

# Common Pregnancy Discomforts & Remedies

## Nausea

- Because this is often due to lowered blood sugar levels, eat small amounts of food often, especially proteins and fruit. Eat something every two hours; nibble at night, too.
- Eat dry, whole grain crackers in the morning before getting up.
- Drink lots of water.
- Get plenty of rest; apply ice-cold washcloth to your eyes when nauseous.
- Vitamin B6 can help. Also try ginger (capsules, tea, candied, or ale).
- Acupuncture points on the wrist (or sea bands) can help.
- Make sure to get some probiotics either in capsules or by eating fermented foods.

## Vomiting

- Sip fresh ginger root tea through the day.
- Drink lots of water throughout the day a little at a time.
- Try some calming herb teas.
- If vomiting becomes severe, consult with your midwife.
- Eat and drink small amounts frequently.

## Backache

- Be aware of your posture.
- Do pelvic rocks to tone muscles and improve posture and circulation.
- Get adjusted by a Webster-certified chiropractor
- Avoid standing for long periods of time.
- Be careful how you bend and lift things – try keeping your back straight, knees bent.
- Wear flats or low heels.
- Apply hot pads to sore muscles alternating with cold pads to promote circulation.
- Massage the painful area with oils such as olive oil or almond oil.
- Be sure the pain you are feeling is not from kidney problems (mention it to your midwife if you have any other symptoms at all).
- Make sure your mineral and vitamin C intake is adequate.

## Sore Breasts

- Wear a well-fitted bra; alternatively, get rid of your bra – see what works for you.
- Apply wet or dry heat.
- Use vitamin E oil on your nipples (only during pregnancy, not during lactation).
- Practice relaxation and calming exercises.

## Heartburn

- Eat smaller, more frequent meals.
- Don't eat heavy foods close to bedtime. Choose a light protein snack instead.
- Eat papaya and chewable papaya enzymes.
- Eat yogurt and honey.
- 1 tbsp apple cider vinegar in a glass of water.
- Aloe juice can help.
- Try chamomile tea, peppermint tea, alfalfa tablets, and catnip tea.
- 1 tbsp apple cider vinegar in a glass of water.
- Try eating handfuls of raw almonds frequently.
- Tums can bring relief, but the type of calcium in them can cause calcifications in the placenta. Avoid if possible.

## Gas

- Identify the offending foods (beans, tofu, carbonation, etc.) and avoid them for now.
- Lie down and do abdominal breathing.
- Try some pelvic rocks.
- Check your food combinations (fruit with heavy protein, etc.)
- Since gas is often caused by prenatal vitamins/supplements, try taking them at night.
- Try eating papaya or papaya tablets.

## Constipation

- Avoid laxatives.
- Make sure you are taking a plant-based iron supplement such as chlorophyll.
- Make sure you are taking a liquid magnesium supplement.
- Try prunes, prune juice, or carrot juice.
- Eat high fiber foods (raw greens, bran, etc.).
- Eat plenty of fresh and dried fruit and vegetables (except bananas).
- Drink a lot of fluids – especially water.
- Exercise daily.
- Squat on the toilet or use a box or stool for elevating feet to facilitate bowel movements
- Psyllium products are okay to soften stool and increase bulk, but may cause gas.

## Hemorrhoids

- Put feet on a small stool while sitting on the toilet for bowel movement.
- Do pelvic rocks.

- Drink more fluids.
- Take sitz baths (shallow and hot for the parts of you where you sit).
- Do lots of pelvic floor exercises.
- Apply witch hazel or a commercial preparation.
- Rectal poultice or chamomile leaves and white oak bark powder.
- See “Constipation” above.
- Try to lie down or at least get off your feet for part of the day.
- Gently tuck the hemorrhoid back up into the rectum with a lubricated finger – instant relief!

## Bleeding Gums

- Increase your vitamin C intake.
- See your dentist. Floss regularly.
- Try applying white oak bark powder to your gums or use white oak bark tea for swishing around on the inside of the mouth.

