

Care for Early Pregnancy Symptoms

Now that you are pregnant you may be experiencing some minor problems or discomforts that are caused by the changing hormones or your body's adaptation to pregnancy. We have some general health guidelines that may help to minimize your discomfort. **If at any time these symptoms become severe, you need to seek help from a physician or emergency room.**

Tiredness, Fatigue

Try to get as much sleep as you can by taking naps and going to bed early. Mild exercise in the fresh air can restore energy when tired. Avoid foods with caffeine or sugar in them because they will give you a sudden burst of energy and then a drop making you feel even more tired.

Morning Sickness

Some women experience nausea early in the morning when they first awaken. Others may have it off and on all day. However, for most women this decreases after the first three months

If your nausea is bad when you first awaken, try eating a high protein snack before bed, such as cheese, milk, yogurt, peanut butter on apple slices or celery, soy products, chicken or turkey. You can also try eating crackers before you get up in the morning and rise slowly without any sudden movement.

If your nausea is during the day, it is important not to allow yourself to get too hungry – eat six small meals instead of two or three large meals. Never go long periods without food. Avoid strong tasting or smelling foods and fried or greasy foods or anything that you know makes you sick. Do not use alcohol or tobacco and avoid smoke-filled environments where the second hand smoke may make you sick.

If these measures don't work to ease nausea, our Medical Director recommends taking Vitamin B_6 , 50 mg, in the morning and evening.

Constipation

Many women experience constipation during early and late pregnancy. This is caused by the hormones of pregnancy as well as the pressure against the intestine by the growing uterus. It is important to eat fresh fruits and

raw vegetables as well as whole grain breads and cereals. Drinking plenty of fluids, especially water (at least 8 glasses per day), and getting regular exercise will also help.

Frequent Urination

Pressure against the bladder by the growing uterus will cause the feeling of needing to go to the bathroom often. This is normal and there is nothing that can or should be done to prevent it. If frequent trips to the bathroom are disturbing your sleep, you may try limiting fluids after 8 p.m. If you feel any pain or burning when you urinate, contact a healthcare provider.

Breast Tenderness

Your breasts may be feeling tender or your nipples may be very sensitive. That is also a very normal part of pregnancy. Wearing a bra with good support may relieve discomfort from movement and wearing a bra at night may help with the sensitivity of the nipples.

Dizziness

Some women may experience dizziness when they move or rise quickly. The best way to avoid this is to change positions slowly and often so that the blood doesn't pool in you legs. Eat and drink on a regular schedule and don't go long periods without eating. Also make sure you get enough fluids, at least 8 glasses of water per day.

Emotional Ups and Downs

Changing hormones and disruptions to your life may cause you to feel like you are on an emotional roller coaster. Talking about your feelings with a caring professional or supportive friend may help. Stress and anxiety can often be relieved by talking about them with a good listener. Avoid caffeine and sugar. Getting adequate sleep can also help.

Precautions During Pregnancy

Taking good care of yourself is important during early pregnancy. The following are some things that you can do.

Get Enough Folate

Folate or folic acid is a B vitamin that helps prevent some birth defects such as spina bifida. You can get this through eating plenty of fresh vegetables and fruit or by taking a prenatal or “one-a-day” vitamin.

Avoid Alcohol

Even if you drank some alcohol before you knew you were pregnant, it is a good time for you to stop. Regular high amounts of alcohol have been associated with some serious problems for babies. We don't know what a safe level is, so we recommend no alcohol during pregnancy.

Don't Smoke

Whatever you take into your body, your baby also gets. Smoke can be harmful for the baby, as well as for you. Many women feel nauseated when they smoke or breathe second-hand smoke during pregnancy and find that it is a good time to quit.

Avoid Other Harmful Substances

Even small amounts of drugs, such as cocaine or heroin, can be harmful to you and your baby, so it is best not to use them. Don't breathe fumes from paint, spray cans, or insecticides. Even some common substances like caffeine and artificial sweeteners should be avoided whenever possible during pregnancy. If you use prescription medication, be sure to check with your health care provider about its safety during pregnancy.

Avoid Other Harmful Activities

We also recommend that you avoid getting overheated during your pregnancy, whether from heavy exercise or saunas and hot tubs. Light exercise or anything that you are currently used to doing is usually safe to continue.

Don't Empty a Cat Litter Box

Some cats carry a disease called toxoplasmosis. Exposure to their feces can cause a pregnant woman to get the disease, which can be very harmful for unborn babies. If you have a cat, ask someone else to empty the cat litter box during your pregnancy. Contact your healthcare provider if you think you have been exposed.

WARNING SIGNS

Note: Our clinic does not provide emergency medical care so if any of the following symptoms occur you should seek immediate care from your healthcare provider or emergency room.

- Bleeding from the vagina
- Sudden gush or leaking of fluid from the vagina
- Sudden weight gain with puffiness in hands or face
- Severe, constant headaches with dizziness, blurred vision or spots before the eyes
- Pain in your abdomen or severe cramping
- Severe nausea or vomiting lasting more than 24 hours
- Burning or pain when urinating
- Fever of 100.4° or higher
- No fetal movement for more than 1 day (after you start feeling the baby move)
- Signs of labor