

## COMMON DISCOMFORTS OF PREGNANCY

DISCOMFORT	CAUSE	ACTIONS
Bad Dreams	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Subconscious fears</li> <li>*A way of working through concerns</li> <li>*High hormone levels</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Talk with someone supportive</li> <li>*They are not predictive</li> </ul>
Bleeding Gums	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Increased blood volume</li> <li>*Congested mucous membranes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Use a soft toothbrush/ brush gently</li> <li>*Eat more foods with Vitamin C</li> <li>*Floss daily</li> </ul>
Bowel Changes (Constipation)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Decreased movement of intestines due to pregnancy hormones</li> <li>*Not enough fiber/fluids in diet</li> <li>*Pressure from growing uterus</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Eat raw fruits, vegetables, prunes and whole grain or bran cereals</li> <li>*Drink lots of water (8-10 glasses daily)</li> <li>*Drink a cup of hot water 3x a day</li> <li>*Exercise (Walk)</li> <li>*See information sheet</li> </ul>
Dizziness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Effects of pregnancy hormones on bl. Vessels (they constrict more slowly)</li> <li>*Sudden changes of position (standing up)</li> <li>*Enlarged uterus restricts return of blood from lower extremities to brain</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Get up slowly when you have been lying down</li> <li>*Drink 8-10 glasses of water daily</li> <li>*Eat regular meals</li> <li>*Do not stay in the sun too long</li> <li>*If cannot resolve with common remedies, report symptoms to provider</li> </ul>
Fatigue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Changes in hormones</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Exercise each day</li> <li>*Lie down at least once a day</li> <li>*Eat 5-6 meals a day</li> </ul>
Frequent Urination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Pressure on bladder from growing uterus</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Limit fluids in the evening</li> <li>*Avoid caffeine - it's a diuretic</li> <li>*Call health care provider if it is associated with burning, fever, or significant back pain</li> </ul>
Headaches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Changes in hormones cause pressure in blood vessels to change</li> <li>*Stress, fatigue, hunger</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Drink more water</li> <li>*Get more rest</li> <li>*Eat a snack</li> <li>*Exercise</li> <li>*Take Tylenol</li> <li>*If frequent, severe headaches occur in late pregnancy, this may be a sign of a more serious problem; you should inform your provider</li> </ul>
Heartburn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Stomach acid gets into the esophagus</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Don't lie down after eating for 2 hrs.</li> <li>*Avoid spicy and greasy foods</li> <li>*Take antacids (see approved meds list)</li> </ul>
Leg Cramps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Insufficient calcium intake</li> <li>*Poor circulation</li> <li>*Changes in Ca-Mag-Phosphorus ratio</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Elevate legs often</li> <li>*Point toes upward and press down on kneecap</li> <li>*Wear supportive hose</li> <li>*Take short rests with legs raised</li> </ul>

<b>Low Back Pain</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Weight of larger belly pulling on lower back</li> <li>*Poor body position when bending/lifting</li> <li>*Loosening of pelvic joints from pregnancy hormones</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Rest often</li> <li>*Maintain good posture</li> <li>*Move around</li> <li>*When reclining or sitting, keep your knees higher than your hips</li> <li>*Wear low-heeled shoes</li> <li>*Wear maternity belt (go to <a href="http://www.prenatalcradle.com">www.prenatalcradle.com</a>)</li> </ul>
<b>Low Belly/abd. (Pelvic) Pain</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Stretching of round ligaments</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Relax in warm water</li> <li>*Bend over or sit down</li> </ul>
<b>Moodiness</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Changes in hormones</li> <li>*Psychological adjustment to pregnancy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Talk with someone supportive</li> <li>*Use relaxation breathing</li> <li>*Don't use as excuse to lash out at loved ones</li> <li>*Report symptoms of significant depression/inability to cope</li> </ul>
<b>Nausea/Vomiting</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Changes in hormones</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Have a snack in the morning (dry crackers, toast, cereal)</li> <li>*Eat 5-6 meals a day</li> <li>*Avoid greasy/spicy foods</li> <li>*Drink lots of water between meals, but not during meals</li> <li>*See "Tips for Morning Sickness" sheet</li> </ul>
<b>Shortness of Breath</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Pressure of growing uterus against the diaphragm</li> <li>*Extra protection from the brain's lowered carbon dioxide threshold</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Rest often</li> <li>*Maintain good posture</li> <li>*Sighing and needing to take deep breaths is normal</li> </ul>
<b>Sore Breasts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Effects of pregnancy hormones causing significant growth</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Wear a good, well-fitting pregnancy bra</li> </ul>
<b>Stretch Marks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Rapid growth of uterus</li> <li>*Genetic predisposition</li> <li>*Pregnancy hormones cause dark coloration</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Wear "scars of motherhood" proudly</li> <li>*Expensive creams have no effect and will not prevent or make them go away</li> <li>*After pregnancy, the color will lighten but the stretch marks will never permanently go away</li> </ul>
<b>Swelling of hands/legs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Slowing of blood due to pressure from growing uterus</li> <li>*Retention of water in extra-vascular spaces due to inc. bl. volume and bl. vessel changes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Lie on left or right side for 30 minutes 3 to 4 times a day</li> <li>*Exercise often</li> <li>*Drink more water</li> <li>*Eat 3 servings of protein a day</li> <li>*Eat "normal" salt diet (not high or low)</li> <li>*Eat whole grain breads (no white bread)</li> <li>*Report sudden increase in swelling if associated w/ severe headaches after 28 weeks gestation</li> </ul>

**Uterine Cramping**

- \*Muscle contraction due to uterine growth
- \*Not drinking enough water, especially in warm weather or at work

- \*Drink more water
- \*Expect mild, irregular contractions as the third trimester advances, especially in late evening, nighttime hours

**Vaginal Discharge**

- \*Stimulation of vaginal tissue growth caused by pregnancy hormones

- \*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 daily
- \*Call health care provider if accompanied by itching, burning, or irritation, or if you think your bag of waters is broken
- \*Wear unperfumed lightday pads and change frequently
- \*Do not douche

**Varicose Veins**

- \*Widening of veins because of pregnancy hormones, increased blood volume, and the "tourniquet" effect of uterus on the lower extremities
- \*Genetic predisposition

- \*Avoid stockings or girdles with elastic bands
- \*Wear supportive hose (thigh high or pantyhose)
- \*Take short rests with legs raised