

CARE FOR EARLY PREGNANCY SYMPTOMS

NOW THAT I AM PREGNANT...

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Now that you are pregnant, you may be experiencing 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 or persistent, you need to seek help from a physician or emergency room.

MORNING SICKNESS

Some women experience nausea early in the morning when they first awaken. Others may have it off and on all day. 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 movements. 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. Never go long periods without food. Avoid strong tasting or smelling foods or anything that you know makes you sick. If these measures do not work, our Medical Director recommends taking Unisom and Vitamin B6, 50mg, in the morning and evening. If you are too sleepy to work or study during the day, try taking the Unisom just at night before bedtime.

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. Realize that foods with caffeine or sugar can give you a false burst of energy that will drop and make you feel more tired.

BREAST TENDERNESS

A normal part of pregnancy is tender breasts or sensitive nipples. Wearing a bra with good support may relieve discomfort from movement. Wearing a bra at night may help with sensitive nipples.

CONSTIPATION

Many women experience constipation during early and late pregnancy. The hormones of pregnancy as well as the pressure against the intestines cause this by the growing uterus. Eating fresh fruits and raw vegetables as well as whole grain breads and cereals can prevent or alleviate constipation. Drinking plenty of fluids, especially water, and getting regular exercise will also help.

FREQUENT URINATION

Pressure against the bladder by the growing uterus will give the sensation of a full bladder. This is normal and there is nothing that can or should be done to prevent it. If frequent trips to the bathroom disturb your sleep, limit your intake of fluids after 8pm. If you feel pain or burning when you urinate, contact your healthcare provider.

DIZZINESS

Some women may experience dizziness when they move or rise too quickly. The best way to avoid this is to change positions slowly and often so the blood does not pool in your legs. Eat and drink on a regular schedule and do not go long periods without eating. Also, make sure you drink enough fluids.

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 friend may help. Stress and anxiety can often be relieved by talking about them with a good listener. Feel free to talk to our staff as we care very much about your wellbeing. Getting adequate sleep can also help.

PRECAUTIONS DURING PREGNANCY

Taking good care of your self 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 folate by eating plenty of fresh vegetables and fruit and by taking a prenatal vitamin.

AVOID ALCOHOL

Even if you drank some alcohol before you knew you were pregnant, it is a good idea for you to stop now. Regular high amounts of alcohol have been associated with some serious problems for babies. We do not 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 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.

DO NOT EMPTY A CAT LITTER BOX

Many cats carry a disease called toxoplasmosis and exposure to their feces can cause you to contract the disease. It can be very harmful for unborn babies.

AVOID OTHER HARMFUL SUBSTANCES

Even small amounts of drugs, such as cocaine or heroin can harm you and your baby, so it is best not to use them. Do not breathe fumes from paint, spray cans, or insecticides. Saccharin (an artificial sweetener) is discouraged, as it crosses the placenta. Limit caffeine to 100mg (one 8oz cup of coffee) per day. Avoid raw eggs and raw fish, unpasteurized milk and cheese as they may cause food infections. Limit deli meat for concerns about clostridial infections. Don't eat shark, swordfish, king mackerel or tilefish (also called white snapper); they contain high levels of mercury. If you use prescription medication, check with your healthcare 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, saunas, or hot tubs. Light exercise or anything that you are currently doing is usually safe to continue.

WARNING SIGNS

Our clinic does not provide emergency medical care. If any of the following symptoms occur, you should seek immediate care from your healthcare provider or go to the nearest emergency room.

- Bleeding from vagina
- Sudden gush or leaking of fluid from vagina
- Sudden weight gain with puffiness in hands and 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 degrees or higher
- Decreased or no fetal movement (after you begin to feel the baby move)
- Signs of labor