

COMMON DISCOMFORTS OF PREGNANCY

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

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 *Wear maternity belt (go to www.prenatalcradle.com)
Low Belly/abd. (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
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 *Don't use as excuse to lash out at loved ones *Report symptoms of significant depression/inability to cope
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 *See "Tips for Morning Sickness" sheet
Shortness of Breath	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Pressure of growing uterus against the diaphragm *Extra protection from the brain's lowered carbon dioxide threshold 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Rest often *Maintain good posture *Sighing and needing to take deep breaths is normal
Sore Breasts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Effects of pregnancy hormones causing significant growth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Wear a good, well-fitting pregnancy bra
Stretch Marks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Rapid growth of uterus *Genetic predisposition *Pregnancy hormones cause dark coloration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Wear "scars of motherhood" proudly *Expensive creams have no effect and will not prevent or make them go away *After pregnancy, the color will lighten but the stretch marks will never permanently go away
Swelling of hands/legs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Slowing of blood due to pressure from growing uterus *Retention of water in extra-vascular spaces due to inc. bl. volume and bl. vessel changes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Lie on left or right side for 30 minutes 3 to 4 times a day *Exercise often *Drink more water *Eat 3 servings of protein a day *Eat "normal" salt diet (not high or low) *Eat whole grain breads (no white bread) *Report sudden increase in swelling if associated w/ severe headaches after 28 weeks gestation

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