

Sleep during pregnancy

During your pregnancy, you will be coping with many changes, which may also **impact your sleep**. Sleep is a vital function that is necessary to our well-being, and we spend close to one-third of our lives sleeping. It is a reversible behavioral state which, alternating with a state of wakefulness, establishes the pattern of our daily lives. Sleep consists in several stages (light, deep and paradoxical) which form a cycle that repeats itself throughout the six- to eight-hour resting period until you wake up¹.

Most pregnant women experience a **decrease in the quality and duration of their sleep**. This phenomenon usually intensifies as the pregnancy progresses. During the **first trimester**, a sensation of fatigue sets in and you might feel the need to **nap** during the day. This is due to the overwhelming hormonal changes taking place in your body. In particular, higher levels of progesterone produce a soporific effect. However, sleep becomes less restorative and may be disrupted by minor discomforts relating to the pregnancy.

During the **second and third trimesters** especially, the amount of sleep you get will gradually diminish. In addition to sleep disturbances induced by the pregnancy, **increased wakefulness at night** may be caused by the moving fetus and uterine contractions combined with a more frequent need to urinate, occasional cramps and difficulty breathing due to the growing size of your baby. The closer you get to your due date, the more anxious you may feel, which does nothing to improve the quality of your sleep¹.

You can find **relief for all of these issues by changing your habits**. Solutions include reducing your work load, taking longer breaks throughout the day and having dinner earlier. If these steps are not enough, **behavioral therapies** such as relaxation, yoga, sophrology, acupuncture and homeopathy can help¹.

If you still can't get relief or if your situation worsens, do not self-medicate. Instead, **contact your doctor** for advice.

¹ <https://dumas.ccsd.cnrs.fr/dumas-01394080/document> Paulovic J., Les troubles du sommeil et la grossesse. Mémoire pour le Diplôme d'État, Académie de Paris - Ecole de Sages-femmes Saint Antoine - Université Pierre et Marie Curie - Faculté de Médecine