

Common Symptoms During Pregnancy

Tips for managing signs and staying healthy

This handout describes symptoms many women have during pregnancy and tips to help manage them. You may have none, only a few, or many of them. If you have concerns or questions, call your healthcare provider.

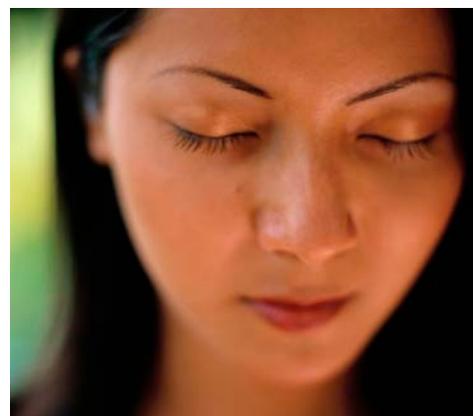
Symptoms and Self-care

Feeling Tired

Why: Changing hormones, increased metabolism, and anemia can all make you feel tired.

This might help:

- Get more sleep than usual.
- Take naps when your body tells you to.
- Talk with your healthcare provider about possible anemia. Many women have mild anemia (which can cause tiredness) during pregnancy.



You may feel more tired than usual while you are pregnant.

Breast Discomfort

Why: Your milk glands are developing and expanding.

This might help:

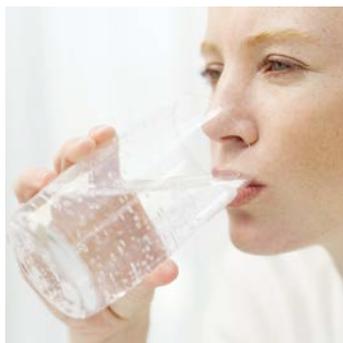
- Wear a larger, more supportive bra, or a nursing bra.
- Use cold compresses (for example, a washcloth dipped in cold water) on your breasts as needed.

Urinating Often

Why: Your uterus is expanding, and this puts pressure on your bladder. Your kidneys are also working harder. Most women find they need to urinate more often in the 1st and 3rd trimesters.

This might help:

- Avoid drinking liquids close to bedtime.
- Accept that you may be getting up at least once a night to urinate. Think of it as good practice for parenting!



Drinking more water may help ease a pregnancy headache.

Headaches and Vision Changes

Why: These are caused by nasal congestion, fatigue, eyestrain, anxiety, and tension. Check with your healthcare provider before taking any medicines – even if they are over-the-counter remedies. Vision changes are often related to increased water retention and are short-term.

Vision changes and headaches may also be an early symptom of high blood pressure that can develop during pregnancy. Tell your healthcare provider if you have vision changes.

This might help:

- Drink more water and eat something. Headaches, nose and head stuffiness, and nausea often improve if you have water or juice and a snack.
- Relax and rest.
- Use a hot, moist towel over your eyes and forehead, or try a cold compress.

Heartburn

Why: Caused by hormonal and physical changes.

This might help:

- Avoid foods that cause stomach distress and a burning sensation. Some of these may be carbonated beverages, caffeine, chocolate, high-acid foods like citrus fruits and juices, tomatoes, mustard, vinegar, and foods that are spicy, highly-seasoned, fried, or fatty.
- Do not eat big meals. Eat several small meals throughout the day, instead.
- Drink most of your liquids between meals. Do not “wash down” food at meals with a lot of liquid.
- Do not eat close to your bedtime. Give yourself at least 2 to 3 hours to digest food before lying down.



Drinking ginger tea may help settle your stomach.

- Sleep propped up with pillows or a foam wedge.
- Ask your healthcare provider to recommend an over-the-counter antacid you can take.

Nausea and Vomiting

Why: These symptoms are caused by changing hormones.

This might help:

- Eat small meals about every 2 hours so your stomach is never empty.
- Eat a few crackers (or any other food you can handle) before you get out of bed in the morning, or during the night if you wake up.
- Eat a protein snack such as cheese, eggs, meat, fish, nuts, or peanut butter before you go to bed.
- Eat crystallized ginger or drink ginger tea to help settle your stomach.

If you have diabetes, talk with your diabetes care provider about how to deal with nausea and vomiting.

Questions?

Your questions are important. If you have questions about your symptoms, call your healthcare provider during office hours.

If you think you need medical care right away, call 911.

