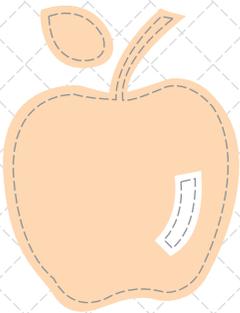
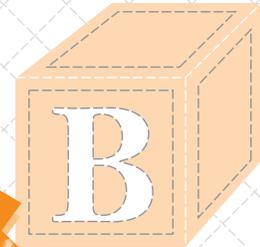
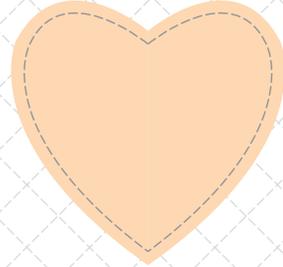
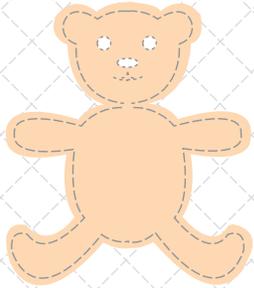


# Nine Months of Changes



A NEW LIFE



# *Nine Months of Changes*

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Pregnancy begins with the joining of an egg and a sperm. It ends with the birth of your baby. The nine months you are pregnant will be nine months of change.

While your baby is growing inside, you will be changing too. Your uterus will get larger as your baby grows. You will produce more blood to carry food and oxygen to your baby. Your breasts will be getting ready to produce milk. At the emotional level, you will be getting ready to be a mother, and your family will be getting ready to welcome a new person.

During these nine months, you are your baby's world. Make this world the best it can be.



## First Trimester: Months 1, 2, 3

### Your baby's growth

#### Weeks 1 to 4

- 0.5 cm (1/4 in) long — about the size of a pea
- spine and spinal cord are forming
- digestive system is starting to form
- umbilical cord is forming
- heart is beating by day 25



actual size

#### Weeks 5 to 8

- 2.8 cm (1 1/8 in) long
- weighs 1 g (1/30 oz)
- face is forming; eyes are shut
- long bones, internal organs, and brain are forming
- arms and legs are forming



actual size

## Second Trimester: Months 4, 5, 6

### Your baby's growth

#### Weeks 13 to 16

- 15 cm (6 in) long
- weighs 115 g (4 oz)
- strong heartbeat
- active muscles: baby turns, rolls, kicks, and waves arms and legs
- skin is thin and covered with soft, downy hair
- fingernails and toenails are forming
- swallows the liquid that is in the uterus (amniotic fluid)



1/4 actual size

#### Weeks 17 to 20

- 25–30 cm (10–12 in) long
- weighs 450 g (1 lb)
- heartbeat can be heard
- sucks thumb
- hiccups
- has hair, eyelashes, and eyebrows
- mother may feel movement



1/4 actual size

Changes you may notice during Months 1, 2, 3

Weeks 9 to 12

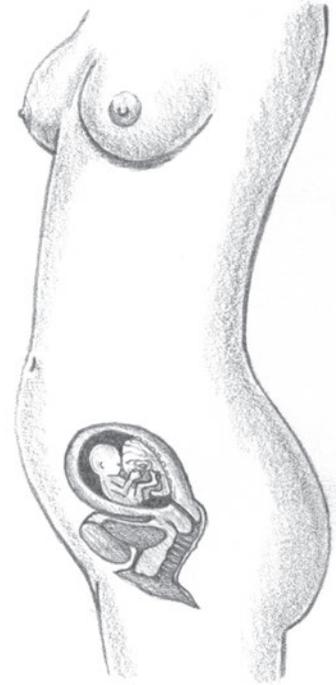
- 7.5 cm (3 in) long
- weighs 28 g (1 oz)
- arms and legs can move
- has fingers and toes
- has fingerprints
- can smile and frown
- tooth buds are forming



1/2 actual size

During the first three months, your baby is growing and changing, but your body does not yet look different.

- Your uterus grows from about the size of a tennis ball to the size of a grapefruit
- You may gain or lose up to 2.3 kg (5 lb)
- You may find there is more wetness (secretions) coming from your vagina
- Your breasts feel full and tender
- You may need to pee (urinate) often
- You may feel faint, tired, or sick
- You may feel like throwing up (nausea) or you may throw up (vomit). This is called “morning sickness.” It can happen at any time of the day or night.



