

Common Discomforts of Pregnancy

There are many common discomforts that you may have during the pregnancy. Here are some of the discomforts and suggestions that may help you.

If you are **dizzy**:

- Lie on your left side.
- Change your position slowly.
- Get up slowly after you have been lying down.
- Eat regular meals.
- **Do not** stay in the sun too long.
- Report your dizziness to your health care provider.

If you are having **trouble sleeping**:

- **Avoid** drinks with caffeine like coffee, teas and sodas.
- **Do not** eat immediately before bedtime.
- Try drinking warm milk.
- Try a warm bath.
- Practice relaxation exercises.

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Learn more about your health care.

If you feel **tired**:

- "Being tired" is common in early and late pregnancy.
- Try to exercise everyday. (Check with your doctor before exercising.)
- Lie down for at least one hour during the day.

If you have **bleeding gums**:

- Use a soft toothbrush and brush gently.
- Drink orange juice and eat foods that are high in Vitamin C.

If you have **increased drainage in your nose or mouth**:

- **Do not** use any "over the counter" medicines.
- Tell your health care provider.

If your **breasts are tender**:

- Wear a good bra that is not too tight.
- It may help to wear a bra to bed.

If your **breasts leak milk**:

- Wear nursing pads or tissues in your bra.

If you have **heartburn** – a burning sensation in the stomach or throat, an upset stomach or a stomach ache:

- Stay away from caffeine, greasy and spicy food.
- Eat smaller meals, but eat more often (every 2 to 3 hours).
- Eat slowly, being sure to chew food well.
- **Do not** wear tight fitting clothes.
- **Do not** bend over, instead squat.

- **Do not** lie down for at least 2 hours after eating.
- Sleep with your head raised on an extra pillow.
- **Stop** smoking.

If you have **nausea**:

- Eat dry crackers, toast or cereal before getting up or when you are feeling sick.
- Eat 5 or 6 small meals a day. Stay within your meal plan. A dietitian can help with meal planning, if needed.
- Drink water between meals, but not during meals.
- **Avoid** strong food smells.
- **Avoid** greasy or spicy foods.
- **Avoid** lying down right after eating.

If your hands and feet **swell**:

- **Avoid** standing for long periods of time.
- Lie on your left side for thirty minutes, 3 to 4 times a day.
- Exercise. (Check with your doctor before exercising.)
- **Avoid** foods high in salt.
- Eat three servings of protein each day such as meat, cheese and eggs.
- If you wake up with swelling in the morning, **tell your doctor**.

If you **urinate frequently**:

- Drink less fluids before bedtime.
- Do urinate often.
- **Avoid** fluids with caffeine as coffee, tea and soda.
- Do Kegal exercises. (See handout "Exercises for Pregnancy and Childbirth").

- **Tell your doctor** if you have any burning or pain when you urinate.

If you feel **constipated**:

- Eat raw fruits, vegetables, prunes and whole grain or bran cereals.
- Drink plenty of fluids, especially water.
- Exercise such as walking.
- **Never** hold back a bowel movement.
- **Do not** use laxatives or enemas. (Check with your doctor before taking any medicine.)

If you have **hemorrhoids**:

- Keep your bowel movements regular and soft.
- **Do not** strain or push when having a bowel movement.
- Use cold compresses to relieve pain or swelling.
- Take short rests with your hips lifted on a pillow.
- Practice Kegal exercises.
- **Tell your doctor** if your pain is increasing or if you have bleeding.

If you feel **low backache**:

- Rest often. Use a supportive mattress. Use a side lying position with pillows between the knees, behind the back and at the stomach.
- Stand up straight. **Do not** slump or slouch.
- **Do not** stand in one place too long. Move around.
- Squat to pick up objects rather than bending at the waist.
- Exercise, as approved by your health care provider.
- Use a foot stool for your feet.
- Wear low heeled, good walking shoes.

- Use the "Pelvic Rock" exercise. (See handout "Exercises for Pregnancy and Childbirth".)
- Soak in a warm bath or shower. **Do not** use "hot tubs".

If you have **leg cramps**:

- Prop your legs up often during the day.
- Apply a heating pad at a low setting for relief.
- During a leg cramp, straighten your leg and bend your foot toward the front of your leg.
- Exercise, such as walking, for 30 minutes a day.
- Get more calcium in your diet such as dairy products and calcium fortified orange juice.

If you have **varicose veins**:

- **Avoid** hose or girdles with elastic bands.
- Use support hose as ordered by your health care provider.
- Put support hose on while lying down.
- **Avoid** standing or sitting for long periods of time.
- Take short rest breaks with your legs raised higher than your heart.
- **Do not** cross your legs.
- **Do not** massage your legs or feet.
- Sleep with a pillow between your legs.

If you have a **vaginal discharge**:

- Bathe the outer vaginal area often.
- Use soap without perfume.
- **Do not** use vaginal sprays or powders.
- Do not use colored or perfumed toilet paper.

- Wear cotton underpants.
- **Avoid** panty hose, girdles and tight pants.
- If these hints do not help, talk with your health care provider.

If you have **contractions**:

- Drink 2 glasses of fluids such as water, juice or milk. If you are less than 9 months pregnant, drink 8 to 10 glasses of water.
- Lie on your side and rest.
- Place your hands on your abdomen and feel when the contraction begins and ends.
- Time how frequently the contractions are coming.
- If you are less than 9 months pregnant and your contractions are 4 or more in one hour, after drinking 8 to 10 glasses of water, **call your doctor**.
- Some problems during pregnancy such as placenta previa require an immediate **call to your doctor**, if you have any contractions.
- If your pregnancy is nine months, call your doctor, if contractions are becoming more uncomfortable, and/or more frequent, or if you have vaginal bleeding or leaking of fluid.

Tell your doctor your problems and complaints and what helped for relief.

Medicines can be harmful to your baby. Do not take any medicines, including those that you can buy without a prescription, unless your doctor tells you to take them.

- **Talk to your doctor or others on your health care team if you have questions. You may request more written information from the Library for Health Information at (614) 293-3707 or email: health-info@osu.edu.**