

Managing Discomforts In Pregnancy

*Tips and tricks for handling the not-so-fun parts of pregnancy.
When you see this (+) by the discomfort you are experiencing,
contact your midwife for her support and recommendations.
Please call or email with any questions.*

Backache

- Prenatal massage
- Chiropractic
- Pelvic rocks
- Heat/cold packs
- Good posture
- Prenatal yoga
- Avoid high heels
- Replace office chair with yoga ball
- Walk
- Swim
- Arica gel
- Epsom salt bath

Colds/Flu/Fever+

- Contact your midwife if:
 - Fever above 100 degrees
 - Fatigue
 - Body aches and pains
 - Nausea/vomiting
 - Chills
 - Diarrhea
 - Persistent cough
- Rest
- Eat well
- Stay hydrated
- Warm bath

Constipation

- Walk daily
- Warm bath
- Rub abdomen in clockwise direction for 10 min.
- Increase fiber intake
- Reduce cheese/meats/fatty foods
- Take a probiotic
- Take magnesium citrate 300-800mg/day
- 1 Tbsp black strap molasses daily
- Drink 8 oz warm, organic prune juice
- Try not to strain on the toilet and prop feet up on a small stool

Heartburn

- Walk after meals
- Smaller meals
- Slippery elm lozenges
- Avoid fatty and fried foods
- Eat a plain, baked potato
- Drink dandelion tea or ginger tea
- Eat raw almonds or papaya enzymes

Swelling (Edema)+

- Elevate feet 20 min. for 3-4 times per day
- Sleep on left side
- Exercise for 30 minutes daily
- 60-75g protein daily
- 2 eggs per day
- Salt food to taste with Himalayan sea salt
- Epsom salt bath
- Rub arnica gel or oil onto swollen feet, hands, legs
- Drink nettle tea

Fatigue

- Take naps
- Rest often throughout the day
- Exercise for 30 minutes daily
- Go outside daily
- Drink 2-3 cups nettle tea daily
- Avoid caffeine
- Ask for help
- 60-75 g protein daily
- Warm bath with citrus EO drops
- Prenatal massage

Headaches+

- *Contact your midwife immediately if your headache are sudden, persistent and severe.*
- Take naps
- Eat often
- Stay hydrated
- Prenatal massage
- Chiropractic
- Acupuncture
- Practice progressive relaxation
- 60-75g protein daily
- Avoid caffeine
- Drink chamomile tea

Hemorrhoids

- Pelvic rocks daily
- Avoid sitting for long periods of time
- 60-75g protein daily
- Try not to strain on toilet
- Witch hazel sitz bath
- Tuck's hemorrhoid pads



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Insomnia

- Eat often
- Exercise 30 min. daily
- Take a calcium-magnesium supplement daily
- Chamomile tea before bed
- Practice relaxation before bed
- Warm bath with lavender
- Avoid electronics/screens for one hour before bed

Itchy Skin+

- *Reach out to your midwife if the itching is severe, accompanied by rash, or if your palms or soles of feet itch*
- Switch to mild soaps
- Use a loofah to clean your body
- Warm (rather than hot) showers/baths
- Exercise 30 min daily
- Reduce fatty and fried foods
- Increase vegetable and fruit consumption
- Increase water consumption
- Consider taking a fish oil supplement

Leg Cramps

- Exercise 30 min daily
- Chiropractic
- Acupuncture
- Increase water consumption
- Prenatal yoga
- Stretch legs often
- Consider a magnesium supplement
- Elevate feet periodically throughout the day
- Coconut water or other electrolyte drink
- Prenatal massage
- Arnica gel on legs

Nausea/Vomiting+

- *Call your midwife if you also have a fever, or if you cannot keep any foods or fluids down for several hours.*
- Sea Bands
- Walk daily
- Eat small protein snacks throughout the day
- Avoid offending scents
- Avoid oily foods
- Rest/nap
- Smaller meals
- Chamomile tea or ginger tea
- Have partner cook meals
- Speak with midwife about vitamin B complex

Nosebleeds

- Increase vitamin C and calcium in diet
- Use a vaporizer or humidifier in home
- Saline nasal spray
- Go to hospital if severe

Pica+

- *Pica is a craving or desire to eat non-food items. Please call your midwife to discuss your cravings.*
- Increase calcium and magnesium in diet

Round Ligament Pain

- Bend toward the point of pain and breathe deeply
- Lie on the affected side until the pain passes
- Massage the area with castor oil and cover with plastic wrap. Place a heating pad on the area for 30 min.
- Place a hot water bottle at the site of pain
- Make slow movements

Salivation (ptyalism)

- Increase carbohydrate consumption
- Reduce fatty foods
- Small, frequent meals
- Chew gum
- Coconut water or other electrolyte drink
- Cinnamon bark tea (if not in 1st trimester)

Sciatica

- Prenatal yoga
- Pelvic rocks
- Chiropractic
- Acupuncture
- No high heel shoes
- Walk daily
- Swim

Shortness of Breath+

- *Call your midwife immediately if it is severe and accompanied with wheezing*
- Most of the time, this is normal, due to pressure from the uterus on the diaphragm—take stairs slowly and exercise carefully. Yoga poses may be helpful.

Stretch Marks

- Rub belly, breasts, and hips with:
 - Coco butter
 - Shea butter
 - Almond oil
 - Wheat germ oil
 - Oil infused with chamomile, orange, lavender, calendula, rose petals, and comfrey
 - Vitamin E oil
- Take oral vitamin E, C and zinc
- Rejuvederm cream

Vaginal Discharge+

- *If associated with pain, foul odor, or thick, cheesy discharge—contact your midwife*
- Normal if clear-ish, may be copious at term
- Bathe regularly
- Wear cotton panties

Vaginal Infections+

- *Contact your midwife if you suspect a vaginal infection*
- Signs and symptoms to look for:
 - Burning
 - Itching
 - Swelling
 - Redness
 - Pain
 - Unusual discharge
 - Foul odor

Varicosities

- *Do not massage*
- Exercise 30 min. daily
- Prenatal yoga
- Support stockings
- Avoid sitting for long periods
- Increase vitamin C in diet
- Dark leafy greens
- 60-75g protein daily
- Drink nettle tea daily
- Pelvic rocks
- Witch hazel sitz bath

Visual Disturbances+

- *Contact your midwife if sudden changes occur or if you see spots or “stars”*
- Changes in vision are typical
- See your eye doctor if vision problems persist or if you experience:
 - Pain
 - Redness
 - Discharge
 - Pressure

References:

- Davis, E. (2012). *Heart and hands: A midwife's guide to pregnancy and birth*. Berkeley: Ten Speed Press.
- Frye, A. (2013). *Holistic midwifery: A comprehensive textbook for midwives in homebirth practice, Volume 1 care during pregnancy*. Portland: Labrys Press.
- King, T., Brucker, M., Kriebs, J., Fahey, J., Geger, C., Varney, H. (2015). *Varney's midwifery*. Burlington, MA: Jones & Bartlett Learning.