

Common Discomforts of Pregnancy

During pregnancy your body goes through many changes. These changes may cause you to feel many different symptoms that are normal during pregnancy.

Nausea & Vomiting

This usually occurs around 4-6 weeks of pregnancy and generally lasts until 12 weeks of pregnancy. Some women have nausea and vomiting during their entire pregnancy. Here are some tips and tricks to help you manage!

- Avoiding foods and smells that trigger your nausea.
- Take your prenatal vitamins with a snack. If your prenatal vitamin contains iron, try taking it at bedtime. Talk with your provider about other vitamin options.
- Keeping soda crackers by your bed and eating a couple before getting up. Allow some time for digestion, and rise slowly once you are ready.
- Eating smaller meals more frequently throughout the day instead of three big meals. Don't skip meals! Eat protein rich foods.
- Drinking less water/fluids with your meals, and instead, drink them between meals. Stay hydrated!
- Eating drier, plain foods such as white rice, dry toast, or a plain baked potato instead of richer, creamier foods.
- Sniffing ginger or lemons, or drinking ginger ale or lemonade, which can help ease the feeling of nausea. Try ginger or peppermint tea, soda or carbonated water.
- Acupressure – anti-nausea wristbands
- Acupuncture
- Do not use marijuana to treat morning sickness! It has not been shown to be safe for your baby during pregnancy.

If you are not able to keep liquids and solid foods down for more than 24 hours OR if the nausea and vomiting becomes constant or severe, please contact our office

Nasal Stuffiness & Nosebleeds

Congestion and nosebleeds happen often in pregnancy due to increased blood flow and swelling of mucous membranes (also known as pregnancy rhinitis).

Breast Tenderness

During the first month of pregnancy, your breasts may get very sore, tender, and heavy. This is caused by estrogen and progesterone. For many moms-to-be, breast pain is like a dull ache, soreness, heaviness, fullness or tenderness, though some report sharp, shooting pain too.

Fatigue (Tiredness)

Fatigue during pregnancy is very common. Some women may feel exhausted throughout their pregnancy, while some may hardly feel tired at all. Here are some tips and tricks to help you manage!

- **Rest**– Make sure you allow yourself to get extra down time to accommodate all of the changes your body and mind are going through
- **Adjust Schedule** – If your current commitments or activities prove to be too draining during pregnancy, you may have to temporarily adjust your schedule to be less busy.
- **[Eat a Balanced Diet](#)** - see my pregnancy plate for recommendations
- **Light to moderate exercise**_– 30-minute walk, this will actually make you feel more energized. Exercise is beneficial in pregnancy unless your healthcare provider has advised otherwise.

Bleeding Gums

Several factors contribute to bleeding gums in pregnancy such as swollen gums from hormonal changes, producing less saliva, or changes in your eating habits.

Urinary Frequency

Expect to go to the bathroom often at the beginning and the end of your pregnancy. Don't cut back on fluids! It is important to stay well hydrated daily.

- Avoid caffeine
- Try limiting fluid intake before bed
- Try to empty your bladder completely every time you go to the bathroom by leaning forward as you urinate.

If you have pain or burning when you urinate, call your provider. You could have an infection

Heartburn & Indigestion

Heartburn and indigestion often occur in pregnancy. Starting early in pregnancy, your body produces [large amounts of the hormones progesterone and relaxin](#), which tend to relax smooth muscle tissues throughout your body, including those in your gastrointestinal (GI) tract.

As a result, food sometimes moves more slowly through your system, resulting in indigestion issues of all kinds, from that [bloated, gassy feeling](#) to heartburn. This also happens as a result of your growing uterus putting pressure against your stomach.

- Avoid eating triggers foods which are typically foods that are spicy or fatty
- Eat smaller meals throughout the day instead of 3 large ones
- Do not lie down right after eating
- When you lie down, use pillows to raise your head and shoulders
- Milk or soda may alleviate symptoms
- Chew on sugarless gum for about a half hour after meals

Vaginal Discharge

Many women experience discharge beginning in early pregnancy. It is usually a thin, milky white and mild-smelling (sometimes odorless) discharge, similar to the discharge you might experience between periods, only heavier. The amount will likely increase as your pregnancy progresses.

If your discharge has a bad or foul odor, becomes yellow or green, causes itching, or you are concerned, notify your provider

Constipation

You may have constipation if your bowel movements are less often and/or your stool is hard or difficult to pass. In early pregnancy, constipation is caused by the increase of progesterone which causes the muscles in your bowels to relax, allowing food to hang around longer in the digestive tract. Later in pregnancy, your growing uterus and baby put pressure against the bowels causing constipation.

- Increase fiber in your diet
- Drink at minimum 8-10 glasses of water daily
- Warm prune juice at night
- Regular exercise

Do not use laxatives. Consult the “Safe Non-Prescription Medications During Pregnancy” list provided in this packet or discuss with your provider

Hemorrhoids

Hemorrhoids are [varicose veins](#) in the rectum. They are especially common in the mid-second to [third trimesters of pregnancy](#), although they can appear at any time. Pressure from your enlarging uterus starting around week 25, plus increased blood flow to the pelvic area, can cause the veins in the rectal wall to swell, bulge and itch. [Constipation can aggravate](#), or even cause, hemorrhoids. Hemorrhoids may also develop postpartum as a result of pushing during labor.

- Use measures listed above to try to help prevent or relieve constipation
- Sleep on your side
- Regular movement/exercise
- Try a warm bath
- Witch hazel or ice pack
- Sitting on a doughnut-shaped pillow if it is uncomfortable to sit
- Talk to provider about treatments if needed

Lower Back Pain

Lower back pain is very common as the body gets used to carrying weight in the front.

- Doing an exercise called the “pelvic tilt” will help build up the lower back muscles, which will help ease soreness. To do these exercises for help with lower back pain:
 - Stand with your feet about a foot apart and your knees bent. Place your hands on your hips near the hip bone. Move your pelvis forward and back 10 to 15 times.
 - You can also do this while lying on your back with your knees bent. Move your abdomen upward keeping the buttocks on the floor, then press your lower back to the floor.
- Change your position often if you are standing for a long period of time. If you are sitting, it is helpful to get up every couple of hours to stretch, and walk around.
- You might find that using extra pillows or a pregnancy pillow for support while you are sleeping also helps.
- Maternity support belt or KT tape
- Heat pad, hot water bottle, warm bath, TENS unit
- Massage, chiropractic care, or physical therapy

If you have pain on the left or right side of your back that does not go away, contact your provider

Abdominal Pain & Round Ligament Pain

As your uterus grows during pregnancy, the ligaments on your uterus may become stretched and pulled, sometimes causing dull or sharp pain. You might feel this when you are sneezing, coughing, twisting/stretching, or moving suddenly.

- Try to avoid sudden movements
- It is helpful to hold your lower abdomen, providing support with your hands when you are sneezing or coughing.
- When getting out of bed, turn your whole body to the side at one time and push up with your arms. This helps to avoid muscle strain.

If you have cramping or pain that occurs more than 4-6 times an hour, or lower back pain that comes and goes, contact your provider. This may or may not occur with spotting or a brownish discharge

