Common Discomforts of Pregnancy

**Fatigue**–some pregnant woman feel tired all the time. This is most common during the first 3 months of pregnancy and usually gets better. If you feel unusually tired, simply rest as much as she can. Exercise and a good diet will help too.

**Nausea and vomiting**–many women have” morning sickness” during the first few months of pregnancy. Try eating small meals, 5 or 6 times a day. Try including a protein in each of these snacks. Eat crackers, tortillas, or dry toast in the morning. Drink liquids separately from solid foods. Drink ginger tea or take ginger capsules 2 or 3 times a day before you eat.

**Heartburn**–eat small portions several times a day. Avoid greasy or spicy foods. Avoid chocolate, coffee, and other foods that bother you. Avoid tight clothing. Do not lie down for at least 2 hours after eating, and sleep with the head of the bed elevated.

**Constipation**–drink plenty of water. Eat lots of vegetables, fruit, and whole grains. Get some exercise. Avoid the use of laxatives.

**Frequent urination**–it is normal to need to urinate often because the growing uterus presses on the bladder. Burning with urination or urine that smells bad are signs of infection and you should call your clinic.

**Emotional changes**–you may have days when you feel sad or irritable for no reason. Some days you may even be in a bad mood and feel like everyone bothers you. This happens due to the changes in your hormones, fatigue, and the discomfort of pregnancy. Even if you’re happy to be pregnant, this is still a stressful time in your life. Most pregnant women have mood changes and this is a normal part of pregnancy.

**Back pain**–take a warm bath, morning and night. Put a hot water bottle or heating pad on your back for 20 minutes, 3 or 4 times a day. Don’t wear shoes with high heels. Avoid lifting or pushing heavy objects, including kids! Try not to stand for long periods of time. Put a pillow behind your back when you are seated or lying down. You can take 2 tablets of acetaminophen (Tylenol).

**Swollen feet and ankles**–pregnant women often get swollen feet and ankles, especially at the end of the day or when the weather is hot. Elevate your feet whenever you can. Drink plenty of water. Wear support stockings or knee high socks.

**Headache**–drink plenty of liquids. Rest with your eyes closed. Relaxed. You can take 2 tablets of acetaminophen (Tylenol). Check with your OB provider before taking any other pain medication.

**Leg cramps**–to relieve leg cramps, point your toes upward (towards your head) and then massage the calf so that the muscles relax. Don’t rub too hard. To prevent leg cramps, don’t point your toes downward. Elevate your feet whenever you can. Also, make sure there is plenty of calcium in your diet.

**Sudden pain in the side of your abdomen**–the uterus is supported by ligaments, which are somewhat like cords that attach the uterus to the bones of the pelvis. The ligaments in front are called the “round ligaments”. The round ligaments can give you a sharp, stabbing or pulling pain, especially when you stand up, roll over, or reach for something. Although the pain can be severe, round ligament pain is harmless. Sometimes it helps to massage the area, use a hot water bottle or heating pad, take a warm bath, or take Tylenol.

**Struggling to lie down and get up**–it is easier to change positions if you go to your side first and then use your hands, rather than using your abdominal muscles.

**Feeling hot or sweaty**–this is very common and nothing to worry about, as long as you don’t have other signs of illness. You should wear loose clothes, dress in layers, bathe daily, and drink plenty of fluids.

**Hemorrhoids**- Hemorrhoids are varicose veins of the anus or rectum. They are caused by the increased weight of pregnancy or straining to have a bowel movement. They can hurt, burn, or itch. Sometimes they bleed when you have a bowel movement. Sitting in a tub of warm water helps soothe the discomfort. You can also use Witch Hazel, Tucks pads, or hemorrhoid cream. The best thing you can do is avoid constipation. Ask your OB provider before you use any other medications for hemorrhoids.

**Difficulty sleeping**- Lie on your side and put something soft (like pillows) between your legs and behind your back. Ask someone for a lower back massage. Before you go to bed try to keep your environment quiet and calm (no cells phones or loud music). Try drinking warmed milk or a mild herbal tea without caffeine.

**If these suggestions do not help, discuss them with your OB provider.**