Changes you may notice during Months 4, 5, 6

Weeks 21 to 24

- 28–36 cm (11–14 in) long
- weighs about 680 g (1 1/2 lb)
- skin is wrinkled and has a creamy coating that protects it
- opens eyes
- has a strong grip
- lots of movement: baby wakes, sleeps, yawns, cries, sucks thumb



1/8 actual size

Most women start to feel a lot better. If you were tired, moody, and had morning sickness, you may find that they will go away. You may feel dreamy and calm. As you feel the baby move and kick, your baby becomes very real.

- You begin to look pregnant.
- You should be gaining about a pound a week—1.5–1.8 kg (3–4 lb) a month.
- You may notice that your nose is stuffy. You gums or nose may bleed.
- You may notice some changes in your skin: a dark line down the centre of your abdomen (called the linea negra) and a dark shadow on your face (called the mask of pregnancy).



**Third  
Trimester:  
Months  
7, 8, 9**

*Your baby's growth*

**Weeks 25 to 28**

- 36–43 cm (14–17 in) long
- weighs about 1000–1400 g (2 1/2–3 lb)
- very active — kicking and rolling around
- starting to make breathing movements
- adding body fat and brain is growing



1/8 actual size

**Weeks 29 to 32**

- 42–45 cm (16 1/2–18 in) long
- weighs 1800–2200 g (3 1/2–4 lb)
- bones in the head are soft and flexible
- is storing iron in liver
- sleeps and wakes
- responds to sounds

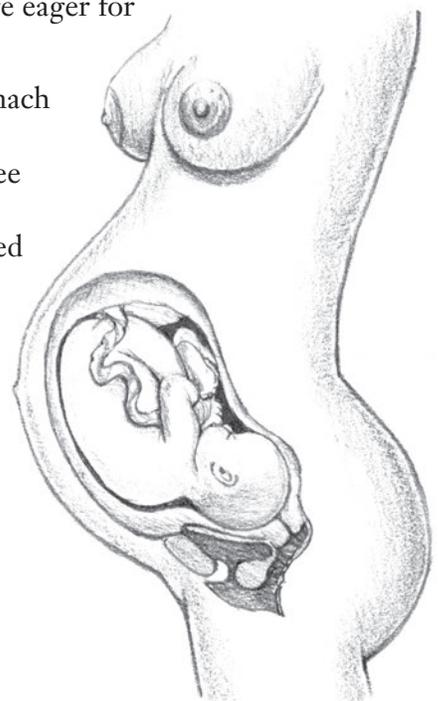


1/8 actual size

*Changes you may notice during Months 7, 8, 9*

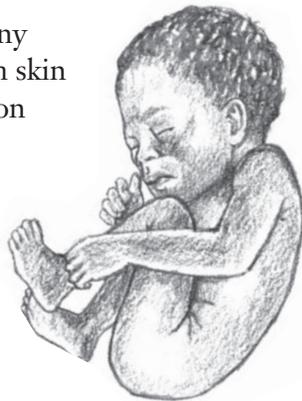
By this time your baby is very real, and you are eager for the birth.

- You may notice stretch marks on your stomach area (abdomen) and breasts.
- You may notice that you sweat often and pee (urate) more.
- You may notice skin changes such as tiny red spots called “vascular spiders.”



### Weeks 33 to 36

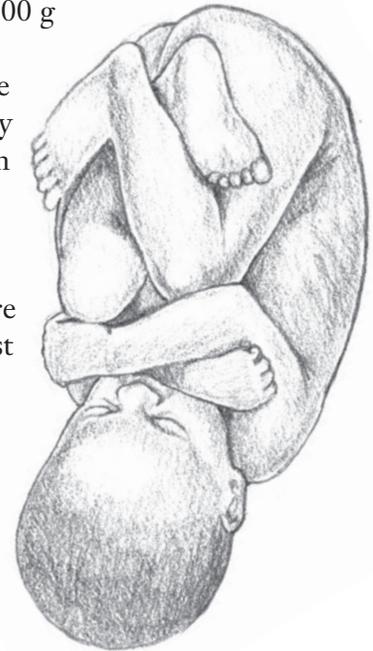
- 48 cm (19 in) long
- weighs 2200–2700 g (4–5 lb)
- getting too big to move around as much
- at about 36 weeks will settle into a head-down position for birth
- adding fat, this means skin has fewer wrinkles
- brain continues to grow
- skin has thick, creamy coating (vernix)
- most of the downy hair is gone from skin
- gaining protection from germs (immunity) from mother



