

Discomfort During Pregnancy

Every woman hopes for a pregnancy that allows her to enjoy a normal routine, while preparing for the arrival of her new baby! Unfortunately, many women go through some stages of discomfort during their pregnancy. Here are some tips to help you with these problems:

Nausea and Vomiting

Many women experience nausea and vomiting during their pregnancy. That's because changes in hormones can make you feel sick to your stomach. Certain smells and movements can make the nausea worse. The good news is that the nausea usually disappears after the first trimester.

To help cope with nausea and vomiting, you can:

- Tell your doctor, midwife, and dietitian about all of your symptoms and any supplements you are taking so that you can make the right choices.
- Ask about taking a vitamin B complex supplement, while you are nauseous.
- Eat 6 or more small meals or snacks a day so your stomach is never empty.
- Get out of bed slowly. Eat a dry biscuit, soda cracker, or dry cereal 15 minutes before and after you get out of bed.
- Do not lie down right after eating.
- Choose cold foods (with less smell) or get someone else to do the cooking if possible.
- Get plenty of fresh air. Go for walks. Keep windows open, especially when cooking.
- Avoid smoke, strong odours, alcohol, caffeine, spicy and fried foods.
- Drink fluids between meals, and not with meals. Drink enough to avoid dehydration.
- Try smelling fresh-cut lemons or grated ginger. Make a hot drink with either one. Use fresh ginger instead of ginger capsules or dried ginger.

- Try this **Quese-Control Ginger Smoothie**. Combine ingredients in a blender. Pour into a tall glass and enjoy!

$\frac{1}{4}$ cup low fat vanilla yogurt
 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup vanilla ice cream
 $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp finely grated ginger root
 $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp honey
1 or 2 ice cubes

- Eat whatever food appeals to you in frequent small amounts, until you are feeling better. Ask yourself what tastes, textures, and temperatures of food appeal to you.
 - Salty:** cheese, ham, pretzels, chips
 - Sour:** pickles, lemonade, lemons
 - Bland:** noodles, rice, mashed potatoes, cream of wheat
 - Sweet:** ice cream, fruit, cookies, popsicles
 - Wet:** juice, milk, water, pureed fruit, watermelon
 - Dry:** cold cereal, crackers, vanilla wafers, toast
 - Crunchy:** nuts, taco shells, carrot & celery sticks, apples

If these ideas do not help, see your doctor or midwife immediately for other suggestions.

Feeling better? As soon as the vomiting stops, gradually return to a normal diet. You may have to eat small meals for a while until your stomach gets used to your increasing appetite!

Heartburn

Heartburn is common during pregnancy. It's caused by the pressure of the growing baby and hormone changes during pregnancy that allow stomach acid to move up to your throat.

The following suggestions might help:

- Eat small meals and snacks.
- Eat slowly. Take the time to chew well.
- Sit or stand rather than lying down after eating.
- When you do lie down, raise your head and shoulders.
- Drink fluids between meals, not with meals.
- Wear loose fitting clothing.
- Avoid foods and drinks that may trigger symptoms: spices, peppermint, chocolate, citrus, onions, garlic, tomatoes, fatty foods, coffee, tea, colas, and alcohol.

Some women take an antacid medicine to help with heartburn. An antacid reduces the amount of acid in your stomach. **Not all antacids are safe for pregnant women.** Check with your doctor before you take one.

Swelling (edema)

Many women notice some swelling in their feet and ankles in the third trimester. Pregnant women naturally retain more water in their bodies, so this is perfectly normal. Now is not the time to cut back on your fluid intake. Even when you feel bloated, you still need to keep drinking water and other fluids (like milk, fruit juice and soup) to stay healthy.

To reduce swelling:

- Put your feet up
- Avoid crossing your legs
- Wear loose clothing
- Get plenty of rest and exercise

Constipation & Hemorrhoids

Many women get constipated during pregnancy. It happens because food passes through your body more slowly when you are pregnant so you can absorb the extra nutrients you and your baby need.

- Eat foods high in fibre such as:
 - vegetables and fruit
 - whole grains
 - cooked or canned beans
 - peas and lentils
- Drink more fluids, especially warm or hot fluids. Drink at least 8 cups of fluid every day.
- Be physically active. There's nothing like a good walk around the block to move things along!

Warning! If you are pregnant, **do not use a laxative** to treat constipation without checking with your doctor or nurse first. Laxatives can trigger the onset of labour contractions.

Leg Cramps

The reason for leg cramps during pregnancy is not clear. It may have to do with you being over-tired, changes in your blood flow, and the pressure of the growing uterus on certain nerves.

Eat enough calcium-rich foods like milk, cheese, yogurt, fortified orange juice and soy beverages. Take your prenatal supplement. Taking more calcium supplements will not ease your leg cramps.

CAUTION!

Check with your doctor, midwife, or pharmacist before taking any medications for these problems. Never take more than one prenatal supplement daily.

For more information, call

- PCCHU Healthline 743-1000
- Eat Right Ontario 1-877-510-5102
- Motherisk Hotline 1-800-436-8477