

# Common Discomforts & Problems in Pregnancy

## Hemorrhoids or Varicose Veins in the Vulvar Region (Near Vagina)

Symptoms of this condition include bleeding and pain after bowel movements, or tenderness and irritation at the rectum area. Straining during a BM can also lead to hemorrhoids. To prevent them, eat a high fiber diet and drink lots of fluids. If you have hemorrhoids, take a stool softener daily, as needed or use Tucks pads for external relief. To make your own Tucks pads at home, soak a disposable small cloth with witch hazel. These can soothe and help shrink hemorrhoids or vulvar varicosities. Some women find that wearing a maternity belt, which lifts the pregnant uterus, can help reduce pelvic varicose veins.

## Vaginal Spotting

Vaginal spotting occurs in half of all pregnancies, especially in the first 12 weeks. Most of the time, spotting will resolve on its own. It often occurs after intercourse or after straining to use the bathroom when constipated and is not a sign of miscarriage. There is nothing you can do to prevent or provoke the spotting. If the spotting is light, avoid intercourse for a few days. If the spotting becomes heavy, like a period (with or without cramping), avoid intercourse and please call us.

## Varicose Veins in the Legs

Elevate your legs during resting can help reduce the pressure in your leg veins. Other common remedies include wearing a maternity belt or knee high compression stocking while moving around during your day.

## Vaginal Discharge

Discharge during pregnancy is usually white, cloudy, or clear and thin. If the discharge has a foul or fishy odor, causes vaginal discomfort, or seems to be water instead of mucus, please call us.

## Decreased Fetal Movement

Most women usually begin to feel movement, such as a flutter, kick, swish, or roll, between 16 and 24 weeks. From 18-24 weeks on you should feel the baby move more and more. After 32 weeks, the movements will stay roughly the same until you give birth. You may be less likely to be aware of your baby's movements when you are active or busy. You should not try to make your baby move. Keep tabs on your baby's movement in utero, just in case – especially during third trimester. If you do notice a decrease in your baby's usual fetal movements, please call us immediately.



## Round Ligament Pain

Most women experience round ligament pain in the second trimester as the uterus outgrows the pelvis, pushing up into the abdomen. Symptoms include a sharp, sudden pain on one or both sides of the lower belly, hips, or groin area. Typically, the pain lasts only a few seconds at a time. Overworked ligaments from an active day with lots of movement may leave you feeling achy for hours. Relief methods include shifting your position throughout the day and wearing a maternity belt. Avoid sudden movements, high intensity exercises, and flexing your hips before sneezing or coughing. If resting does not alleviate pain or your symptoms become more severe, please call us.

## Swollen Feet and Ankles

Swelling is caused by fluid retention and usually gets worse late in the day. Prevention methods include drinking enough water, reducing salt intake, elevating your feet periodically during the day, and wearing comfortable shoes or compression stockings.

## Elevated Blood Pressure (Hypertension)

Hypertension or high blood pressure may develop in your pregnancy and sometimes in the postpartum period. Pregnancy causes the body to make more blood to support the baby's growth. Your provider will monitor your blood pressure at each prenatal and postpartum visit.

Preeclampsia is a serious blood pressure disorder that can happen during pregnancy or in the postpartum period. It usually develops after 20 weeks of pregnancy in the third trimester. Uncontrolled blood pressure can put you and your baby at risk. Symptoms of Preeclampsia include swelling of face/hands, headache, vision changes, pain in upper abdomen or shoulder. In rare conditions, seizures can happen as well. Contact your provider if you have any of these symptoms.

## Morning Sickness or Nausea

Luckily for most women, it resolves by about 13 weeks or so. If you can keep some food and fluids down, it should not cause any long-term problems for you or the baby. See the Safe Medications list for over-the-counter options. Prevention methods may include ginger tea or ale, ginger or lemon candy, the scent of fresh-cut lemon, cotton balls soaked in lemon extract, or wearing Sea Bands. An empty stomach generally makes you feel worse, so try to eat small amounts every hour. Eating a high protein bedtime snack and bland foods may help. Be sure to stay well hydrated. Try drinking about 1 ounce of Gatorade, water, or diluted fruit juice every 15 minutes. If you lose significant amounts of weight, cannot keep food down for more than 24 hours, are unable to urinate, or your urine becomes scant and dark-colored, please call us.

## Cramping

Mild and periodic cramping and uterine contractions are normal in pregnancy. If you notice cramping pain in your lower abdomen or back that lasts for about a minute then relaxes, especially with pelvic pressure and a hard uterus, it is most likely a contraction. If you have 6+ contractions in one hour (every 10 minutes or less), drink two big glasses of water and lie down or take a warm bath. If the contractions do not stop, please call us.

## Additional signs to call us

- You have a fever.
- You have symptoms of a urinary tract infection (UTI), such as:
  - Pain or burning when you urinate.
  - A frequent need to urinate.
  - Back or side (flank) pain.
  - Blood in your urine.
- You have skin changes, such as:
  - Rash.
  - Itching of hands or feet.
  - Yellow color to your skin.