## Braxton-Hicks Contractions

- Stay very well hydrated.
- These are usually good “warm-ups” for your uterus.
- Do abdominal breathing.
- Change activities and rest.
- Consider the possibility of it being premature labor: make sure you aren’t having more than 10 per hour.
- Red raspberry leaf tea is good for your uterus, but for some, it can worsen Braxton Hicks contractions.

## Headache

- Drink lots of water and eat plenty of protein.
- Have a protein snack before bed and if you wake up at night.
- Do head and neck rolls.
- If headache is persistent or severe, call your midwife.
- Consider chiropractic care.
- Warm baths are helpful.
- Relax and rest.
- Be cautious about pain relievers – ALWAYS ask your midwife first!
- Try a full body massage.
- Brisk walking in the fresh air.
- Essential oils or teas: peppermint, lavender, chamomile.
- Spray magnesium oil on your neck to relieve tension.
- Take a liquid magnesium supplement.

## Fatigue

- Get extra rest – take naps and avoid overdoing activities.
- Eat foods rich in manganese such as egg yolks, whole grains, and green vegetables.
- Take a quality B-complex supplement.
- Take a refreshing walk.

## Itching Skin

- Soothe your skin with oils, particularly wheat germ, sesame, almond, and safflower.
- Increase your consumption of foods rich in vitamin E.
- Try dry brush massage with a natural bristle brush or loofa sponge.
- Get more sunshine.
- It is possible that your liver is over stressed so it may be helpful to drink plenty of water to help rid your body of toxins.
- A great drink for helping your liver flush excess toxins gently:

*1 gallon distilled water*

*3 sliced cucumbers*

*3 sliced lemons*

*3 tbsp freshly grated ginger root (in produce section of grocery store)*

Combine the above in a pitcher and let sit in fridge several hours. Drink 4+ glasses daily.

Refill pitcher with water 2-3 times before dumping all contents and starting over.

## Leg Cramps

- Try a liquid calcium-magnesium supplement right before bed.
- Try pelvic rocks to improve circulation, try squatting and tailor sitting.
- Sleep with your legs slightly elevated.
- Avoid pointing your toes or stretching too hard. Do gentle ankle circles.
- Try not to cross legs and ankles.
- Check to see if salt intake is adequate.
- Eat potassium-rich foods such as avocados and bananas.
- Make sure you are getting enough exercise.
- To stop cramping in progress – point toe or heel or stand on the affected leg, stretching cramped muscles.

## Moodiness

- Remember this is a normal result of hormonal changes and extra blood and fluid. It will usually go away soon after the baby is born.
- Be nice to yourself, relax and talk with a friend.

- Take a Vitamin D supplement.
- Get 30 minutes of sunshine and fresh air daily.
- If excessive, take St. John's Wort as a supplement.
- Talk to your midwife if it's more than just the occasional bit of moodiness and blues!

## Sleeplessness

- Be sure to get enough exercise.
- Stay away from caffeine-containing foods and drinks.
- Keep your emotional climate as serene as possible.
- Sleep with extra pillows supporting your back and knees (in-between).
- If you can't sleep, try reading, sewing, or finish something that you have put off doing.
- Try taking a warm bath while drinking warm milk and/or chamomile tea.
- Take liquid calcium-magnesium shortly before bedtime.
- Carbs make us sleepy. Don't make carb-heavy dinners a habit, but a banana with some honey and Greek yogurt right before bed can do the trick!
- Hypnobabies tracks can do wonders for relaxing a busy mind and helping with insomnia.

## Round Ligament Stretching/Cramping (Groin Pain)

- A sudden, sharp pain in the groin is often caused by cramping of the round ligament of a sudden spurt of the uterus. Do pelvic rocks.
- Lean toward the cramped side as you would with a leg cramp until it eases.
- Get up and lie down more gently and slowly.
- Take liquid calcium-magnesium daily.

## Shortness of Breath

- Sit up straight to make for more lung space.
- Don't get up quickly.
- Do full arm circle exercises, breathing in deeply on the upswing.

## Stretch Marks

- Apply oils or cocoa butter frequently to your skin, paying special attention to your belly, buttocks, thighs, and breasts. Oils rich in vitamin E are very helpful.
- Increase your consumption of foods containing vitamin E.
- This is partly genetic, and for some women, all the oils in the world won't help.
- Purplish marks will turn silver and fade with time.

