

# Common Discomforts & Annoyances of Pregnancy

from *Pregnancy and Childbirth, A Goal Oriented Guide to Prenatal Care*

All these discomforts/annoyances are a normal part of pregnancy and will end eventually. Try the hints given below. If you don't get relief, talk to your doctor, midwife or nurse about other possible measures to try.

<b>Discomfort</b>	<b>When</b>	<b>What you can do to help</b>
Ankle/foot swelling	Second trimester till end	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wear comfortable shoes or sandals and avoid high heels.</li> <li>• While sitting, prop your feet up (even a few inches up helps) and don't cross your legs.</li> <li>• Continue drinking lots of fluids.</li> </ul>
Breast tenderness	Begins early and continues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wear a good support or athletic bra day and night.</li> <li>• Soak in a warm bath.</li> </ul>
Breast leakage	Begins during the second trimester	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wear breast pads that don't have any plastic linings.</li> <li>• Avoid harsh soaps, creams or ointments</li> </ul>
Bleeding gums	Throughout	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use very soft tooth brush and gently brush teeth.</li> <li>• <b>Get</b> routine dental care.</li> </ul>
Constipation	Second trimester until the end	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eat foods high in fiber (bran cereal, green leafy vegetables, whole grain breads, fruits) every day.</li> <li>• Drink lots of fluids to include: soups, milk, water, and fruit juices, especially prune juice.</li> <li>• Exercise each day.</li> </ul> <p>Walk after meals. Avoid laxatives and enemas unless prescribed by your doctor or midwife.</p>
Contractions ( <i>Braxton-Hicks</i> )	After 20th week	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lie down on your left side for about 20 minutes.</li> <li>• Drink two to three glasses of juice or water.</li> <li>• Walk around.</li> </ul>
Dizziness	As your uterus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Get up from lying down slowly.</li> <li>• Do not go too long between meals and</li> </ul>

	enlarges	<p>carry healthy snacks with you.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Drink lots of fluids.</li> <li>• If you get dizzy, lie down on your side or bend forward with your head down close to your knees.</li> </ul>
Enlarging belly and breasts	Second half of pregnancy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sleep on your side with a pillow between your legs and lower abdomen.</li> <li>• Wear loose, comfortable clothing.</li> <li>• Wear a supportive bra even to bed.</li> </ul>
Fatigue or tiredness	Early in pregnancy and again in the last month	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take extra naps during the day if possible.</li> <li>• Continue exercise but not to the point of exhaustion.</li> <li>• Try to get at least 8 hours sleep a night.</li> </ul>
Flatulence	Anytime, especially after 20 week	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Try to schedule your daily bowel movement.</li> <li>• Avoid gas-forming foods such as beans, cabbage and sodas.</li> <li>• Increase bulk and water to diet.</li> <li>• Increase exercise.</li> </ul>
Food cravings	First half of pregnancy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• OK to indulge a bit as long as diet is otherwise healthy and food choice is not harmful.</li> </ul>
Frequent urination	Begins early, gets better mid-pregnancy, then increases towards the end of pregnancy when baby drops.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Know where the bathrooms are when out and about .</li> <li>• Don't cut back on fluids.</li> <li>• Expect to make many trips to the bathroom, day and night.</li> <li>• Avoid drinking lots of fluids before bedtime.</li> </ul>
Headaches	First half	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Avoid eyestrain.</li> <li>• Frequent eye rests and computer breaks.</li> <li>• Use mild analgesics as directed.</li> <li>• Avoid aspirin and other pain medications, unless you have discussed their use with care health care provider.</li> </ul>
Heartburn	Second trimester till end	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eat more frequent and small meals.</li> <li>• Eat slowly and chew your food well</li> <li>• Avoid deep fried, greasy, and spicy foods.</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Drink fluids between your meals.</li> <li>• Go for a walk after meals.</li> <li>• Avoid lying down right after eating.</li> <li>• Antacids, as directed, are safe and effective.</li> </ul>
Hemorrhoids	Anytime	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Avoid constipation.</li> <li>• Apply cold witch hazel pads or hemorrhoid ointment.</li> <li>• Do your Kegel exercises</li> <li>• Take sitz baths.</li> </ul>
Increased perspiration	Anytime	<p>Increase fluids</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Easily washable, comfortable, loose fitting clothing</li> <li>• Good hygiene</li> </ul>
Increased saliva	First trimester	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sugar free gum and sugar free hard candy</li> <li>• Mouthwash</li> <li>• Avoid starches.</li> </ul>
Increased vaginal discharge	Throughout pregnancy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wear cotton underwear. Don't wear sanitary napkins or mini pads.</li> <li>• Avoid nylon panty hose, feminine hygiene soaps or sprays.</li> <li>• <b>DON'T douche.</b></li> <li>• Inform your health care provider immediately, if your vaginal discharge is yellow or greenish, thick and cheesy, or has a strong fish-like odor or if there is soreness, itching or burning.</li> </ul>
Insomnia	Anytime but especially last trimester	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Try a warm bath prior to bed.</li> <li>• Do not have stimulating activity before bed</li> <li>• Use relaxation techniques.</li> <li>• Get in a comfortable position to sleep: place pillows between legs and under lower abdomen</li> </ul>
Leg cramps	Second half of pregnancy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Try eating a banana every day.</li> <li>• When you get a leg cramp: Stand up on flat surface or point your ankle and toes as if you were standing or try walking or curling your toes.</li> </ul>
Ligament pain (sharp pulling sensation on	Increases with increasing uterine size	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support your weight with your hands when changing positions.</li> <li>• Move slower.</li> </ul>

