

# Self-Care Plan

When you're pregnant or have a baby, your life can feel very different. It's normal to feel overwhelmed, stressed, or sad. It can be tough to deal with problems when you're feeling down and low on energy. Creating a self-care plan can be helpful for taking care of yourself and your baby's needs.



- 1. Simple goals and small steps.** Break your goals down into small steps and give yourself credit for each step you finish.



- 2. Make time for pleasurable activities.** Commit to scheduling a simple and enjoyable activity each day.

Things I find pleasurable include:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

During this week, I will spend at least \_\_\_\_\_ minutes doing (choose one or more activities to try):

\_\_\_\_\_



- 3. Stay physically active.** Make time to move your body and be active, even if it's only a few minutes.

During this week, I will spend at least \_\_\_\_\_ minutes doing (write in ways you'll be active):

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



- 4. Ask for help.** Look to the people in your life who may help you – for example, your partner, your parents, other relatives, your friends.

People I can ask to help me:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

During this week, I will ask at least \_\_\_\_\_ person/people for help.



- 5. Talk or spend time with people who can support you.** Explain to friends or loved ones how you feel. If you can't talk about it, that's OK – you can still ask them to be with you or join you for an activity.

People I find supportive:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

During this week, I will contact (name/s):

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

And try to talk with them \_\_\_\_\_ times.



6. **Belly breathing** is about breathing in a certain way that triggers your body's natural calming response.
- » Begin by slowly bringing your breath to a steady, even pace.
  - » Focus on breathing in from the very bottom of your belly, almost as if it's from your hips/pelvis.
  - » See if you can breathe in a way that makes your belly stick out on the in-breath and deflate totally on the out-breath. Your chest and shoulders should stay quite still. It's all about breathing with your belly.
  - » Any amount of time you can find to do this can help. Aim to practice for 10–15 minutes at least 2x/day.



7. **Mindful breathing** helps bring awareness into the present moment using our body's natural rhythm of breath. Bring your attention to your own natural rhythm of breath.
- » Notice physical sensations with breathing, such as the textures of clothing, feet on floor, or movement of your body.
  - » When your mind offers a distraction, notice it and bring your attention back to the physical sensation of natural breath. Try and notice the temperature of the in-breath and out-breath. Notice the precise moment in the rhythm where an in-breath becomes an out-breath.
  - » Practice this when you feel like you could use some present-moment grounding.



8. **Sleep is a very important part of self-care.** Here are some tips to help you sleep better at night:
- » Watch how much caffeine you take in. Caffeine stays in the body for 10–12 hours. Consider limiting coffee, tea, soda, chocolate, and energy drinks – and setting a cutoff point during the day (such as lunchtime) to stop drinking or eating caffeine.
  - » Set a routine. Set regular times for going to bed and waking up, even if you slept poorly the night before. Set up a relaxing routine 1–2 hours before bed where you do something calming and limit your exposure to electronics and light. Getting into a routine will train your body to prepare for sleep near bedtime.
  - » Keep the bedroom mellow. Only use your bed for sleep and sexual activity. This helps your body link the bed with sleep rather than other things that keep you awake. Keep your bedroom dark and cool and move your clock to prevent you from constantly checking it throughout the night.

