



## Coping strategies when you have a new baby

A new baby can really test your strength and ability to cope under stress, especially when you are not getting enough sleep. It is really important that over this time you continue doing some of the things you use to do before the baby came into your world. This will ensure you have some familiarity and normality EVERY DAY. Simply having a shower on your own or reading for 20 minutes can make or break a day. Have a talk with your partner or close friend or family about how this can happen – maybe you can shower before your partner leaves the house for work or get a friend to pop in and while they are there ask them to watch the baby while you take a quick walk to the shops for a coffee. In the early days these mini breaks are really important so make them a priority if you can.

Other activities that can be really helpful with a newborn are going for a swim/walk/yoga session or getting your partner or friend to take the baby for a walk. Babies love the continuous movement and it gets you outside or gives you a chance to lie on the couch with a cup of tea for a bit.

Other coping tools that people with newborns have turned to:

- » Writing; journaling your experience can be really therapeutic.
- » Logging; keeping a record of your babies eating, sleeping and feeding habits is useful, as this may highlight a pattern that could make things easier especially when someone else helps out with the baby.
- » Blogging or using social media to connect with other people in the same situation – this can give you a sense of connection with others going through the same experience. Just be careful of information overload, and the fact that some people may not have the same values you do!
- » Putting your feet up and talking to friends on the phone, especially if you are having a bad day.
- » Having a family member come over at a planned set time every week (ideally every few days to give you an hour to yourself). You will love the break and your friend/family will love helping out.
- » Look up which cinemas have what they call ‘cry-baby’ sessions where you can take the baby in.
- » Start making meals in larger batches so you always have spare in the fridge or freezer.
- » If you have a partner talk with them, hug them and importantly, LAUGH with them and share the experience. Tell them what they can do to help and ask them what you can do – everyone is different.
- » If things are really bad and you are feeling really down – get some counselling. Even just a couple of sessions can provide a different perspective.