either side of the lower abdomen)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mild analgesic may help.</li> <li>• Apply ice to affected side.</li> <li>• Use maternity girdle/belt.</li> <li>• Lean back in a slant position supporting your back with your knees bent.</li> </ul>
Light headed & dizziness	Begins early and continues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stop what you are doing and lie on your left side with your legs up for short period of time .</li> <li>• Get up slowly from a lying down position.</li> </ul>
Low backache	Second half of pregnancy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good body mechanics helps: } Keep your back straight and your head up. Avoid bending at the waist to lift things. Wear comfortable flat shoes– No high heels! Don't stretch to reach high places. Avoid prolonged standing. Keep one foot on a stool with leg bent.</li> <li>• Move about frequently.</li> <li>• Get back rubs.</li> <li>• Use a firm mattress or put a board under your mattress.</li> <li>• Do pelvic rock exercises to strengthen your back.</li> </ul>
Nasal stuffiness & bleeding	1st trimester and again at term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use humidifier/vaporizer if air is dry.</li> <li>• Can use Over the Counter (OTC) decongestant such as Pseudoephedrine as directed.</li> <li>• Use a saline nasal spray.</li> <li>• Avoid using nasal decongestant sprays.</li> <li>• If your nasal stuffiness occurs often and is difficult to control, tell your health careprovider.</li> <li>• Blow your nose gently.</li> </ul>
Nausea ( <i>Morning Sickness</i> )	Occurs in early pregnancy and usually improves after first trimester.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nibble some crackers before getting up in the morning and when you are feeling queasy .</li> <li>• After getting up in the morning, wait an hour to drink any liquids.</li> <li>• Eat small snacks throughout the day instead of big meals.</li> <li>• Avoid any strong odors.</li> <li>• Drink liquids between meals rather than with meals.</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stay away from greasy, smelly or spicy foods</li> <li>• Chew sugar free gum and suck on sugar free hard candy.</li> <li>• Sip on room temperature Ginger ale or clear sodas.</li> <li>• Talk to your health care provider if your symptoms continue.</li> </ul>
Varicose veins	Increase as pregnancy increases	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Put support hose, ace wraps or elastic stockings on in bed before lowering feet down.</li> <li>• Avoid tight clothing.</li> <li>• Avoid crossing legs.</li> <li>• Good posture</li> </ul>
Vision changes	Throughout pregnancy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Don't buy a new prescription for your glasses, as you will probably return to pre-pregnant vision after delivery.</li> <li>• Take frequent eye breaks.</li> <li>• May not be able to wear contact lenses during pregnancy</li> </ul>