1/8 actual size

### Weeks 36 to 42

- 50 cm (20 in) long
- weighs 3200–3500 g (7–7 1/2 lb)
- lungs are mature
- has enough body fat to keep warm
- fingernails are long
- head is large
- arms and legs are curled up against body
- Ready to be born!

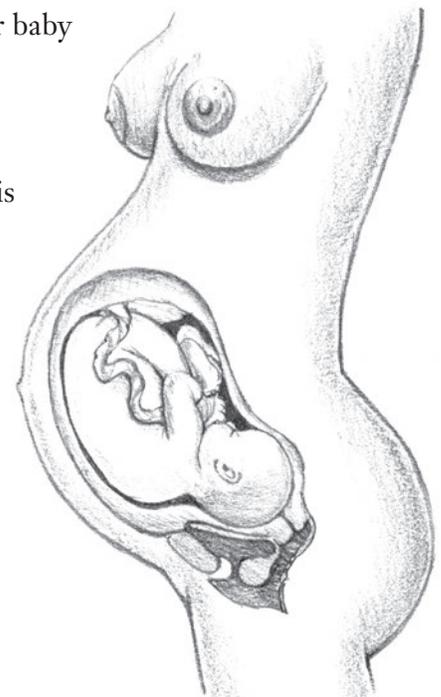


1/4 actual size

### What you might be feeling during the 9th month (Weeks 36 to 42)

This is it! You are full of mixed feelings. You can hardly wait to see your baby and you are nervous about giving birth.

- You may feel lots of “Braxton-Hicks” contractions. These are normal practice for labour. See Section 7 - Healthy Birthing to learn more.
- You may notice that the baby has dropped lower into your pelvis. This makes it easier for you to breathe. It also means you will pee (urinate) more often.
- You may have a burst of energy
- Signs that labour is starting:
  - backache
  - a plug of mucus with a little blood in it comes out of your vagina. This is called a “show.”
  - contractions may get stronger and don’t stop when you move around
  - your water breaks
- You have loose bowel movements



HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

# Relief from Common Aches And Pains

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When you are pregnant, your body goes through many changes. Some of them are not comfortable. But most of them are normal. You do not need medicine or treatment. It's also nice to know that not all women have ALL of the problems we talk about here.

In general, if you eat healthy food and stay active you will be more comfortable during these nine months.

## Backache

### What causes it?

Poor posture and your growing abdomen can make your back sore.

### What can I do about it?

- Stand up straight. Tighten your buttocks and pull in your tummy muscles. Good posture will ease the strain on your back.
- Do pelvic tilts and abdominal exercises every day. See Section 6 - Healthy Activity for directions. Doing a pelvic tilt on your hands and knees can help a lot. Here's how to do it:
  1. Lower yourself to the floor, on your hands and knees. Keep your back flat and your head level with your back. Do not let your back sag.
  2. Tighten your buttocks and abdominal muscles, pulling in your tummy and curving your back up. Hold for a few seconds.
  3. Relax back to where you began. Keep your back flat. Do not let it sag.
  4. Repeat a few times.
- Be careful when lifting. See Section 6 - Healthy Activity, for safe ways to lift.
- Use a firm mattress on your bed and sleep on your side with your knees bent toward your chest. The left side is best because it helps your blood to circulate.
- Use a heating pad, hot water bottle, warm bath, or ice to reduce the ache.
- Wear shoes with a low heel and good support.
- A back rub from a friend or partner can also feel good.



### **What if none of this helps?**

- Talk to your health care provider.
- Do not take any kind of pain medicine without asking your doctor if it is okay to do so.

