

CENTERING PREGNANCY PROGRAM

COMMON DISCOMFORTS AND WHAT TO DO

Below are some common discomforts that happen to many women during pregnancy. This sheet describes the discomfort, possible causes, and gives suggestions for coping with them. This handout may help to reassure you and to inform you of some of these normal body responses.

DISCOMFORT	CAUSE	WHAT MIGHT HELP
Low belly (pelvic) pain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stretching of round ligaments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relax in warm water • Bend over or sit down
Nausea/vomiting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes in hormones 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have a snack in the morning (dry crackers, toast, cereal) • Eat 5-6 meals a day • Avoid greasy/spicy foods • Drink lots of water between meals, but not during meals
Heartburn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stomach acid gets into esophagus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Don't lie down after eating • Avoid spicy and greasy foods
Bowel changes (Constipation)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decreased movement of intestine due to pregnancy hormones • Not enough fiber/fluids in diet • Pressure from growing uterus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eat raw fruits, vegetables, prunes and whole grain or bran cereals • Drink lots of water (8-10 glasses a day) • Drink a cup of hot water 3 times a day • Exercise (walk)
Frequent urination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pressure on bladder from growing uterus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limit fluids in evening • Avoid caffeine • Call health care provider if it is associated with burning, fever, or waist-like back pain
Vaginal discharge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stimulation of vaginal tissue growth caused by pregnancy hormones 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wear cotton underwear • Avoid pantyhose and tight pants • Use non-perfumed soap • Do not use feminine hygiene products, sprays, or powders • Bathe the outer vaginal area often • Call health care provider if accompanied by itching or burning

DISCOMFORT	CAUSE	WHAT MIGHT HELP
Headaches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes in hormones cause pressure in blood vessels to change • Stress, fatigue, hunger 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drink more water • Get more rest • Eat a snack • Exercise • Take Tylenol • If frequent headaches occur in late pregnancy, this may be a sign of a more serious problem; you should inform your care provider
Moodiness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes in hormones • Psychological adjustment to pregnancy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talk with someone supportive • Use relaxation breathing
Bad dreams	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subconscious fears • A way of working through concerns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talk about them with someone supportive • They are not predictive
Leg cramps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insufficient calcium intake • Poor circulation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elevate legs often • Point toes upward and press down on kneecap • Wear support hose • Avoid meals at bedtime
Varicose veins	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Widening of veins because of pregnancy hormones 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid stockings or girdles with elastic bands • Wear support hose • Take short rests with legs raised
Sore breasts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effects of pregnancy hormones 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wear a good bra
Shortness of breath	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pressure of growing uterus against diaphragm 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rest often • Maintain good posture
Fatigue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes in hormones 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exercise each day • Lie down at least once a day • Eat 5-6 meals a day
Low back pain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weight of larger belly pulling on lower back • Poor body position when bending/lifting • Loosening of pelvic joints from pregnancy hormones 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rest often • Maintain good posture • Move around • When reclining or sitting, keep your knees higher than your hips • Wear low-heeled shoes

DISCOMFORT	CAUSE	WHAT MIGHT HELP
Dizziness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effects of pregnancy hormones on blood vessels • Sudden changes of position (standing up) • More blood in uterus and less available for the head 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get up slowly when you have been lying down • Eat regular meals • Do not stay in the sun too long • Report dizziness to your health care provider
Swelling of hands/feet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Slowing of blood due to pressure from growing uterus • Retention of water due to not drinking enough water 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lie on left side for 30 minutes 3-4 times a day • Exercise often • Drink more water • Eat 3 servings of protein a day
Uterine cramping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Muscle contraction due to uterine growth • Not drinking enough water 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drink more water
Bleeding gums	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in blood flow 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use a soft toothbrush and brush gently • Eat more foods with Vitamin C