



Bed Rest Guidelines

Helping you have a healthy baby

If your doctor has put you on either “modified” or “strict” bed rest while you are pregnant, here are important instructions for you to follow.

Why do I need bed rest?

Lying on your side in bed increases the flow of blood to your uterus. This relaxes your uterus, which helps decrease contractions.

Can I still take childbirth classes?

Check with your doctor about attending a class, if you can use the floor or a lounge chair to lie on your side during class. Limit practicing to relaxation and birth techniques. Do **not** exercise or practice “pushing.” Ask your doctor about educational videos.

Is it safe to have sex while on bed rest?

While you are on bed rest:

- Do **not** do any nipple or breast preparation.
- Do **not** become sexually stimulated.
- Do **not** douche.
- Put **nothing** in your vagina unless prescribed by your doctor.
- Be open to enhancing your relationship in nonsexual ways. Try hugging, cuddling, and back, foot, or scalp massage.

What about my partner’s needs?

A high-risk pregnancy with activity restrictions is stressful for the entire family. Your partner may feel overwhelmed at times, especially if there are already children in the household to take care of. To help ease their stress, partners can:

- Talk with friends when things are difficult.
- Find support groups where they can talk with others who have also had a high-risk pregnancy.

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Questions?

Your questions are important. Call your doctor or health care provider if you have questions or concerns. UWMC clinic staff are also available to help.

Maternity and Infant Center: 206-598-4616

What can I do while I'm on bed rest?

This table explains what you can and cannot do while on either modified or strict bed rest.

Activity	When on Modified Bed Rest	When on Strict Bed Rest
Using the toilet	Use the toilet as usual. Emptying your bladder often can help decrease uterine irritability.	Spend only short times on the toilet. Emptying your bladder can help decrease uterine irritability.
Showering and bathing	Bathe or shower for daily hygiene or to relax. Bath water temperature should not be above 100°F (37.8°C).	Take only quick, short daily showers.
Food preparing, eating and drinking	Prepare only simple foods. Eat very nutritious foods. Drink 6 to 8 full glasses of fluids a day. Sitting at the table for meals is OK.	Do not prepare food. Eat very nutritious foods. Drink 6 to 8 full glasses of fluids a day. To eat lying down, raise your head by propping an arm under your head. Keep the tray or dishes very close. Have your family join you for at least 1 meal every day.
Housework	Do only light housework such as simple dusting, dishes, and light laundry. Do not vacuum, clean the floor, or work in the garden.	Do not do any housework. Try reading, TV, radio, videos, phone calls, and handicrafts.
Traveling	Take only short trips.	Travel only as needed for doctor visits.
Walking	Walk only as needed for essential activities of daily living.	Avoid walking as much as possible. Arrange for your bed to be near the bathroom. Move your ankles and do range-of-motion exercises while you are in bed.
Stairs	Use stairs only once a day, as needed from your bedroom.	Do not use stairs. Arrange for your bed to be on the same floor as the bathroom.
Lifting	Do not lift anything over 10 pounds. Lift only with help. Do not hold or carry objects for a long time.	No lifting at all.

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