### **What causes breasts to change?**

Most breasts start to change early in pregnancy and continue to change until the baby's birth. Your breasts may get larger. You may be able to see the veins in your breasts, and you may notice a tingle in your nipples. The darker skin around your nipples (the areolas) may get larger and darker, and the little bumps on them stand up more. Later in your pregnancy you may notice a sticky, yellow fluid leaking from your breasts. This is colostrum, the fluid your body makes before it starts to make breast milk.

All of these changes are your body's way to get ready to produce milk for breastfeeding.

### **What can I do about it?**

Breast changes are a normal part of pregnancy. If your breasts are tender or uncomfortable, wearing a support bra can help. A good bra is also important when you are doing exercise or being active. Some women also wear a bra at night because it feels comfortable.

## *Breast Changes*

## Constipation

### What causes it?

When you are pregnant, your bowels slow down a bit and your growing uterus causes pressure on your bowels. This makes constipation more likely. Women who take iron pills when they are pregnant may be constipated. It can also be caused by a change in your eating habits.

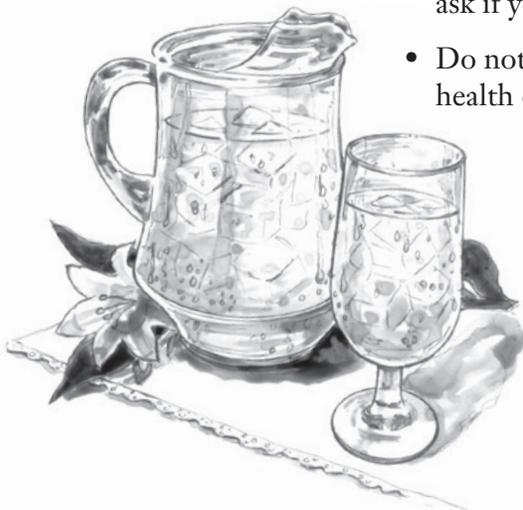
You are constipated if your bowel movements are hard and dry or are difficult to pass. It is not a serious problem. Although it may be very uncomfortable, it does get better.

### What can I do about it?

- Eat high-fibre foods like whole wheat bread, whole grain cereal, bran, beans, dried fruit, and fresh fruit, prune juice and vegetables.
- Drink lots of water — 6 to 8 glasses a day.
- Stay active. Walk every day or do some other exercise that you enjoy.
- Develop good bowel habits:
  - When you have to go, do it. Do not wait.
  - Wait until you have to go. Do not try to force it.
  - Do not strain. Relax and take your time. Try raising your feet on a stool or a box while you are sitting on the toilet.
- Try drinking hot or very cold liquid on an empty stomach.

### What if none of this helps?

- Talk to your health care provider if the problem lasts more than a week or so.
- If you're taking iron pills because your health care provider has told you to, ask if you should stop taking them.
- Do not take any laxative or other medicine without checking with your health care provider.



## Cramps in your legs and feet

### What causes it?

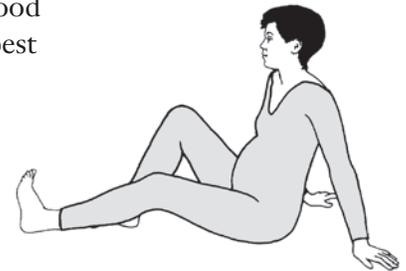
Cramps in your feet and legs are most common in the last 3 months of pregnancy. They can be caused by the pressure of your uterus on the blood vessels and nerves that connect to your legs. They can also be caused by pointing your toes when you stretch.

### What can I do about it?

- Stay active. Exercise will provide more circulation to your legs.
- Be careful not to point your toes when you stretch, especially when you first wake up in the morning.
- Wear comfortable shoes. Avoid wearing high heels.
- Avoid standing for long periods of time.
- Avoid crossing your legs.
- Wrap ice in a wet towel and place it on the cramped muscle. Leave it there for 10 to 12 minutes to help relax your muscles.
- If you do get a muscle cramp, do not massage, squeeze, or press on it. Blood vessels bruise easily, and pressure will only make the cramp worse. The best thing to do is to stretch gently.

#### *For foot cramp:*

1. Sit down. Keep the cramped leg straight. Bend the other knee.
2. Slowly flex the toes of the cramped foot towards your nose.
3. Hold your legs this way until the cramp goes away.



