

## COMMON DISCOMFORTS OF PREGNANCY

There are some common discomforts which may occur at one time or another during pregnancy. Of course, prevention is always preferable to cure, so ways of possible avoidance are mentioned as well as remedies. The effectiveness of the following remedies varies greatly. If one doesn't work, try another.

**BACK PAIN** - Low (nonpathological) backache refers to the backache in the lumbarsacral region. This can increase in intensity as the pregnancy progresses because of the weight of the enlarging uterus changing the woman's center of gravity and the hormonal shift allowing normally stable joints to loosen up.

*PREVENTION/REMEDIES* --pay deliberate attention to posture. Do not let your stomach hangout, tuck your hips under. Stand straight and tall. Use proper body mechanics for lifting. Bend knees, not back. Exercise daily. Avoid excessive bending and lifting without rest periods. Pelvic rocks tone muscles and improves posture. Wear supportive shoes - avoid high heel shoes. Increase calcium. Chiropractic care is recommended.

**BLEEDING GUMS** may be caused by increased circulation. All mucous membranes are more sensitive during pregnancy.

*PREVENTION/REMEDIES* : massage gums, floss, use soft tooth brush, and increase foods rich in Vitamins C, D, B6, and calcium.

**CONSTIPATION** is very common during pregnancy. Due to the high levels of progesterone your intestinal tract slows down. You may become constipated from irregular eating habits, changes in environment, stress, or the iron in your vitamins.

*PREVENTION/REMEDIES* : daily exercise, chew food thoroughly, eat leafy greens daily, increase fiber, drink 8 plus glasses of liquids daily. Relax and take time for your bowel movements. LBS is a safe and effective (Herbal formula).

**LEG CRAMPS** are painful, spasmodic muscular contractions in the legs. The enlarged uterus applies pressure on the nerves supplying the legs. There can be a change in the calcium/phosphorous balance in the muscles. It can be aggravated by poor posture and chilling.

*PREVENTION/REMEDIES* : Avoid standing or sitting for long periods of time. Exercise to improve circulation. Keep the legs warm and don't point toes. Have warm milk at bedtime. A calcium/magnesium supplement 1000mg CA and 500 - 700 mg MAG.

**EDEMA** is swelling that makes the skin feel tight. During pregnancy, the amount of blood in your body increases by about 40%. The heart has to work harder to push this extra fluid around the body. This normal increase in fluid causes swelling of the hands and feet during the last three months of pregnancy. Swelling tends to be worse during hot weather. Puffiness of the eyelids, face, and hands if accompanied by high blood pressure and protein in the urine is a sign of a more serious condition called toxemia, which requires attention. Some puffiness is not unusual or serious, but it can be uncomfortable.

*PREVENTION/REMEDIES* : Avoid highly salted foods. Eat high protein foods, such as beans, cheese, fish, meat, poultry and tofu. Drink 8 plus glasses of water daily. Avoid standing for long periods of time. Elevate your legs for 20 minutes 2 or 3 times daily. Do not wear tight clothing.

**FATIGUE** Women often feel more tired than usual and need extra sleep during pregnancy. During the early months, this fatigue is caused by natural hormonal changes as your body adjusts to pregnancy. During the last month or two carrying the extra weight of the baby will be tiring. It is a sign that you need rest.

*PREVENTION/REMEDIES* : Check if you are anemic. Eat a well-balanced diet. Exercise regularly. This will make you less, not more tired.

**GAS** usually caused from undesirable intestinal bacteria.

*PREVENTION/REMEDIES* : Small frequent meals, chew food thoroughly, avoid constipation, avoid gas-forming foods, eat yogurt to build "friendly" bacteria in the intestines.

**HEADACHES** mostly caused from tension and fatigue. It is also a symptom of toxemia which is described more under edema. If headaches are severe or unusual, please report.

*PREVENTION/REMEDIES* : Regular and adequate rest. Use relaxation techniques if needed. Tea made with 2 parts camomile and 1 part rose hips. Do not go for long periods of time without food.