## Varicose Veins

- These are caused by circulation being inhibited by the weight of baby and increased blood volume.
- Keep off your feet as much as possible.
- Stay out of chairs; tailor sit on the floor. If you must sit in a chair, put the sole of one foot against your other thigh (like a half tailor sit) resting gently on the chair.
- Do pelvic rocks.
- Lie on the couch on your side, with feet up, resting on one arm or on pillows, for five minutes.
- Increase vitamin E intake.
- Increase intake of foods rich in vitamin C.
- Try a supplement specifically for varicosities, like *Vari-Gone* by Nature's Sunshine.

## Vaginitis

- Report to your midwife.
- Take a good-quality probiotic and eat fermented foods: yogurt, kombucha, sauerkraut, etc.
- Encourage air circulation by wearing cotton panties or none at all.
- Put a couple spoonfuls of apple cider vinegar into a squirt bottle filled with warm water and use it to rinse after every time you pee (or take lots of warm baths with a cup of apple cider vinegar in them).
- Do pelvic floor exercises to increase circulation to the area.
- Insert probiotic capsules vaginally or apply probiotics directly to labia and opening of vagina.
- Insert a clove of garlic into vagina overnight (can attach string if worried about getting it back out).

## Yeast Infections

- Report to your midwife.
- Drink plenty of fluids, especially water. Add freshly squeezed lemon to your water.
- Wear cotton underwear or none at all. Wear loose-fitting cotton clothing.
- Avoid all simple carbs: sweets, bread, pasta, juice, and even fruit.
- Put a couple spoonfuls of apple cider vinegar into a squirt bottle filled with warm water and use it to rinse after every time you pee (or take lots of warm baths with a cup of apple cider vinegar in them).
- Avoid intercourse during the worst symptoms or if painful. Your partner may also need to be treated to prevent reinfecting you. Men can harbor asymptomatic infections that you then pass back and forth, and your attempts at eliminating the infection will be ineffectual.
- Take 500 to 1,000 mg of vitamin C complex (with bioflavonoids) daily as a preventative or when infections occur.
- Take a probiotic supplement and eat plenty of live-culture plain yogurt each day to both prevent and treat vaginal infections.
- Insert probiotic capsules vaginally or apply probiotics directly to labia and opening of vagina.
- Insert a clove of garlic into vagina overnight (can attach string if worried about getting it back out).
- Use Thieves/OnGuard/similar essential oil blend on your feet and diffuse in your home.

## Urinary Tract Infections

- Symptoms: burning or pain when peeing, a feeling of pressure in your bladder, feeling like you need to pee but unable to, cloudy urine, or bad smelling urine.
- Drink lots of water, add freshly squeezed lemon to your water.
- Don't hold urine, pee when you need to, and urinate soon after sex.
- Drink unsweetened cranberry juice or take a cranberry supplement (recommended dosage twice daily)
- Take recommended dosage of probiotics twice daily.
- Take uva ursi supplement or tea twice daily.
- Take garlic supplement or raw garlic clove twice daily.
- Rinse vulva several times per day with ACV diluted in warm water.

## Water Retention/Swelling

- Report anything more than mild swelling to midwife, let her know immediately if face, hands, or upper legs are swelling suddenly.
- Get daily exercise, but don't overdo.
- Drink lots of water.
- Avoid processed foods.
- Eat lots of protein.
- Rest in bed on your left side if the problem is extreme.
- Do ankle and wrist rotations.
- Try natural diuretics like cucumbers and watermelon.
- Try Sassy Water:
  - 1 gallon distilled water*
  - 3 sliced cucumbers*
  - 3 sliced lemons*
  - 3 tbsp freshly grated ginger root (in produce section of grocery store)*Combine the above in a pitcher and let sit in fridge several hours. Drink 4+ glasses daily.  
Refill pitcher with water 2-3 times before dumping all contents and starting over.

## Weight Gain

- Understand that there is no set weight gain which can be applied to all women.
- Eat a well balanced diet. Eat to appetite, but avoid simple carbs and processed foods.
- Get plenty of exercise.