

# Comfort in Pregnancy

## Backache:

- Be aware of your posture.
- do pelvic rocks to tone muscles and improve posture and circulation.
- Avoid standing for long periods of time.
- Be careful how you bend and lift things - try keeping back straight, knees bent.
- Wear flat or low heels.
- Apply hot pads to sore muscles alternating with cold pads to promote circulation.
- Massage the painful area with oils (such as olive oil or almond oil).
- Make sure your mineral and vitamin C intake is adequate.

## Sore Breasts:

- Wear a well-fitted bra or alternately, get rid of your bra.
- Apply wet or dry heat.
- Use vitamin E oil on your nipples (only during pregnancy, not during lactation).

## Shortness of Breath:

- Sit up straight to make for more lung space.
- Don't get up quickly.
- Do full arm circle exercises, breathing in deeply on the upswing.

## Nausea:

- Because this is often due to lowered blood sugar levels, eat small amounts of food often, especially proteins and fruit. Eat something every two hours; nibble at night, too.
- Eat dry, whole grain crackers in the morning before getting up.
- Drink LOTS of water.
- Get plenty of rest; apply ice cold washcloths to your eyes when nauseous.
- Vitamin B6 can help. Also try ginger (capsules, tea, candied or ale).
- Acupressure points on the wrists (or sea bands) can help.

## Heartburn:

- Check GAS list.
- Eat smaller, more frequent meals.
- Don't eat close to bedtime.
- Eat papaya and papaya tablets.
- Tums can be helpful and are high in calcium, but check with your care provider.
- Try chamomile tea, alfalfa tablets, and catnip tea.

## Gas:

- Identify the offending foods and avoid them for now.
- Try some pelvic rocks.
- Check your food combinations (fruit with heavy protein, etc.).
- Since gas is often caused by prenatal vitamins/supplements, try taking them at night.
- Try eating papaya or papaya tablets.

**Constipation:**

- Avoid straining while moving bowels.
- Avoid laxatives.
- Try prunes, prune juice or carrot juice.
- Eat high-fibre foods (raw greens, bran, etc).
- Eat plenty of fresh and dried fruit and vegetables (except bananas which are binding).
- Drink a LOT of fluids; especially water.
- Exercise daily.
- Squat on the toilet or use a box or stool for elevating feet to facilitate bowel movements.
- Psyllium products are okay to soften stools and increase bulk, but may cause gas.

**Hemorrhoids:**

- Put feet on a small stool while sitting on the toilet for bowel movements.
- Do pelvic rocks.
- Drink more fluids.
- Take sitz baths (shallow, warm baths that you 'sitz' in...!).
- Do lots of pelvic floor exercises.
- Apply witch hazel or a commercial preparation.
- Rectal poultice of chamomile leaves and white oak bark powder.
- See "constipation", above.
- Try to lie down or at least get off your feet for part of the day.
- Gently tuck the hemorrhoid back up into the rectum with a lubricated finger (not 'nice' but instant relief!).

**Bleeding Gums:**

- Increase your vitamin C intake.
- See your dentist; floss regularly.
- Try applying white oak bark powder to your gums or use white oak bark tea for swishing around on the inside of the mouth.

**"Braxton-Hicks" Contractions:**

- These are good 'warm-ups' for your uterus.
- Do relaxing breathing.
- Change activities or rest.
- Remember these are good for the baby.
- Consider the remote possibility of it being premature labour.
- Red raspberry leaf tea is good for your uterus.

**Headaches:**

- Drink LOTS of water.
- Warm baths are helpful; try to relax and rest.
- Be cautious about pain relievers.
- Do head and neck rolls.
- If headache is persistent or severe, call your care provider.
- Seek chiropractic help.
- Try a full body massage.
- Brisk walking in the fresh air.

**Fatigue:**

- Get extra rest; take naps.
- Avoid overdoing activities.
- Check for anemia.
- If working, take more breaks.
- Eat food rich in manganese such as egg yolks, whole grains and green vegetables.

**Itching Skin:**

- Soothe your skin with oils (wheat germ, sesame, almond, or safflower)
- Increase your consumption of foods rich in vitamin E.
- Try dry brush massage with a natural brush or loofa sponge.
- Get more sunshine.
- It is possible that your liver is over stressed so it may be helpful to drink plenty of water to help rid your body of toxins.

**Leg Cramps:**

- Try pelvic rocks to improve circulation, try squatting and tailor sitting.
- Sleep with your legs slightly elevated.
- Avoid pointing your toes or stretching too hard. Do gentle ankle exercises.
- Check to see if salt intake is adequate.
- Try not to cross legs and ankles.
- Eat calcium-rich foods, add a calcium-magnesium supplement.
- Make sure you are getting enough exercise.
- To stop cramping in progress, point or heel or stand on the affected leg, stretching cramped muscles.

**Moodiness:**

- Remember this is a normal result of hormonal changes and extra blood and fluid. It usually will go away soon after the baby is born.
- Be nice to yourself.
- Relax and talk with a friend.
- Try taking Evening Primrose Oil capsules 500 - 1000 mg each morning and again in the evening.

**Sleeplessness:**

- Be sure to get enough exercise.
- Stay away from caffeine-containing foods and drinks.
- Keep your emotional climate as serene as possible.
- Sleep with extra pillows supporting your back and knees (in between).
- If you can't sleep, try reading, sewing, or finish something you have been putting off doing.
- Try taking a warm bath while drinking warm milk and/or chamomile tea.

**Round Ligament Stretching/Cramping (Groin Pain):**

- A sudden, sharp pain in the groin is often caused by cramping of the round ligament or a sudden spurt of the uterus. Do pelvic rocks.
- Lean towards the cramped side as you would with a leg cramp until it eases.
- Get up and lie down more gently and slowly.
- Rest more.

**Stretch Marks:**

- Apply oils or cocoa butter frequently to your skin, paying special attention to your belly, buttocks, thighs, and breasts. Oils rich in vitamin E are very helpful.
- Increase your consumption of foods containing vitamin E.
- This is partly genetic, and for some women, all of the oils in the world won't help.
- Purplish marks will turn silver and fade with time.

**Varicose Veins:**

- Keep off your feet as much as possible.
- Stay out of chairs; tailor-sit on the floor. If you must sit in a chair, put the sole of one foot against your other thigh (like a half tailor sit) resting gently on the chair.
- Do pelvic rocks.
- Lie on the couch on your side, with feet up, resting on one arm or on pillows, for five minutes.
- Increase vitamin E intake.
- Increase intake of foods rich in vitamin C.

**Vaginitis:**

- Report to your care provider.
- Eat yogurt and cottage cheese and add good quality acidophilus to drinks.
- Sit tailor fashion to allow more air circulation in the vaginal area.
- Encourage air circulation by wearing cotton panties (or none at all).
- Take a lot of warm baths with a cup of apple cider vinegar in them.
- Do pelvic floor exercises to increase circulation to the area.

**Water Retention:**

- Get daily exercise, but don't overdo it.
- Drink LOTS of liquids.
- Eat more easily digestible proteins.
- Rest in bed on your left side if the problem is extreme.
- Do ankle and wrist rotations.
- Try natural diuretics like cucumbers and watermelon.

**Weight Gain:**

- Understand that there is no set weight gain which can be applied to all women.
- Eat a well balanced diet; eat to appetite.
- Avoid junk food.
- Get lots of exercise.