#### *For leg cramp:*

1. Sit on the floor, near a wall.
2. Using your cramped leg, press the bottom of your foot against the wall. Keep your other leg bent.
3. With your arms straight, lean back on your hands for support.
4. Pressing your foot into the wall, slowly straighten your cramped leg until the back of your knee touches the floor.
5. Hold your leg this way until the cramp goes away.



### What if none of this helps?

- Talk to your health care provider if you have painful cramps often.

## Feeling tired (fatigue)

### What causes it?

Feeling tired is a normal part of being pregnant. Women notice it most during the first three months. It is caused by the fact that your body is using a lot of energy to adjust to pregnancy.

You may also feel tired again during the last two months because you are using a lot of energy to carry the baby's weight and your own.

### What can I do about it?

- Accept that you need to rest and allow time to rest during your day.
  - Rest before you become too tired.
  - Rest when you can, even at work. Sit down and put your feet up for a few minutes. If you have a place to do so, lie down on your side.
  - Take naps when you need them. Take a nap instead of a coffee break.
  - Go to bed early to get the extra sleep you need.
- Take good care of your health. Eat well and stay active. Regular exercise will make you feel less tired, not more tired.

### What if none of this helps?

- Check with your health care provider. Do not take any medication.
- Do not use coffee or caffeine pills to stay awake.



### **What causes it?**

You can have gas at any time while you are pregnant. It happens because your digestive system slows down when you are pregnant. This gives gas more time to form. It is also caused by the pressure of your uterus on your stomach and intestines.

### **What can I do about it?**

- Notice which foods you ate just before you felt the gas pains. Try to eat only small amounts of foods that give you gas. Many kinds of food can cause gas. They are different for everyone.
- Try not to be constipated. Follow the advice in the section on constipation.
- Stay active.

### **What if it does not help?**

- Gas may annoy you. In most cases, it is not a serious problem.
- If you have a lot of pain from gas, talk to your health care provider.

### **What causes it?**

The urge to pee (urinate) is very common during the first three months of pregnancy. It is also strong in the few weeks before the baby is born. It happens because your uterus is pressing against your bladder (the sac that holds pee). This leaves only a small space in your bladder, and you need to empty it (or urinate) more often.

### **What can I do about it?**

- It is good to drink plenty of fluids when you are pregnant, so do not reduce the amount you drink during the day.
- If you find you have to get up many times a night to go to the bathroom, try to drink less during the evening.

### **What if none of this helps?**

- Don't worry. This may annoy you, but it is a normal part of being pregnant.
- If you have any pain or burning when you pee (urinate), check with your health care provider. You may have a bladder infection.

## *Flatulence (Gas)*

## *Frequent Urination (needing to pee often)*

## Groin Pain

### What causes it?

Near the end of the nine months, you may feel a “pull” or “stitch” below your belly or in your groin. This is caused by the weight of your pregnancy stretching the ligaments that hold your uterus in place. This kind of pull can happen when you exercise, cough, or sneeze. It is not comfortable and not serious. Do not let it stop you from being active.

### What can I do about it?

- Stand up straight. Poor posture can cause this pain and make it much worse.
- Do not stand for long periods of time.
- If you get this pain while you are doing exercise, try to notice what makes it happen, and avoid doing this.

*If you get groin pain:*

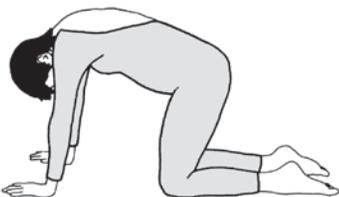
- Do a light, massage in circles around the sore area. Use a very light touch when stroking downward.
- To stop a sudden pain:
  1. Lean against something for support.
  2. Use both hands to lift up your belly. This will take the pressure away.
  3. Continue to hold your belly until the pain goes away.



- Try lying down on the sore side with your legs bent into your chest. This takes the stress off your ligaments and may provide quick relief.



- Do pelvic tilt on your hands and knees:
  1. Kneel on your hands and knees. Keep your back flat and your head level with your back. Do not let your back sag.
  2. Tighten your abdominal (stomach) muscles, pulling in your tummy and curving your back upward. Hold for a few seconds.
  3. Relax back to your starting position. Keep your back flat. Do not let it sag.
  4. Repeat a few times.



### What if none of this helps?

- Talk with your health care provider if this happens often and is painful.

