

# I'm. So. Tired.

Category: Fatigue

written by Jessica Faraci | September 2, 2020

Tired doesn't even begin to describe it, actually. Exhaustion. Weariness. A deep, gut-wrenching physical ache that fogs my brain and fills my body with despair. I can feel the ache arise somewhere in the vicinity of my stomach, worm its way past my heart, and drive deep into my forehead. I close my eyes and imagine the bliss of sleep.

I'm so tired.

A small cry breaks the silence of the night, and I open my eyes. Before me lie my newborn twins, identical girls born a month early. They are two weeks old, finally out of the hospital, gaining weight. But this also means cluster feeding and pumping as I supplement their premature attempts at breastfeeding.

The cry grows louder, and her sister starts to whimper. I sit up and exhale, driving the fog out of my mind. I feel a surge of resentment towards my babies. All I need is sleep. Why can't they give that to me? Even just one hour would be heaven. But their cries grow louder, and I have a job to do. I settle them on my lap, grabbing two bottles I pumped twenty minutes ago. They quickly suck it down, and my emotions swirl, unchecked. *Pride*: I am breastfeeding twins, albeit by pump. *Anger* that the last hour of pumping and washing dishes could be ingested this quickly. And *despair*, thinking of the long night still ahead of me.

In all of my night shifts and twenty-four-hour call in residency, I had never experienced sleep deprivation like this. I thought I was prepared. After all, what could be harder than residency? I had my answer: having twins in residency. I have six weeks of paid maternity leave, which feels like a joke with premature twins. You would think a medical institution would understand the benefits of longer maternity leave. Residency is a rigid system, but I would gladly return to work today if it meant more sleep.

I burp my girls and lay them back in their bassinet. Luckily they do not cry, and I have time to go to the bathroom, pump and wash dishes. By the time I'm done an hour has passed, and I know I have another ten minutes until they want to feed again. I lie down and close my eyes, feeling fatigue wash over me. But before blissful sleep has a chance to embrace me, I hear the twins start to stir again. My stomach sinks, and a tear falls down my cheek.

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