

## Normal Discomforts of Pregnancy

At times, you may feel uncomfortable during your pregnancy. These discomforts are common.

### Fatigue

Feeling tired is very common in the 1st trimester. It is often related to hormonal changes in your body. Sometimes it is related to anemia or low blood counts. You will have blood tests for these at your first visit.

Fatigue usually gets better during the 2nd trimester. It can come back as you near the end of your pregnancy.

### Nausea and vomiting

Nausea and vomiting most often happens in the 1st and early 2nd trimesters. It may continue to a lesser degree throughout your pregnancy. This is usually due to hormonal changes in your body.

Let your care team know if you have any abdominal pain with nausea and vomiting.

The following may help decrease nausea and vomiting in pregnancy:

- Always try to keep something in your stomach, starting when you wake up.
- Eat small amounts more often instead of larger meals.
- Chew gum.
- Convert your prenatal vitamin to folic acid supplements instead. Take 400 micrograms of folic acid once a day.
- Take 250 milligrams (mg) of ginger (in capsule form) 4 times a day.
- Take 25 mg of vitamin B6 3 to 4 times a day, or 12.5 mg of doxylamine (Unisom®) 3 to 4 times a day. Unisom may make you sleepy.

### Uterine cramping

Mild uterine cramping is most common in the 1st trimester due to the growing uterus. Uterine cramping in the 3rd trimester can be common as well. It may be due to false labor contractions called Braxton-Hicks contractions.

Let your care team know if you have heavy bleeding with uterine cramping or major pain.

If uterine cramping is a problem:

- Drink plenty of fluids.
- Take acetaminophen (Tylenol®) for relief as directed by your physician.

## Back pain

Back pain is most common after 28 weeks but may happen earlier in your pregnancy. This can happen due to changes in your body that affect your muscles, joints and nerves.

You may be able to relieve back pain with:

- Resting
- Taking acetaminophen (Tylenol) as directed
- Applying heat or ice
- Massage
- Stretching

## Ankle swelling

Ankle swelling is common after 28 weeks. This can happen due to fluid changes and increased pressure in your legs as your baby grows.

If this is a problem for you:

- Put your feet up when resting.
- Wear compression stockings.

## Heartburn

Heartburn can happen at any point during pregnancy, but is most common during the 3rd trimester.

You can treat heartburn or acid reflux with over-the-counter medications such as calcium carbonate (TUMS®), famotidine (Pepcid®), ranitidine (Zantac®), or omeprazole (Prilosec®) as directed.

If heartburn is a problem:

- Avoid spicy foods, acidic foods and carbonated beverages.
- Eat earlier in the evening and stay upright for at least 3 hours after the evening meal.
- Eat many small meals instead of a few large meals each day.

## Constipation

Constipation can happen at any point during pregnancy but is most common in the 1st and 3rd trimesters.

To treat constipation:

- Change your diet and eat foods that are high fiber.
- Use a common over-the-counter medication as directed.
- Drink plenty of water.

If you have any questions, please ask your care team.