**HEARTBURN** is a burning sensation beginning behind the breast bone and going upward toward the throat. Contrary to the implication, it has nothing to do with the heart. Burping, nausea, acid regurgitation and pressure in the stomach area may be present as well.

*PREVENTION/REMEDIES* : Eat small frequent meals, avoid greasy, fried, and highly seasoned foods. Try sips of hot water or milk or peppermint tea with honey. At night use 2-3 pillows under your head and shoulders or side lying

position. Do not eat just prior to bed. DO NOT use antacids or baking soda that have a high sodium content. Papaya mints and stomach comfort tablets aid digestion.

**HEMORRHOIDS** are veins at the anal opening which are engorged with old blood caused from a weak area in the wall of the blood vessels. They may itch anytime, burn during bowel movements, and sometimes bleed slightly. It occurs more often during pregnancy because of the pressure the unborn baby puts on your circulatory system.

*PREVENTION/REMEDIES* : Prevent constipation, increase Kegal exercises and pelvic rocks. Get regular exercise and do not wear tight clothing. Tucks (pads with witch hazel) help relieve the pain and itching. Keep them refrigerated because they are more soothing when applied cold.

**ITCHING** on the abdomen and breast are caused from the skin stretching. Itching especially on the palms and foot soles can signal a liver compromise in pregnancy. It increases as pregnancy progresses.

*PREVENTION/REMEDIES* : wear soft clothing next to skin, rub in lanolin or cocoa butter. It is often aggravated by laundry detergent or fabric softeners. Dandelion Root, Yellow Dock, and Milk Thistle can be used safely during pregnancy as a liver tonic. Itching can be symptomatically relieved with plain yogurt massage into the skin and/or oatmeal baths (tie a diaper-full of oatmeal over the faucet as the water fills the tub).

**NAUSEA** or morning sickness is usually confined to the 4th to 14th weeks and occurs in about half of Western women. It usually occurs only in the morning but sometimes lasts throughout the day, especially at meal times. It is caused by the hormonal changes in pregnancy, anxiety, anticipation of nausea, low blood sugar and inadequate B vitamins.

*PREVENTION/REMEDIES* : try to keep your life peaceful, small frequent meals and snacks high in protein and B vitamins. Limit sweets and heavy fats and fried foods. Eat a piece of bread or few crackers before rising in the morning or when you feel nauseated. Get out of bed slowly. 10 mg. Vitamin B6 at bedtime may be helpful. Try Ginger Tea or Ginger in a capsule..

**SHARP SENSATION IN GROIN** is usually a cramping of the round ligament which anchors the uterus.

*PREVENTION/REMEDIES* : don't lie flat on your back, roll to your side before getting up from a lying position. Lean toward the sensation. Wear a "belly support" when active.

**SWELLING** see edema

**VAGINAL DISCHARGE** is often increased during pregnancy. \*If there is intense itching, strong odor or if it is profuse, you probably have a vaginal infection. There are several kinds, and treatment may be different for each. If you begin the remedies and baths as soon as you notice itching and the symptoms are not relieved in two days consult your health care person. It is important to identify an infection early. Your baby could pick it up in the birth canal.

*PREVENTION/REMEDIES* : Wear cotton crotch underwear, cleanse area with vinegar and water 3 times daily (1/4 cup white-vinegar to 1 quart water). Acidophilus (2 capsules 3 times daily) to promote good bacteria. Eliminate or decrease sugar and refined carbohydrates.

**VARICOSE VEINS** Along with the increase of blood volume, the weight of the growing uterus puts pressure on the blood vessels and the walls of the veins become weakened.

*PREVENTION/REMEDIES* : Take a brisk walk daily. Avoid standing or sitting for long periods of time. Don't sit with your legs crossed. Wear support stockings. Increase Vitamins C & E.

### **SIGNS TO REPORT**

- unusual or severe headaches
- burning or painful urination or frequent in 2nd trimester
- nausea and vomiting after 4th month
- fever, chills
- discharge of clear fluids or blood from vagina
- extreme swelling of hands, feet, legs, face
- blurred vision