## Headache

### What causes it?

Most of us get a headache once in a while. They do not stop just because you are pregnant. During pregnancy, some women get more headaches than usual for them. This is caused by normal changes in the blood vessels. Headaches can also be caused by fatigue and stress.

### What can I do about it?

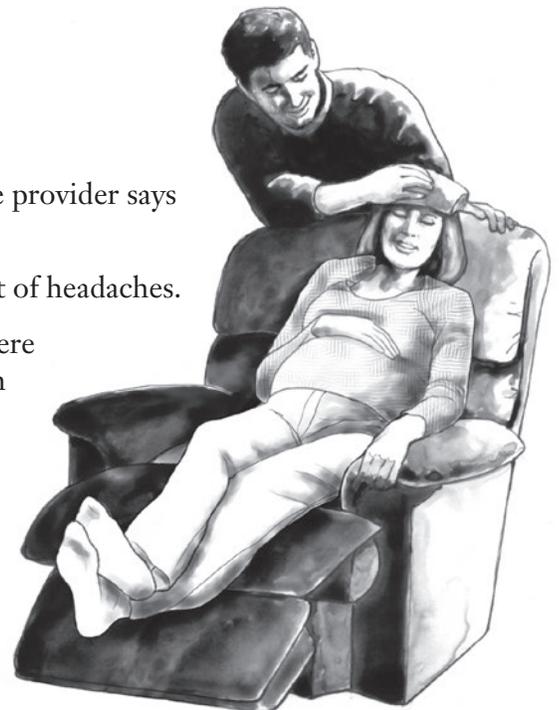
- Think about the things that give you headaches and try to avoid them. Eye strain, cigarette smoke, coffee, and fluorescent lights cause headaches in some people.
- Get plenty of rest.
- Eat many small meals. Do not go for a long time without eating.
- Drink lots of fluids.

*If you get a headache:*

- Find a quiet place and relax.
- Put a damp cloth on your forehead or the back of your neck. Some people like a warm cloth, others want a cool one.
- Rub your neck, shoulders, face, and scalp. It's even better if someone else does this for you.
- Get some fresh air.

### What if none of this helps?

- Do not take any kind of pain medication until your health care provider says it is okay.
- Talk to your health care provider if it seems like you have a lot of headaches.
- Contact your health care provider right away if you have a severe headache, or a headache that lasts a long time, or if your vision is blurry (fuzzy).



## Heartburn

### What causes it?

Heartburn is caused by acids pushing up out of your stomach. When you are pregnant, it happens because the stomach muscles relax, making it easier for food to come back up and your growing uterus pushes up against the stomach, which forces acids up.

### What can I do about it?

- Sit up straight during meals. This gives your stomach as much room as possible to digest food.
- Eat many small meals instead of a few large ones.
- Eat slowly.
- Avoid foods with a lot of grease or spices.
- Remain sitting up for an hour or two after eating. Lying down after you eat can cause heartburn.
- Avoid heavy meals for 2 to 3 hours before bedtime.
- Do not drink anything just before or after eating.
- When lying down raise your head and shoulders.

### *If you get heartburn:*

- Take small sips of water or milk.
- Sit up straight or stand. Lying down may make heartburn worse.
- At night, sleep with the head of your bed raised a bit, or use extra pillows.
- Try sleeping on your side.

### What if none of this helps?

- Talk to your health care provider or pharmacist before you take antacids or any other kind of medication.

## *Hemorrhoids (Piles)*

### **What causes it?**

Hemorrhoids are swollen veins in the rectum. They are caused by the pressure of the baby on the lower part of your body. They may also be caused by pushing too hard when you are having a bowel movement. Hemorrhoids can be painful or itchy and may hang out of the rectum. They usually go away after delivery but will sometimes last for a few weeks after the birth.

### **What can I do about it?**

- Try not to be constipated. See the section on constipation for advice on this.
- Do not sit on the toilet for a long time. Do not push too hard when having a bowel movement. Putting your feet up on a stool while sitting on the toilet may reduce the strain a bit.
- Do pelvic floor exercises to improve blood circulation in your pelvic area. See Section 6 - Healthy Activity for details on this.
- Sitting in a warm bathtub for 15 to 20 minutes may reduce the pain.
- Putting warm pads or ice packs on the hemorrhoids may also help.

