

Ways to keep feeling well after the birth of your baby

It's very normal to feel overwhelmed when your baby arrives, particularly as you're very likely to be getting less sleep. You may feel other pressures and stresses, as well, such as new feelings of responsibility for your baby, money worries and changes to your relationships. This could be with a partner, a family member, friends or other children, if you have any.

Here are some tips to help you stay feeling well:

- 1. Keep talking to your family and friends** - be open about how you're feeling rather than keeping it inside.
- 2. Remember most new parents feel very tired and need support** - it's normal for babies to keep waking for feeds and cuddles; they love to be near you. This means most new parents will experience tiredness. If you're feeling low or anxious, as well, lack of sleep can make everything seem worse and more difficult to cope with. Try wearing your baby in a sling and sleeping with them in the same room. This can help make them feel more secure and comforted and therefore more settled. Can you think of someone you could ask for help so that you can get more rest? Or, could you try to rest when your baby naps? It can help to talk to your partner or family members about how you feel (you could show them the MindWell website) and discuss with them how they can support you to catch up on sleep. You can find more info about sleep and tiredness here:
www.nhs.uk/conditions/pregnancy-and-baby/pages/sleep-and-tiredness.aspx
- 3. Be social** - some new mums can feel isolated or lonely, so try to keep in touch with other parents that you have met at groups like Preparation for Birth and Beyond, or join a new group at your local Children's Centre. Sharing experiences with other people who are going through the same thing can make a huge difference.
<https://familyinformation.leeds.gov.uk/families/preparation-for-birth-and-beyond>
<https://familyinformation.leeds.gov.uk/childrens-centres>
- 4. Download the free Baby Buddy app** - it can act as your personal baby 'bubby' guiding you through your pregnancy and the first six months of your baby's life. Baby Buddy was developed by a charity called Best Beginnings with the help of mums, partners, midwives and GPs. You can view films of families from Leeds talking about their emotional health and their experiences as new parents and parents-to-be.
 - You can read the app's privacy policy and terms of use at:
www.bestbeginnings.org.uk/babybuddy-privacypolicy
 - You can download the app free from Google Play or from the App Store.

● There is also a web version of Baby Buddy which you can find at:
<https://web.bestbeginnings.org.uk/web/lets-get-started>

5. **Don't be afraid to ask for help with breastfeeding** - keeping up with your baby's needs can feel demanding and sometimes overwhelming. All babies, whether breast or formula-fed, need to be fed when they need it (sometimes called 'fed responsively' or 'on-demand') which can be quite often. If you are breastfeeding and would like extra support there are groups and specialist support available for you. Find out more at: www.leeds.gov.uk/docs/Breastfeeding%20support%20groups.pdf
6. **Try not to put too much pressure on yourself** - some new mums feel like they are failing if they struggle to keep on top of everything in the house. Being a new mum with new responsibilities will mean that you won't be able to do everything, though some women find this difficult to adjust to. Try to accept help from others with things like cooking and washing if possible.
7. **Try to eat a well-balanced diet** with plenty of water and cut down on caffeine. www.mindwell-leeds.org.uk/eat-healthy
8. **Avoid smoking and drinking** - there's support to stop smoking available from One You Leeds and help with alcohol difficulties at Forward Leeds: <https://oneyouleeds.co.uk/be-smoke-free/>
www.forwardleeds.co.uk/getting-help/support-for-families/
9. **Try to get outside for a change of scene and do some gentle exercise as often as you can** - this is helpful for your own wellbeing and good for your baby. Join a social walking group like Ready Steady Mums. You can find more information at <http://www.rsmleeds.co.uk/>
10. **Take time to relax** - try some different relaxation or breathing techniques and **practise mindfulness** - a technique which can help to bring our attention back from worrying, or thinking too much, to the present moment. www.mindwell-leeds.org.uk/breathing
www.mindwell-leeds.org.uk/be-mindful