

Making the Most of Bed Rest

Bed rest can help control your blood pressure and may help keep your heart from beating too fast. If your heart rate slows down, less blood will be pumped into your arteries which helps keep your blood pressure stable. As long as your blood pressure remains mild, you can take care of it outside of the hospital. It can quickly get worse, so you must follow your doctor's orders very carefully. Bed rest is beneficial for women who are in preterm labor or who have preterm premature rupture of membranes (PPROM). The items listed below may help you make the most of bed rest.

■ **Most Important: Stay in Bed**

Bed rest means lying quietly in a dark room with very little noise or activity. You should never lie on your back. This will help increase the blood flow to your baby. Leave your bed only to go to the bathroom.

■ **Get Help**

Ask your family and friends to help by getting meals, doing the laundry, shopping and cleaning. If you have young children, ask a family member or friend to babysit. This can be a special time for children if you can call it a "vacation."

■ **Do What You Can**

Being in bed doesn't mean that you can't do anything. You can still plan meals, read, watch TV or work a crossword puzzle. Any activity is fine, as long as you lie in bed, on a couch, or in a recliner and the action does not cause excitement or stress.

■ **The Bottom Line**

Staying in bed is hard when you're used to being active, but it is worth it. Follow your doctor's orders closely. This can increase your chances of having a healthy baby.



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