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## Common Discomforts in Pregnancy and Relief Measure

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For You formed my inward parts;  
You covered me in my mother's womb.  
I will praise You, for I am fearfully *and* wonderfully made;  
Marvelous are Your works,  
And *that* my soul knows very well.  
Ps 139:13-14

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### Danger Signs in Pregnancy

CONTACT YOUR MIDWIFE OR GO TO THE NEAREST EMERGENCY ROOM IF THESE SYMPTOMS PRESENT THEMSELVES.

- ☞ Abdominal pain, especially sudden, sharp pain.
- ☞ Vaginal bleeding.
- ☞ Persistent vomiting, especially past the first trimester.
- ☞ Illness and/or high fever.
- ☞ Painful urination or difficulty urinating.
- ☞ Unusual vaginal discharge or "fishy" odor.
- ☞ Sudden decrease or absence of baby's movements.
- ☞ Dizziness, especially persistent or with headache.
- ☞ Excessive swelling, especially in the face and/or upper extremities.
- ☞ Sudden gush of water from the vagina.
- ☞ Anything coming out of the vagina (bag of waters, umbilical cord, hand, foot, etc.)

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*Listed below are many of the most common discomforts experienced in pregnancy. Not everyone has all of them but most experience some of them at some point*

*If you think it might be an emergency please contact us, and head to the hospital. You know so trust your intuition.*

**Backache-** is a common complaint. Upper back pain needs added support and lower back comes from enlarging uterus and shift in center of gravity

Try: A supportive well made bra, improve posture,

Exercise- mild or gentle stretches and walking,

Complimentary Therapies: chiropractic, massage,

Hot packs, hot water bottle, comfrey compresses, hot bath

Bend and lift with the legs not the back

Rest lying on the side, support knee and belly when side lying,

Supporting lower back, wear low-heeled shoes

If you are every concerned about pain discomfort call and we will check and rule out any issues or illnesses causing back pain.

**Colds, Flu, Pneumonia, Fevers** – bacterial or viral origin requiring adequate hydration

Try: general symptoms

Drinking plenty of clear liquids

Eat fruit or light meals,

Get sufficient REST,

Use cool compresses

Eucalyptus can be used as a fever reducer and expectorant. Use diluted eucalyptus oil externally to ease symptoms of respiratory congestion

Colds: hot lemon water, hot bath, and keep warm

Flu: Lots of fluids, Clover tea, REST

Pneumonia: need bed rest and full -scale care, hot and cold fomentations,

It is a serious condition and can be fatal.

Seek immediate medical help if you experience difficulty breathing or pain in chest,

*We have a secret in our culture, it's not that birth is painful, it's that women are strong." - Laura Stavoe Harm*

**Constipation** – Hormonal changes in the body will decrease the time for digestion and increasing absorption of nutrients for growing baby. The enlarging uterus pushing on the intestines and dehydration may cause constipation.

Try:

Increasing water intake

Increase daily fresh fruits and vegetables intake

Eating chia seeds or flax seed regularly

1 TBSP of slippery elm a day

Adequate rest,

Establish of regular BM schedule - Do not suppress the urge to defecate or urinate.

DRINK HOT LIQUID followed with a cold liquid.

Drink prune or cherry juice regularly.

STOP supplements with iron and antacid until condition corrected.

Increase Vitamin C for better absorption of Iron

If the condition because unmanageable, have it checked out for possible other underlying health issues.

Not all of these suggestions may work for you, but you may find one that works really well for you.

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**Edema** – is caused by compression of the inferior vena cava suppressing the venous flow from lower extremities, or more commonly experienced from inadequate protein, salt or fluid intake

Try:

Increase sea salt or other good mineralized salt, fluid intake, and protein intake,  
Gentle massage of the region to increase lymph flow

Rest and elevate legs, lay on left side with adequate propping

Walking, regular movement, ,

Physiologic edema increases as day goes on

Ultimate pathological edema stems from dietary inadequacy- increase of protein

IF edema is accompanied with visual disturbances, headaches, heart palpitations  
please seek medical attention immediately. Keep me updated on any changes.

