

## Tips for Common Discomforts During Pregnancy

- **Abdominal pain**- this is very common in the first and second trimester. This is typically caused by round ligaments.
  - Avoid sudden movements
  - Slowly get out of bed in the morning
  - Wear an abdominal support garment, like [Mama Strut](#). They are often covered by FSA accounts.
  - Call your provider if you get any persistent pain.
- **Back pain**- thanks to progesterone and relaxin softening ligaments and joints, alongside a change in the center of gravity, backache can be pretty annoying in the 2nd and 3rd trimester.
  - Pelvic floor exercises can help remedy this. Chiropractic adjustments can also help.
  - Swimming a few times a week can help.
  - Yoga, massage and relaxation techniques.
  - Heat and cold
  - Reach out to your provider if none of these help to talk about management.
- **Breast/chest tenderness**- a common symptom of pregnancy due to increased levels of estrogen.
  - Wearing a well fitting bra and if very tender at night, wearing it to bed.
  - Making sure you wear a supportive sports bra when exercising
  - Avoid stimulation when having sex
  - Limit caffeine
- **Bleeding Gums**-this is also known as gingivitis of pregnancy
  - Warm salt water gargles a few times a day can help
  - Switching to a softer [brush](#)
  - Continued flossing
  - Extra cleaning that is usually covered by insurance while pregnant.
  - If it gets worse, a referral to the dentist may be needed from your midwife.
- **Constipation**- experienced by about 40% of pregnant persons. Another side effects of rising progesterone.
  - Increase fiber in your diet (dried fruits, prunes, whole grains, raw vegetables)
  - Drink hot tea in the morning to stimulate bowels
  - Brisk walks
  - Contact midwife if you have blood in your stool, signs of preterm labor or severe abdominal pain.
- **Dizziness or fainting**-normal changes causing increased blood flow to baby but decreased blood flow to you.
  - Arise from bed slowly
  - Don't stand for long periods of time.
  - Eat regularly to keep blood sugar at an even level.

- Avoid laying on your back after 12 weeks
- If for any reason you get chest pain or shortness of breath, contact your provider.
- **Edema-** due to the increase in fluids in the body, it can accumulate in the interstitial space (space that lies between blood vessels and cell)
  - Water immersion 20+ minutes. Epsom salts can increase relief
  - Foots massages
  - Herbal teas for fluid balance (Parsley or Dandelion)
  - Rest with feet higher then heart for one hour twice a day
  - Compression hose
  - Call midwife in the case of sudden weight gain, headache, spots in vision, or upper gastric pain.
- **Fatigue-** most common in the first and third trimesters.
  - Take a day time nap
  - Go to bed at a decent hour
  - Modify your schedule if it's really busy, ask for help.
  - Eat at least 80 grams of protein a day and get adequate iron.
  - Eat at least every two hours to keep blood sugar even.
  - [Iron](#) supplements under supervision
- **Headaches-** tension headaches are common in pregnancy
  - [Chiropractor adjustment](#)
  - [Massage](#)
  - Physical therapy
  - Biofeedback
  - Call midwife in the case of sudden weight gain, headache, spots in vision, or upper gastric pain.
- **Heartburn-** back flow of stomach contents spill into the esophagus.
  - Slippery elm lozenges
  - Marshmallow root tea
  - Ginger
  - Peppermint tea
  - Diet recall, reducing fatty foods, eating close to bed time or lying down after a meal.
- **Hemorrhoids-**common in pregnancy. Swollen vessels in the lower rectum.
  - Herbal sitz baths
  - Witch hazel 10-50% compresses, comfrey, epsom salt, plantain ointment.
  - Avoid straining when using the bathroom
  - Don't sit on the toilet too long
  - See remedies for constipation
- **Insomnia-** difficultly falling or staying asleep
  - How is your sleep hygiene? Tv? Phones?
  - Is your room dark, cool and quiet?
  - You can try Chamomile , lemon balm, or passion flower tea.
  - Hydrotherapy
  - Yoga

- Massage
- Contact your midwife if it persists after adjustments.
- **Itchy Skin-** caused by the skin stretching
  - Hydration
  - Oatmeal baths
  - Some oils can help relieve itching
  - Contact your midwife if lesions appear, palms itch and the bottoms of the feet itch.
- **Leg cramps-** painful spasm in the lower legs
  - Increase dietary sources of magnesium and calcium.
  - [NORA](#) tea (after 16 weeks)
  - Regular activity
  - Warm towels around legs
  - Call midwife if there is an increase of spasms, swelling, pain or redness in the leg.
- **Nausea-** an unpleasant urge to vomit, early pregnancy symptom that should go away by 12 weeks
  - Peppermint tea
  - B vitamins
  - Acupuncture
  - [Seas sickness bands](#) (P6 acupressure)
  - Call midwife if you have vomited 6 or more times in the last 12 hours or if there is a fever, diarrhea, pain in the belly, or this is new-onset in the second half of pregnancy
- **Ptyalism-** excess saliva
  - Carrying a spitting cup
  - Rinse with mouth wash often
  - Sour candies can help
  - Contact midwife if it is leading to dehydration
- **Shortness of breath-** common in first and third trimester
  - Normal, try not to worry.
  - Good posture
  - Lifting arms over head to catch a bigger breath
  - sleeping in an upright position
  - Call midwife if you start coughing, having heart palpitations, chest pain, fever, chills or of faintness.
- **Stretch marks-** no matter what your mother said, there isn't much you can do
  - Hydration
  - Use sunscreen
  - Emollient creams can help itching
  - [Trofolastin](#) has had some success in prevention
- **Tingling of hands-** also known as carpal tunnel syndrome
  - hand splints can help
  - avoid extreme flexion or extension

- Don't use vibrating tools
- Massage and gently stretch fingers
- Chiropractic care can help
- **Urinary Incontinence**- when you gotta go, you gotta go
  - Empty bladder frequently
  - Do kegel exercises
  - Panty liners
  - [Absorbent panties](#)
  - Prenatal belly support can help
- **Vaginal discharge**- excess secretion from the vagina
  - Panty liners
  - Extra pairs of underwear
  - Shower twice a day
  - Call the midwife if you have any odors, itching, green discharge. Discharge should be clear or white.
- **Varicosities**- large and superficial veins, usually in the thigh or calf.
  - Compression hosiery
  - Elevate legs whenever possible
  - Avoid standing for long periods
  - Avoid crossing legs when seated
  - Sleep in Zero G if possible
  - Walk daily to stimulate leg muscles
  - Limit weight gain based on BMI and a recommendation by your midwife.
  - Call your midwife if there is swelling, pain or redness in the legs.

Resources:

Brucker, M. C. (2022). *Varney's midwifery* (5th ed.). J&BL.

Jordan, R. G., Farley, C. L., & Grace, K. T. (2018). *Prenatal and postnatal care*. Wiley.

Tharpe, N. (2012). *Clinical practice guidelines for midwifery & women's health* (4th ed.). Jones & Bartlett Learning.