SLEEP AND STRESS

A sleep-deprived, stressed body is NOT in a good position to **prepare for birth.**

Emotional stress and **physical stress** is often linked to poor diet, drinking the wrong things, not staying hydrated and not getting enough sleep. This then triggers the stress hormone **cortisol** to release **glucose** from the liver into the blood stream. Getting adequate rest is a necessary step in stopping this negative cycle.

TIPS FOR GETTING A GOOD NIGHTS SLEEP

Here are 10 Top Tips For Getting a Good Nights Sleep:

1. **Maintain a consistent daily schedule** – Your body needs to learn when it's in sleep mode and awake mode, and the best way to do this is to go to bed at the same time, and wake up at the same time each day.

2. **Reduce caffeine intake** – Avoiding caffeine altogether is best really if you're struggling to get to sleep. Caffeine is a stimulant and plays havoc with your sleep cycle and makes it harder for you to nod off the more you consume it.

3. **Turn off the computer/television/tablet/mobile** – The bright light/backlighting associated with laptops, tablets and mobile phones these days doesn't send you off to sleep, they stimulate your brain, so keep them switched off when you're in your bedroom.

4. **Don't go to bed on a full stomach** – Your digestive system needs time to process your food, and if you eat too close to bed time, it's actually quite dangerous, particularly if you have any heart conditions.

5. **Read fiction** – Reading fiction is a means of escape for a lot of people and a great way of settling you off to sleep. Choose books that are easy to read and ones that you enjoy. Keep text books and work reports out of the bedroom.

6. **Engage in regular exercise** – The benefits of exercise are numerous, and studies definitely show there's a link between engaging in regular exercise ending in a better nights sleep.

7. **Get out in the fresh air** – Take a walk or get out in the fresh air at some point during the day. Not only does it stimulate your senses, it tires you and baby out too.

8. **Keep your bedroom dark and quiet** – Invest in some black out blinds, install double-glazing and/or wear an eye mask. You'll look like a superhero and wake up like one too.

9. **Invest in a comfortable mattress, pillow and bedding** – The more comfortable you are, the better chance you have of catching some zeds. If your mattress and pillows are old and lumpy, the more your neck and back will suffer.

10. **Go to sleep and wake up using your internal alarm clock** – Not always possible if you work set hours or shifts (why do you think I'm self-employed?!), but it makes sense to allow yourself to wake up naturally, doesn't it, so you're not rushing around and/or adding stress to your day.