*A baby is something you carry inside you for nine months, in your arms for  
three years and in your heart till the day you die*

Mary Mason

**Fatigue** – Common in 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> trimester diminishing in the 2<sup>nd</sup> because of increased blood volume. Increase strain on the body because of pregnancy. One of the most common complaints heard. Anemia is another cause for fatigue.

Try: nap during the day when possible,

Regular exercise

Adequate rest

Maintain a positive attitude,

Get adequate nutrition,

If persistent fatigue continues consult with care provider to rule out other health possibilities.

**Headaches** - Vascular constrictions – muscular tension – toxin exposure

Migraines – consult care provider

Muscle contraction or tension headaches- hot bath, massage, chiropractic, relaxing tea, sleep

General care for headaches :

Stay hydrated and eat regularly

Avoid exposure to toxins, smoke, paints, harsh cleaners, coffee, chocolate, and excess sugar.

A cold cloth for the head and hot water for hands and feet.

Consult if combined with visual disturbance or vomiting. If a headache creates concern for you, call.

**Heartburn** – Hormonal changes to the smooth muscles combined with the upward pressure from the enlarging uterus on the stomach pressing against the lower end of the esophagus

Try:

Small meals, eat plain baked potato, eat and thoroughly chew almonds, filberts or cashews.

Walk after a meal

Use papaya enzymes, ,

Drink milk or a little cream, ,

Do not eat and drink together

Avoid spicy or fatty foods, no heavy meals at night

**Hemorrhoids** – a varicosity of the rectum and the anal opening, sensations of burning or pain can be experienced.

Try: ice packs,

witch hazel compresses

mild exercise and walking

no straining during BM, pushing them back in,

increase water intake

Preparation H

**Insomnia** – Stress, anxiety, hypoglycemia, enlarging uterus, inability to get in a comfortable position, or overly hot

Try: Tea before bed – chamomile or catnip,

Eat a protein snack just before bed,

Drink warm cup of milk

Take a warm bath before bed,

Be supported by pillows in bed.

Talk to your partner or a friend about emotional stresses

Have a clear and relaxed mind before bedtime

Do not exercise just before bed

As always, if the problem is severe or just doesn't seem right to you, let us know so we can discuss it and rule out underlying issues or illnesses.

**Leg Cramps** – Inadequate nutrients to provide for the proper firing of the muscle fibers, clotting issues

Try:

Prevention: Adequate sodium, calcium/magnesium, and potassium-

Nutrient rich foods to help leg cramps – banana, citrus fruit, cottage cheese, yogurt, seaweed, almonds dark greens, sesame seeds.

Proper hydration 64-96 oz. of water – clear liquids a day depending on exertion

Remedy: while sleeping elevate legs higher than heart,

Do not point toes,

Move or change positions frequently. Sit, stand, walk, lie down, stretch

Apply heat, walk a mile a day to improve circulation.

Concerns call me: Do not massage varicose veins until clot ruled out.

**Morning Sickness/Nausea and Vomiting** – One of the most common and annoying complaints of early pregnancy usually 6-14 weeks. Rising hormones, hypoglycemia, inadequate dietary needs or psychological ambivalence

Try:

1<sup>st</sup> trimester - Eating regularly. Eat before rising, every 2-3 hours, eat high complex-carbohydrate food followed by protein,

Eat stomach-settling foods: yogurt, cottage cheese, toast, crackers, high protein foods, drink to thirst (avoid dehydration),

Avoid spicy or greasy foods.

Suggestions: Drink Recharge or natural electrolyte,

Eat boiled eggs

Take ginger by capsule or tea, Drink peach, peppermint or spearmint tea, fennel or anise seed tea,

2<sup>nd</sup> trimester – Hypoglycemia, low blood pressure, multi-gestation, hydatidiform mole, late presenting ectopic pregnancy

Suggestions: anti nausea medications

Rule out serious health condition. Contact office with concerns.