### **What if none of this helps?**

- Talk to your health care provider.
- Do not use any kind of medication, ointment, or suppository without asking your health care provider if it is okay.



## ***Insomnia (Trouble Sleeping)***

### **What causes it?**

Some women have difficulty falling asleep and staying asleep when they are pregnant. During the first three months, this is because your body is getting used to the changes that come with being pregnant. Later on, the size of your uterus and your baby's kicking can make it hard for you to find a comfortable way to sleep. Insomnia can be more of a problem for women who have shortness of breath.

### **What can I do about it?**

- Stay active. Walk or exercise every day. It is easier to get to sleep if your body is tired.
- Avoid caffeine (in coffee, tea, cola drinks and chocolate).
- Try to go to bed and get up at the same time each day.
- Avoid eating large meals near bedtime.
- Try to find a comfortable way to sleep. Use pillows and rolled-up blankets for support.
- Sleep on pillows that prop you up if you are short of breath.
- Have a warm shower or bath before bed.
- Have a glass of warm milk or hot water with lemon before bed.
- Try going for a walk in the evening.
- Try relaxation exercises. See Section 6 - Healthy Activity, for directions.
- Read a really boring book.
- Get a backrub. It may help you sleep.

### **What if none of this helps?**

- Do not take any sleeping medication unless your health care provider says it is okay.

## Morning Sickness (throwing up)

### What causes it?

“Morning sickness” is the feeling that you might throw up (nausea). It is also the act of throwing up (vomiting). Both of these can happen during the first three months or longer. Although it is called “morning sickness”, it can happen any time of the day or night.

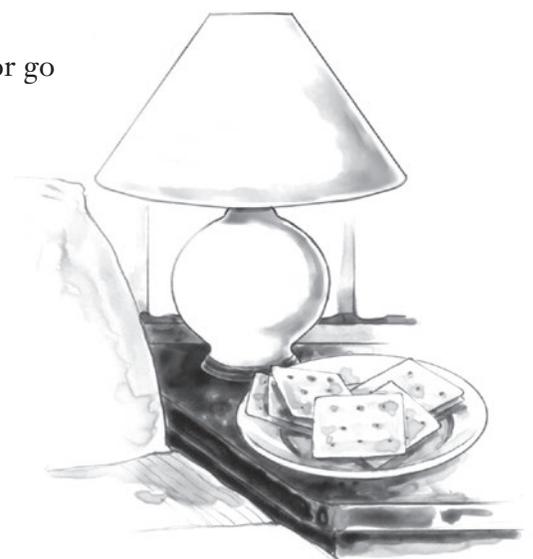
Some pregnant women get morning sickness, and others never do. If you are one of the women who gets it, you may not be able to stop the feeling that you might throw up (nausea). But you may be able to stop the throwing up (vomiting) by trying what we suggest here. You may need to try a few things before you find one that works for you.

### What can I do about it?

- You will feel better after you eat, so even though you may not want to, it’s important to eat. Nausea is much worse if your stomach is empty.
- Try eating a few crackers or dry toast before you go to bed or before you get up in the morning. Keep them by your bed.
- Instead of a few large meals, try eating small meals or snacks every 2 or 3 hours. A bedtime snack can be helpful. Try peanut butter or a protein rich food to keep your stomach full for a longer time.
- Try not to eat solids and liquids at the same time. Have soups and drinks between meals instead of with meals.
- Avoid fried foods.
- Avoid coffee.
- Avoid smoking.
- Get up slowly in the morning. Do not move quickly or suddenly.
- If you feel like you might throw up, sip soda water or ginger ale, or go outside for fresh air. A short walk might help.

### What if none of this works?

- Talk to your health care provider.
- Do not take any medicine for nausea without asking your health care provider if it’s okay.
- Try not to worry. Morning sickness does not affect your baby’s growth or health.



## **Shortness of Breath**

### **What causes it?**

Shortness of breath can happen at any time during pregnancy. As your uterus grows, it presses against your rib cage. This leaves less room for your lungs to expand. For many women, shortness of breath stops when the baby gets bigger and moves down into your pelvis. For most women who are having their first baby, this happens about two weeks before labour begins.

