

Treatment for Common Discomforts in Pregnancy

Discomfort	Possible Cause	Possible Remedies
Abdominal achiness	Stretching of the muscles & ligaments supporting the uterus	Sit down, put feet up, relax, flex knees towards abdomen, pelvic tilts, warm baths and heat
Abdominal cramp	Pressure on muscles, ligaments, veins & other organs Ligament stretching Orgasm Preterm labour	Experiment with different positions However, call your healthcare provider if you have cramping along with spotting, heavy bleeding, fever, chills, vaginal discharge, tenderness & pain, or if the cramps don't subside after several minutes of rest
Bleeding gums	Pregnancy hormones can cause gums to swell and become inflamed, which may lead to frequent bleeding especially while brushing teeth	Continue to floss and brush regularly Try a toothpaste for sensitive teeth. Apply ice to gums Avoid eating refined sugars Call your dentist if your gums are bleeding & painful. Decaying teeth can cause an infection that initiates preterm labour
Breasts, sore	Increased levels of oestrogen & progesterone. Increased size of breasts	Soreness often -but not always- decreases later in pregnancy Wear a good supportive bra and a sleep bra at night
Breathlessness	The uterus pushes on the diaphragm toward the lungs	A normal part of pregnancy, but if accompanied by chest pain, palpitations racing pulse or clamminess in fingers and toes, call healthcare provider; if asthmatic, also discuss with healthcare provider
Clumsiness	Carrying more weight, changing centre of gravity, relaxing of joints due to pregnancy hormones	No solution but watch out for wet, icy or uneven surfaces. Avoid wearing high heeled shoes. Don't carry things you can't safely drop. Call healthcare provider if accompanied by dizziness
Constipation	Pressure of the growing uterus on the rectum Pregnancy hormones (slow transit of food through digestive system Iron supplements	Eat high fibre foods (cereals, whole grain breads, fresh fruits and vegetables). Drink plenty of water (at least 6-8 glasses/day) Exercise
Dizziness	Pressure of the growing uterus on the	Healthy snack, water or juice

Dandelion Midwifery

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	<p>rectum Hunger. Low blood sugar Standing too quickly (postural hypotension) Anaemia Allergies Hyperventilation</p>	<p>Sit down Avoid lying on your back in late pregnancy If in a stuffy place, fresh air Call healthcare provider if dizziness is accompanied by blurred vision, headaches, palpitations</p>
<p>Oedema (swollen extremities)</p>	<p>Pressure of the growing uterus on the rectum Extra blood flow during pregnancy Growing uterus puts pressure on pelvic veins, slowing down circulation Excessive water retention</p>	<p>Elevate feet Wear support stockings Exercise Eat properly, avoid sodium and salt foods</p>
<p>Fatigue</p>	<p>Developing placenta Rapidly changing hormone levels Low blood sugar Low blood pressure</p>	<p>Take naps Adjust schedule Eat healthfully May subside in 3rd trimester</p>
<p>Finger pain & numbness</p>	<p>Carpal tunnel syndrome</p>	<p>Symptoms most often at night, so shift sleep position Avoid sleeping on hands Flex fingers and hands regularly If pain is persistent, surgery may be recommended Consult healthcare provider if numbness interferes with sleep or daily activities</p>
<p>Heartburn/ indigestion</p>	<p>Increased progesterone from developing placenta (makes digestion sluggish) Oesophageal reflux of stomach contents Growing fetes crowds abdominal cavity, slowing elimination and pushing up the stomach acids</p>	<p>Avoid rich or spicy dishes, chocolate, citrus and coffee Eliminate alcoholic beverages Eat small, frequent meals Take small mouthfuls and chew food well Avoid drinking large quantities of fluids during meals to avoid distending stomach Try not to lie down for at least an hour after eating Sleep propped up with several pillows or elevate the head of bed Over the counter antacid with magnesium or calcium Natural remedies (see below)</p>

