

Bed rest recommendations for moms-to-be not always best

January 19 2011



For moms-to-be facing complicated pregnancies, a prescription to get some rest might be just what the doctor ordered—but it might not be the healthiest practice for pregnant women and their babies.

According to Judith Maloni, a professor at the Frances Payne Bolton School of Nursing at Case Western Reserve University, [bed rest](#) carries physical and psychological risks of its own. Doctors recommend bed rest for nearly 1 million [pregnant women](#) every year for complications that range from early contractions to high blood pressure to bleeding. Recommendations also vary, from simply taking it easy to actually being confined to a bed or couch for all or most of the day.

Studies have shown that remaining in a resting position can lead to bone loss and muscle atrophy, according to Maloni. She also says the strictest

bed rest guidelines—where an expectant mother is confined to bed for nearly 24 hours a day—cause more severe side effects and can lead to depression and anxiety as mothers worry over every contraction.

Maloni's findings were published in a special women's health issue of *Biological Research for Nursing*, and she says more evidence is needed to determine if bed rest is best for mother and baby.

"Nurses can challenge bed-rest treatment by functioning as advocates for [women](#) and educating them about the evidence for bed-rest treatment as well as the risks and benefits," she says.

Provided by Case Western Reserve University

Citation: Bed rest recommendations for moms-to-be not always best (2011, January 19) retrieved 24 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2011-01-bed-rest-moms-to-be.html>

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