### **What can I do about it?**

- Very little can be done to prevent shortness of breath. Having good posture can help. Stand up straight. This will give your lungs room to expand.
- Try sleeping propped up on pillows.
- Try taking slow deep breaths.
- Raise your arms over your head, lifting your rib cage.
- Do not exert yourself too much.
- Wear loose clothing.
- Avoid smoking.

### **What if this does not help?**

Tell your health care provider about your problem. Shortness of breath can also be a sign that you do not have enough iron in your blood.

## **Swelling**

### **What causes it?**

During pregnancy, the amount of blood and other fluid in your body increases. This is normal. It may cause your feet, face, and hands to be puffy or swell a little. This is most common during the last three months of pregnancy. About 8 out of 10 women get some swelling when they are pregnant.

### **What can I do about it?**

- Avoid wearing tight clothes or jewelry—for example, avoid elastic waists, knee-high stockings, socks with elastic tops, rings, and tight watchbands.
- Try to gain weight in a slow, steady way.
- Avoid standing for long periods of time.
- Do not sit with your legs crossed.

- Get as much rest as you can.
  - Rest with your feet up many times each day.
  - When you are resting, lie on your left side. This can improve your blood circulation and reduce swelling.
  - Try to reduce your workload.

*If you have mild swelling in your legs, ankles and feet, do this exercise for 10 to 15 minutes, twice a day:*

1. Lie with your head and shoulders propped on pillows.
2. Keep your knees bent a bit, and put your legs on a chair or sofa, so they are a bit higher than your heart.
3. Curl your toes under and then make them stand straight up. Repeat this several times.
4. Make circles with your feet. Repeat this several times.
5. Tighten and relax the muscles in your upper legs (thighs). Repeat this several times.



- If you have mild swelling in your hands, bend your fingers back and then make them stand straight again. Move your hands in circles.

### **What if none of this helps?**

- Do not take any kind of diuretic (water pills), or other medication unless your health care provider says it is okay.
- If you have pins and needles in your hands, especially at night, talk to your health care provider.
- Contact your health care provider right away if you have sudden or severe swelling in your hands and face, or if you feel numb in your hands and face.

### **What causes it?**

When you are pregnant, it is normal to have more thin, milky fluid coming out of your vagina. Sometimes there can be a lot of this wetness. As long as the fluid is thin and milky, it is normal and you do not need to worry.

If the wetness makes you itchy, smells bad or feels like it is burning, you may have an infection. If this happens, contact your health care provider.

## *Wetness in your vagina*

### **What can I do about it?**

- Keep the area clean and dry.
- If the wetness is heavy, try wearing a panty liner.
- Do not douche.

## Varicose Veins

### What causes them?

When you are pregnant, the walls of your blood vessels stretch because they have to carry more blood. As well, your uterus is growing and this puts extra pressure on the veins in your legs. Blood circulates more slowly. More blood stays in pools in your veins. When this happens, it is called varicose veins. Varicose veins can also happen in the vulva or the rectum (hemorrhoids or piles) if you sit too long in one place or if you have weak pelvic floor muscles.

If you had varicose veins before, you may find that they are worse when you are pregnant.

### What can I do about it?

- Stay active. Walking and moving improve circulation.
- Stand up straight. Good posture will improve your circulation. See Section 6 - Healthy Activity to learn more.
- Do leg, foot, and pelvic floor exercises often each day. See Section 6 - Healthy Activity, for more information.
- Lie down with your legs raised for 10 to 15 minutes often each day. Support your feet on pillows so that your legs are a bit higher than your heart.
- Do not stand for a long time. Be sure to sit down and put your feet up often each day.
- If you sit during the day, change position often. Using a footstool may help. Get up and walk around for a few minutes once an hour.
- Do not sit with your legs crossed.
- Sleep and rest on your left side.
- Avoid tight clothing, especially socks with elastic tops and knee-high stockings.
- Wear shoes with low heels and good support.

*If you get varicose veins in your legs:*

- Wear fitted support stockings. Put them on before you get out of bed in the morning. If you get up first and your legs begin to swell, lie down and raise your legs for 10 minutes before you put the stockings on.

### What if none of this helps?

- Talk to your health care provider about it.
- Do not take any medication unless your health care provider says it is okay.