3<sup>rd</sup> trimester – smaller meals, review what work previously. If it doesn't resolve the nausea quickly, consult with care provider. We are here to help you.

**Nosebleeds** – Increased blood volume and higher hormone levels may increase the likelihood of capillaries rupturing and a nosebleed to occur.

*Preventions*

Diet with adequate vitamin C, bioflavonoids, calcium can help to diminish or prevent.

Running a humidifier or vaporizer in the home

Using a nasal atomizer filled with warm water and a pinch of salt

*Coping with nosebleed:*

Gently pinch nose and tilt head back

Roll up small piece of paper towel and place in upper lip

Homeopathic Belladonna maybe helpful

If severe, hospitalization maybe necessary

As always, if the problem is severe or just doesn't seem right to you, let us know so we can discuss it and rule out underlying issues or illnesses.

*Think of stretch marks as pregnancy service stripes.* By Joyce Armor

**Pica**- mild to severe craving of non-nutritive substances: coffee grounds, dirt, starch, ice, flour, etc. indicative of a severe dietary deficiency.

Please notify care provider or office if you have these cravings

It can cause intestinal and pyloric obstructions, pre-maturity, toxemia, and perinatal mortality. Parotid gland enlargement may occur from eating starch.

We are here to help you find what you need.

Substitution: for non-nutritive substances- eggs, vegetables, grapefruit, tomatoes, beans, onions, green foods, dried fruits or molasses. As always, if the problem is severe or just doesn't seem right to you, let us know so we can discuss it and rule out underlying issues or illnesses.

**Round Ligament Pain** – enlarging uterus stretching and straining, improper lifting, moving quickly in rotated position.

Try: bending toward pain,

Breathe deeply,

Rest on her side,

Use 5-20 drops of St. John's Wort tincture,

Massage with castor oil or put on castor oil compress, leave for 30 minutes, heating pad or hot pack,

Do gentle movements, not sudden movements when rising from chair, car, bed, etc.

As always, if the problem is severe or just doesn't seem right to you, let us know so we can discuss it and rule out underlying issues or illnesses.

**Salivation**- It may start 2-3 weeks gestation, usually associated with nausea and an inability to swallow because it worsens the problem. The problem may increase in the amount until after birth.

Try: Increase carbohydrates and decrease fats and fluids

Review nutritional status – suspect Pica

Dehydrations a possibility if vomiting is involved, if so Third World or natural electrolyte drink

Homeopathic remedies and Chinese medicine may prove effective

Cinnamon flavored gum or tea may help

**Sciatica**- Nerve pain radiating in the hips and legs because of compression against the sciatic nerve. This happens most frequently in the 3<sup>rd</sup> trimester as the enlarging uterus pushes against the sciatic nerve and the pelvic joints shift and move to prepare for delivery

Try:

Massage Therapy, chiropractic

St John's Wort tincture 5-20 drop doses

However these may not work for everyone.

As always, if the problem is severe or just doesn't seem right to you, let us know so we can discuss it and rule out underlying issues or illnesses.

**Shortness of Breath (Dyspnea)**- The thinking is that increased levels of progesterone in fact the level of carbon dioxide is in the blood. Carbon dioxide levels are decreased and oxygen levels are increased. The metabolic activity increases the carbon dioxide levels hyperventilation counteracts this increase. These physiological changes start to take place in the 2<sup>nd</sup> trimester. In the 3<sup>rd</sup> trimester the enlarged uterus is pressing up on the diaphragm, which compresses the lungs.

Try: Be deliberate about controlling rate and depth of respiration.  
Stand and s-t-r-e-t-c-h your arms over your head slowly and take a deep breath  
Be conscious of good posture correcting as needed  
Reducing stress will greatly reduce the response of hyperventilation.  
As always, if the problem is severe or just doesn't seem right to you, let us know so we can discuss it and rule out underlying issues or illnesses.