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Haemorrhoids	Increased blood circulation, dilated veins Constipation	Sitz bath Ice pack or heating pad Avoid sitting or standing for long stretches Topical anaesthetic or medicated suppositories; over the counter remedies
Itchy skin, red & itchy palms and soles	Hormones and stretching skin Increased oestrogen	Apply moisturiser Oatmeal bath (available in drug & beauty stores) Wear loose clothing to avoid heat rash
Leg cramps	Added weight on leg muscles Excess of phosphorus (found in processed meats, snack foods, sodas) Shortage of calcium Pressure of expanding uterus	Stretch, massage Warm bath or hot water bottle Walk Increase calcium intake

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Nausea	Pregnancy hormones	Eat 6 small meals per day rather than 3 large ones. Avoid drinking fluids with meals. Instead drink fluids ½ hour after meals. Try to keep a little food in stomach at all times. Carry crackers when out Vit B6 50- 75mg every day may be helpful to some Try Acupressure (sea bands) on wrists Red raspberry / Ginger tea (see recipe & dosage below) or capsules Omit prenatal vitamins until nausea subsides but keep taking folic acid 1mg during this time
Nosebleeds	Increased blood supply to nose's delicate veins Dry membranes, especially in dry weather	Avoid nasal dryness Blow nose gently Drink extra fluids
Rectal bleeding	Anal fissure caused by constipation Haemorrhoids	Avoid sitting or standing for long stretches Do daily kegels Sitz bath Thoroughly cleanse affected area Apply ice Topical anaesthetics or medicated suppositories Sit on inflatable ring Eat a fibre rich diet to avoid constipation
Sleep disturbances, insomnia	Cant get comfortable Bladder under pressure (frequent urination) Heartburn Anxiety Nausea	No smoking or alcohol Cut down on caffeine Don't exercise before bedtime Establish bedtime routine Relaxation techniques Snack before bed to avoid nausea Avoid heavy meals and spicy foods Drink fewer fluids in late afternoon, evening Natural remedies (see below)
Spotchy skin	Pregnancy hormones	Usually diminish after pregnancy Keep out of sun Get enough folic acid Apply concealing makeup
Stuffy nose	Allergic rhinitis of pregnancy	Inhale a bowl of steam before sleeping Hot shower Nasal spray (use sparingly)
Urination, frequent	Growing uterus shrinks bladder capacity Increased pressure on bladder	Avoid excessive liquid intake before bed Contact healthcare provider if urination is accompanied by burning, as it may indicate a urinary tract infection

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Vaginal spotting	In late pregnancy, usually a sign of softening cervix or cervical dilation	Possibly, bed rest if it becomes excessive Consult healthcare provider - may suggest placenta previa, placenta abruptio, preterm labour
Varicose veins	Growing uterus puts pressure on pelvic veins, increasing pressure on leg veins, increase in progesterone, causing blood vessels to relax	Avoid putting too much pressure on legs and standing for long periods Exercise Elevate feet and legs Keep within recommended weight range during pregnancy Sleep on left side with feet on a pillow Support pantyhose

Sleeplessness

- It is important to have a night time routine. This could include light exercise and having a set bedtime. Use lots of pillows as props.
- Try warm milk. It contains an amino acid called tryptophan which aids relaxation
- Calms forte is a homeopathic remedy found at most health food stores
- Valerian tincture in small doses. Take with food or drink
- An mien pien is a Chinese remedy for sleeplessness in pregnancy or postpartum. Follow directions on the box and wash the outer red coating off the pill with cold water

Heartburn & Indigestion remedies

Ferrum phos; 6 or 12x dosage. Take 4-5 pills 2x daily. Available at most health food stores

- Lemon water, apple cider vinegar, celery, carrot juice, peppermint or chamomile tea. Any of these may work for some women.
- Acidophilus in pill or liquid form
- Alfalfa tablets: up to 6-8/day especially after meals
- DGL: a supplement in pill form that is very effective for some. Available in some health food stores
- Fruitin is very effective for some. Available in some health food stores