps to improve your mood and helps with confidence.
- Meet with people. This might be visiting old friends or making new ones, attending play groups, seeing family etc. Parenthood can initially be quite a lonely time for many new parents. Social interaction is very important and can help with depression. Don't isolate yourself!
- Speak to your GP, Health Visitor or seek psychological support, if you feel you need to confide in someone about how you feel and may not feel comfortable to talk to those around you.
- Don't forget who you are!!! Try to make time for yourself – this might include relaxing, reading, hobbies, pampering, watching a film, baking, seeing friends. Becoming a parent, does not mean you stop being a person too!!!!