



## Common Problems and Frequently Asked Questions in Pregnancy

Listed below are some common problems that can occur during your pregnancy along with several simple “self help” suggestions. If you have any questions, please contact the nurses through the patient portal.

### What to Avoid

- Cigarettes, marijuana, alcohol and illicit drugs
- Vaginal douching
- Hot tubs, Jacuzzis, Whirlpools, bathtubs with water exceeding 100°F
- If you are a cat owner, do not change litter box.
- Herbal supplements

### Okay to

- Dye hair
- Paint nails, get manicure and pedicure
- Paint with good ventilation
- Use bug spray
- Use sunscreen
- Take Tylenol as directed on bottle
- Have sex, unless having vaginal bleeding

## Nausea

Nausea in pregnancy occurs for most women and can happen anytime either day or night. Most symptoms will resolve by first trimester, although some women continue to have nausea throughout pregnancy.

We recommend eating small, frequent meals that combine protein and carbohydrates every 2-3 hours. You may also try eating a small, bland snack (such as crackers or toast) before getting out of bed in the morning. Limit fatty and spicy foods. Eat foods high in protein and B Complex: Nuts, dried fruits, brown rice, peanut butter, cheese, etc. Do not try to drink lots of water with your meals, instead drink your water between meals. Goal is to not have an empty stomach or a full stomach.

Other remedies for nausea include Emetrol, Ginger (in the form of tea, root powder, capsules, or extract up to 1,000mg/day), acupuncture, accupressure wrist bands (Sea Bands), and B-Natals or Pregger Pops.

If these ideas are not helping, the first medical treatment involves taking Unisom and Vitamin B6. You can take this regimen until nausea resolves. It is okay to continue this throughout pregnancy.

- Vitamin B6 10mg - 25mg 3 to 4 times a day
- Unisom 12.5mg can be added to the Vitamin B6 if nausea is not resolving

If Vitamin B6 and Unisom are not helping with your nausea, please contact us for additional prescription treatments. Also, if you become dehydrated, please contact us.

## **Cold, Allergies and Flu**

Pregnant women may be more susceptible to common colds. Practice good hand hygiene and stay hydrated. If you get common cold symptoms, you can try nasal saline spray, cough drops, throat lozenges, nasal lavage and these over the counter medications.

It is okay to take:

- Tylenol
- antihistamines (diphenhydramine/Benadryl, doxylamine, cetirizine/Zyrtec, loratadine/Claritin)
- guaifenesin (Mucinex)
- dextromethorphan (Delsym, Robitussin)
- chlorpheniramine (Robitussin)

Some medications, like Tylenol Cold and Sinus, will combine these medications. If your cold is not improving, please contact your primary care doctor or go to an urgent care

Discuss with your provider prior to taking pseudoephedrine or phenylephrine, especially if in first trimester or having blood pressure issues. It is not recommended to take Nyquil products with alcohol when pregnant.

Contact us if you or someone in your household has been diagnosed with the flu. We do recommend receiving the flu shot every year, especially when pregnant. Pregnant women should not receive the nasal spray flu vaccine which is a live virus vaccine.

Nasal stuffiness and drainage are very common symptoms in pregnancy. Many women with no prior allergies often complain of these symptoms during pregnancy only. Try to avoid your allergy triggers and stay away from people who smoke. Many over-the-counter antihistamines are safe to use including Benadryl, Zyrtec, and Claritin. Please contact us if you have been prescribed an allergy medication and we will check the safety for you.

Commonly prescribed antibiotics such as Keflex, Penicillin/Amoxicillin, and Z-pack/Zithromax are considered safe in pregnancy.

## **Fever**

If you have a fever of 100.4 F or higher, please notify us. Take Tylenol and increase your fluids. If the fever is related to an upper respiratory infection, you may need to see your primary care doctor or urgent care.

## **Backache, Minor Aches and Pains**

Tylenol (normal or extra strength) is okay to take during pregnancy. Take as instructed on the bottle. Check with your provider prior to taking NSAIDs (Motrin, Advil). There are times during pregnancy when NSAIDs can be safe in limited quantities. You may also get relief from a heating pad, resting, relaxing and taking warm (not hot) baths. Use correct posture and stay active.

Round ligament pain is sharp, sudden pain in the groin area caused by the uterus growing to accommodate the baby. Move carefully and avoid sudden movements.

Consider using a prenatal cradle from online store (Amazon) or a local maternity store. We would be happy to provide you a prescription to receive a Prenatal Cradle from a medical supply store, although commonly there is a better selection and lower price from an online store. Insurance companies do not commonly cover Prenatal Cradles.

## **Headache**

Headaches can be a common problem during pregnancy. Treat first with Tylenol, rest, fluids and caffeine. Warning signs to watch for: facial droop, loss of vision or blind spots. If these occur, you may need to receive emergency care.