**SKIN -Itching** – Dry stretched skins is more likely to itch than oily or lubricated skin. It may also be related to soaps or detergents. Did you recently change products?

Try: Add unrefined olive oil to your diet,  
Apply castor oil to skin daily  
Refer to Skin- Stretch marks for ideas of skin care  
Avoid mineral oils  
Take an Aveno bath  
Increase Vitamin A and E oil rich foods.  
As always, if the problem is severe or just doesn't seem right to you, let us know so we can discuss it and rule out underlying issues or illnesses.

**SKIN -Stretch Marks** – Most notable universal skin change is stretch marks. They can show up on the breast, belly, or thighs. New marks are reddish or purplish in color. It is presumed that poor nutrition and a lack of vitamin E in the diet contributes to the stretch marks.

Try: Massaging regularly the belly with cocoa butter may reduce them  
Mix ½ c. olive oil, ¼ c. aloe vera, 6 capsules of vitamin E and 4 capsules of vitamin A in blender and store in the refrigerator. Apply daily.  
Use creams with elastin  
Taking extra Vitamin E, C, bioflavonoids and zinc will help to optimize the elasticity in the skin.

**Vaginal Discharge** - Is common during pregnancy. Normal discharge will be milky or clear mucus without an odor. The purpose is to keep infection and bacteria away from fetus. Sometimes dryness may occur making intercourse uncomfortable.

Try; lubrication if you feel dry to reduce discomfort in intercourse  
Remove panties at night to reduce moisture if it seems excessive  
If you notice a fishy smell please contact us.  
If you have any concerns about your discharge do not hesitate to contact the office so we can rule out a possible infection

## Gentle Touch Midwifery

**Vaginal Infection** - are twice as likely to happen during pregnancy with increased symptoms manifesting in the third trimester. Many times they are caused from an abundance of yeast or bacteria. Yeast infections normally present with cheesy curd like discharge and itchy vaginal sensations. A discharge with a thin, scant milky consistency of a white or grey color is signs of a bacterial infection. A fishy odor is a common complaint. Bacterial vaginosis is associated with premature rupture of membranes, preterm labor, preterm birth, postpartum endometriitis, and wound infection after cesarean and it is thus imperative that we do not delay treatment  
Try: Cotton panties – going without underwear at night – wear panty liner to reduce moisture in the perineum  
Use of antifungal creams or suppository available OTC from a pharmacy  
Avoid tight fitting clothes  
Do not use tampons or douche  
Use condoms or abstain from intercourse until it is cleared up  
Wash hands after use of toilet  
If you present with these symptoms or have other concerns regarding vaginal discharge please contact the office.

**Visual disturbance** --(fluid retention, vascular pressure) – pregnancy related will correct after pregnancy, (organic disease) – unrelated to pregnancy – eye exam to determine cause

Be aware of any of the following and have it check out

1. Blurred vision may exist with diabetes
2. Distorted vision may be linked to retina leaking – check with eye doctor
3. Tunnel vision – check with eye doctor
4. Double vision with blurring or dimming may be linked to pre-eclampsia

Try: removing contact lens

Check sugar levels

Be checked for glaucoma or other optical diseases

For any eye disturbances lasting more that 2 hours contact your pregnancy care provider and seeing your eye doctor is advised.

**Varicosities** – tend to be hereditary. They usually worsen with the growing baby. Most commonly found in the legs and vulva, impaired venous circulation caused by enlarging uterus, constrictive clothing,

Try: internally butcher's broom

Wear support hose and avoid tight or constrictive clothing,

Avoid long periods of standing take rest periods and elevate legs, lie in the right angle position several times a day

Keep legs uncrossed while sitting sit with legs elevated maintain good posture, and good body mechanic,

Engage in mild exercise and walking to increase circulation

Take warm soothing baths do Kegel exercises

Rinse legs with an apple cider vinegar wash on legs.

If you have any concerns please do not hesitate to contact the office.