



Common Discomforts in Pregnancy

Following are things you can do to relieve some of the common discomforts in pregnancy as well as symptoms to watch for.

Back Pain

- Heat or ice (see which one is more effective for you)
- Massages, physical therapy and chiropractic adjustments are safe during pregnancy
- Pregnancy support belts (more info available at our clinic)
- Tylenol/Acetaminophen
- Ask the midwife about back exercises that may be helpful
- CALL if it doesn't improve, or if you have abdominal cramping, contractions, spotting or fever

Cold and Flu

- Drink lots of fluids and rest
- Consider increasing your Vitamin C intake (not to exceed 1000 mg during first trimester)
- Try a humidifier in your room to make breathing easier
- Tylenol/Acetaminophen for headache; Tylenol-Cold, Phenylephrine (only after 12 weeks of pregnancy) for congestion
- Frequent hand washing to avoid infecting others
- CALL if you have a fever of 100.4°F or higher, chills, fatigue, body aches, or you think you may have been exposed to an infection other than a routine cold

Constipation

- Increase fiber – bran cereal, oatmeal, raw fruits/veggies, prunes, prune juice, “Uncle Sam’s” breakfast cereal with flax seed
- Fiber supplements – Metamucil, Citrucel or Fiber Con (must be taken with 8 oz. of water)
- Increase fluid intake and daily exercise
- Milk of Magnesia or stool softeners twice a day (Docusate Sodium/Colace) if symptoms don't improve
- CALL if symptoms do not improve or you develop abdominal or rectal pain



Cough

- Drink lots of fluids
- Tea with honey
- Cough drops
- Robitussin (DM) or similar cough medicine
- CALL if cough is productive, you have a fever of 100.4°F or greater, or cough is so severe you are unable to sleep at night

Diarrhea

- Increase fluids, avoid milk products
- Try the BRAT diet (Bananas, Rice, Applesauce, Toast)
- Avoid spicy and greasy foods
- CALL if unresolved within 24hrs

Dizziness

- If you get dizzy, lie down, preferably on your left side until the feeling passes or, if sitting, try putting your head down between your knees)
- To prevent dizziness, drink more liquids and eat small frequent meals
- Move slowly when getting up from lying down and sitting positions
- CALL if occurs multiple times daily or you lose consciousness (“pass out”)

Gas

- Common in pregnancy due to the hormonal changes causing slowed digestion in pregnancy
- Gas-X
- CALL if you experience persistent unexplained abdominal pain

Headache

- Alternate warm and cold compresses
- Rest, relaxation and massage
- Tylenol (Acetaminophen) – start with two regular strength; can take up to 1000 mg every eight hours
- AVOID Aspirin and Ibuprofen (Advil) products
- To prevent headaches, increase your water intake to at least 8–10 cups per day
- CALL if unrelieved by usual remedies or if you have visual changes



Heartburn

- Avoid spicy or fried foods
- Try avoiding carbonated beverages
- Eat smaller, more frequent meals
- Do not lie down within 2 hours after eating
- TUMS tablets or liquid Mylanta
- CALL if heartburn pain persists despite above measures or is associated with other symptoms

Hemorrhoids

- Avoid constipation (see recommendations on p. 13) and straining with bowel movements
- Warm water soaks (in tub) for 20 minutes twice a day may help
- Tucks pads
- Anusol HC cream (requires prescription)
- CALL if you have significant rectal pain or bleeding

Insomnia (difficulty sleeping)

- Warm baths, relax with soft music; massages
- Sleepytime tea or warm milk before bed
- Try sleeping on your side with a pillow to support your knees and hip joints
- Sleep in any position that is comfortable for you, but in late pregnancy if you prefer sleeping on your back, place a pillow under your side to tilt your uterus to the side
- Benadryl or Unisom (25 mg) on occasion may help if you have difficulty falling asleep
- CALL if you have several nights when you are unable to sleep

Muscle Cramps

- Increase fluid intake
- Wear comfortable shoes
- Stretching exercises – try flexing your toes toward your head
- CALL if you have severe pain in your legs

Nausea/Vomiting (“morning sickness”)

- Try small frequent meals, bland diet, avoid spicy/greasy foods
- Crackers, dry toast, hard candy, plain popcorn, or dry cereal
- Sea Bands acupressure bracelet (available over the counter)
- Dry toast or crackers before getting out of bed in the morning
- Vitamin B6 – take 50 mg 2-4 times/day (do not take more than 200 mg each 24 hours)
- CALL the office or midwife on call if you are regularly vomiting more than two times a day, or have more than 5 lbs of weight loss, despite these remedies



Nose Congestion or Nosebleeds

This is often a normal symptom in pregnancy. If you need relief, try:

- Saline solution (Ocean Spray, Salinex)
- Cool mist vaporizer (run while sleeping)
- After 12 weeks of pregnancy you may try phenylephrine
- CALL if you have allergy-related congestion or unresolved symptoms

Nerve Pain (Sciatic Nerve)

- Sleep with a pillow between your knees, don't cross legs while sitting, rest with an ice pack on the affected hip
- A support belt, physical therapy, chiropractic adjustments, massage, and acupuncture may improve your symptoms
- CALL if your symptoms persist or you have severe pain

Sore Throat

- Warm salt water gargles
- Tea with honey
- Sore throat lozenges
- Tylenol / Acetaminophen (start with two regular strength – can increase to 1000mg every 8 hours if needed)
- CALL if pain does not subside with treatment or have fever or difficulty breathing

Spotting

- Spotting can commonly occur, especially early and late in pregnancy. It is especially common after sexual intercourse. CALL right away if you have any more than light spotting.

Swelling

- Swelling in your legs is very common at the end of pregnancy, and usually normal
- Stay cool, especially in the summer
- Soak in a cool tub or pool
- Elevate your legs and avoid long periods of sitting or standing in the same position
- Try maternity support hose
- Avoid salty foods and drink more water
- CALL if swelling is one-sided, increases suddenly, is painful or is associated with other symptoms of concern



Tooth Pain or Bleeding Gums

- Rinse your mouth frequently with warm salt water
- Brush more often with a SOFT toothbrush and floss daily
- See your dentist for a check-up as soon as possible
- Tylenol/Acetaminophen (start with two regular strength – can increase to 1000mg every 8 hours if needed)

Urinary Tract Infection (UTI, Bladder infection)

- Signs may include pain/burning with urination, blood in the urine, sudden increase in frequency of needing to urinate
- You can help prevent UTIs by drinking at least 64 oz. (8 cups) of water each day and by emptying your bladder after intercourse
- Untreated UTIs can result in kidney infections or preterm labor
- CALL if you have any signs of a UTI

Varicose Veins

- Maternity support hose or an abdominal support belt may be helpful
- Avoid standing for prolonged periods of time, and elevate your legs several times a day
- CALL if they cause pain or discomfort and we may recommend special prescription support stockings

Yeast Infections

- Over-the-counter creams are safe in pregnancy (although best avoided in the first trimester)
- CALL if you think you may have a vaginal infection and we can discuss if you should be seen before treating