Pregnant women with elevated blood pressures (gestation hypertension, chronic hypertension or Preeclampsia) should call for headaches not improved with rest, fluid and Tylenol.

## **Constipation**

Constipation is common during pregnancy. To prevent constipation, stay well hydrated, exercise regularly and eat fruits, vegetable or other sources of fiber.

Iron supplements can make constipation worse. If you are taking an iron supplement and are having a hard time with constipation, talk with your provider.

To prevent constipation, you can take an over the counter stool softener. To treat constipation, you can try the "BAP Diet" below. You can use a stimulant like bisacodyl, sennosides, docusate. It is also safe to take Osmotic laxatives like Miralax.

### ***BAP Diet***

Mix 6 ozs prune juice

3/4 cup apple juice

3 1/2 cups

Kellogg's All Bran

Take 1 -2 tablespoons daily with a glass of water. Keep in the refrigerator and make new every week.

## **Diarrhea**

Most cases of diarrhea tend to be self-limiting and do not require treatment. Make sure to stay hydrated by sipping on fluids. It is safe to use Imodium AD while pregnant. If the

diarrhea persists or is leading to dehydration, please contact us. You may require IV fluids or need to be assessed by your primary care doctor or Urgent Care.

## **Hemorrhoids**

There are many over the counter products to help with symptoms from hemorrhoids. Products like Preparation H, Anusol Cream or suppositories are safe to use during pregnancy. Avoid constipation by increasing the amount of fluids and fiber in your diet. Cleaning the rectal area with Tucks pads or sitting in a soothing tub or warm water (not hot) may help as well.

## **Indigestion and Heartburn**

Maalox, Mylanta, Tums, Roloids and Pepcid are safe to take during pregnancy. Avoid spicy foods and acidic foods. Eat small and frequent meals and avoid lying down after eating. If your symptoms persist, discuss with your provider.

## **Leg Cramps, Swelling and Varicose Veins**

Stay hydrated, stay active and elevate your feet when able. Wearing support stockings or socks can help prevent swelling. We can provide you with a prescription for medical support stockings.

## **Vaginal Bleeding and Cramping**

Please notify us if you are having vaginal bleeding or spotting. Avoid intercourse and tampons.

Mild cramping and bloating are very common early in pregnancy and usually not anything to worry about. Please let us know if you experience severe pain, one-sided pain or bleeding as these may be a sign of something more serious.

## **Vaginal Discharge**

You will normally have more discharge when you are pregnant. There can be a wide range of what is considered normal. If you have concerns that you may have an infection, please make an appointment.

## **Insect Repellent**

Insect repellents protect against mosquito bites that can transmit the West Nile Virus and tick bites which can transmit Lyme Disease. The best repellents use a chemical called DEET (Diethyltoluamide) which is very effective.

There is no evidence that the use of DEET by pregnant or lactating women poses a health hazard to unborn babies or children who are breastfeeding. In fact, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) has advised that pregnant women take precautions to reduce their risk of West Nile Virus by avoiding mosquito bites and using protective clothing and DEET based repellents. You should not travel to a Zika location while pregnant or trying for pregnancy.

## **Dental Visits**

Dental work, including routine cleanings and cavity fillings, are safe during pregnancy. Be sure to notify your dentist before your visit that you are pregnant. X-rays are safe during pregnancy if necessary but require double lead shielding of the abdomen. If you require a dental filling or more extensive surgery, local anesthesia WITHOUT epinephrine is recommended. Most antibiotics used for dental purposes are in the penicillin family and are safe for use during pregnancy. We do have a “Dentist Letter” on our website that you can provide to your dentist if needed.

## **Herbal Supplements**

Many herbs and supplements are NOT safe during pregnancy. Few studies have been done to measure the effects of various herbs on pregnant women or a developing fetus. The FDA urges pregnant women not to take any herbal products without talking to their healthcare provider first.

## **Painting**

Painting is considered safe during pregnancy with proper ventilation. Please do not climb on ladders while pregnant due to changes in balance and the risk for falls.

## **Massage Therapy**

Only a handful of small studies have focused on massage in pregnancy. Some benefits may include lowered anxiety, improved sleep, and a decrease in the minor aches and pains of pregnancy.

Generally, a massage is safe during pregnancy, but be sure the massage therapist is aware that you are pregnant. Many will adjust their technique to address the changes your body goes through as your pregnancy progresses.

## **Acne**

Many women will get acne or worsening acne during pregnancy. Over the counter products with topical Benzoyl Peroxide, Azelaic acid, topical Salicylic acid and Glycolic acid are considered safe. It is not considered safe to use the following during pregnancy: hormonal therapy, isotretinoin, tetracycline or topical Retinoids.

## **Falls, Trauma or Car Accident**

If you have any slips, falls, strike your abdomen or are in an automobile accident, please call our office immediately or the on-call physician after hours.