



COMMON DISCOMFORTS DURING PREGNANCY AND *HOW TO MANAGE THEM*



COMMON DISCOMFORTS IN PREGNANCY AND WAYS TO MANAGE THEM:

- **Acne:** Try washing a few times each day with mild cleanser. Benzoyl peroxide containing products (Neutrogena and Clearasil) are usually safe in pregnancy. Do not use acne products containing isotretinoin or tetracycline.
- **Allergies:** Avoid allergy triggers. Women with asthma may use their inhalers during pregnancy.
- **Back Pain:** Try to rest as much as possible. Take a warm bath (NOT hot bath). Good posture and stretching can help. Avoid heavy lifting. Bend at the knees to pick things up. Sleep on a firm bed. Tylenol and heat can be helpful. Wear low-heeled, supportive shoes.
- **Cold, coughs, sore throat and minor aches and pains:** If your temperature is greater than 100.4 degrees, and you have been exposed to the flu, COVID or other illness, or if you develop difficulty breathing, call the clinic. It is recommended that all women who are pregnant during COVID/flu season (usually November through February) be up to date on vaccines. Antiviral medications may be offered during pregnancy for women exposed to the flu virus.
- **Groin Pain:** Round ligament pain is a sharp, sudden pain in the groin area caused by the uterus growing to make room for the baby. Move carefully and avoid sudden movements. Turn over carefully when you are in bed or getting up. There are abdominal support belts which might help.
- **Headache:** Common in early pregnancy. Apply ice pack to forehead. Often Tylenol, caffeine, and sleep can help. If your headache does not go away in one hour after taking acetaminophen (Tylenol) or if you have trouble with your vision or having elevated blood pressure, call the clinic.
- **Heartburn and indigestion:** Eat small low-fat meals and snacks. Do not overeat. Avoid spicy, greasy and fried foods. Avoid fizzy drinks, citrus fruits or juices. Do not bend over or lie down 1 to 2 hours after eating. Avoid soft drinks and drinks with caffeine. Wear clothes that are loose around the waist. Try sleeping with several pillows under your head.
- **Hemorrhoids/Constipation:** Constipation can cause hemorrhoids, which are enlarged veins at the opening of the rectum. Eating fiber and drinking plenty of water (8 to 10 glasses a day) will soften the stool and make passage easier. Eat foods such as green vegetables and whole wheat bread. For breakfast, eat whole grain cereals and bran cereals. Avoid constipating foods like cheese, chocolate and rice. Sit in a tub of warm water. Increase physical activity, exercising every day aids your digestive system. Additionally, stool softeners are available to ease your discomfort.

- **Insomnia:** As your abdomen grows larger, it may be hard to find a comfortable position. Take a shower or warm bath at bedtime. Try using relaxation techniques, such as yoga. Lie on your side with one pillow under your abdomen and another between your legs. Limit naps during the day.
- **Leg cramps:** Wear support pantyhose and low-heeled shoes. Elevating feet and warm baths may help. Stretching your legs before going to bed can help.
- **Nausea** (morning sickness)- eat crackers, dry toast, or a handful of dry cereal when you first wake up, then rest in bed for a while. Have plenty of fresh air in the room where you sleep. Get out of bed slowly. Drink liquids between meals, now with them. Avoid caffeine. Avoid food with strong smells. Avoid or limit spicy, greasy or fried foods. Eat small meals. Sit upright after meals.
- **Skin problems:** Minor skin rashes or itching, commonly occur during pregnancy. Use a hypoallergenic moisturizer. Apply cool moist packs and avoiding heat can help. If the rash or itching covers most of your body or the medication do not provide relief or you are having other symptoms (such as fever, body aches, severe abdominal pain, vomiting), call the clinic.
- **Sinus drainage:** Humidify your home or bedroom and increase your fluid intake.
- **Sore throat:** Increase fluids. Gargle with warm water. Throat lozenge (see medication list).
- **Swelling** (edema): This is a discomfort that most pregnant women will have at some time during their pregnancy. Support panty hose, elevating feet above the level of the heart, and resting on your left side may offer some relief. Do not wear rings if your hands are swollen. Drink fluid, lower your salt intake.
- **Vaginal discharge:** You will normally have more discharge when you are pregnant. If signs of infection occur, such as itching or bad odor, do not douche or have intercourse and call the clinic.
- **Varicose or “spider veins”:** Elevate feet as often as possible and wear support pantyhose. If you must sit or stand for long periods, be sure to move around from time to time. Do not sit with your legs crossed. Exercise.