

Minor Discomforts of Pregnancy

Backache

As the pregnant women's center of gravity changes the lumbodorsal spinal curve is accentuated and the women's posture changes causing stretching and strain of the muscles in this area. Pain in the upper back may occur as a result of the increased weight of the breast during pregnancy.

Timing During Pregnancy

Upper Backache-First Trimester

Lower Backache- Second and Third Trimesters

Complaints

Pain,

Aching

Tightness, or spasm in upper or lower back

Numbness or tingling in back

Buttocks or extremities

Prevention Or Relief Measures

Avoid excessive weight gain

Wear a well-fitted supportive bra

Practice good posture and body mechanics

Avoid high heels shoes

Utilize pelvic rocking exercise

Massage and relaxation

Prenatal Cradle support garment

Exercise-walking, swimming, prenatal exercise program 3-4 time a week

Analgesics such as two Tylenol (325mg) every four hours if needed

Danger Signs

Sharp or severe persisting back pain

Pain in the kidney area

Tightening of the uterus associated with back pain

Constipation

Constipation is associated with hard, dry, difficult and infrequent bowel movements. Constipation is caused by the hormonal influence of progesterone, changes in dietary habits, decreased physical activity and relaxation of the abdominal muscles. Iron supplements may also cause constipation.

Timing During Pregnancy

Most common in the second and third trimesters

Complains

Irregular, hard bowel movements

Abdominal cramping and gas
Hemorrhoidal discomfort

Prevention of Relief Measures

Adequate fluid intake
Adequate roughage and fiber in diet
Adequate exercise
Warm liquids upon arising
Avoid dependence on over the counter laxative and stool softeners

Danger Signs

No bowel movement for more than five days
Laxative dependency
Severe abdominal pain
Passing blood or mucus per rectum

Cough or Upper Respiratory Infection

The hormonal effects of progesterone and estrogen during pregnancy may cause a variety of upper respiratory complaints including: cough nasal congestion or stuffiness and ear congestion. Cough or fever may be attributed to a cold, virus, bronchitis or sinusitis.

Timing During Pregnancy

May occur anytime during pregnancy

Complaints

Nasal discharge, congestion, stuffy nose, sneezing, postnasal drip, cough, sore throat, headache, fever, fatigue, hoarseness/laryngitis.

Prevention Or Relief Measures

Increase fluid intake to 8-10 glasses of water everyday
Humidify environment
Smoking cessation
Avoid second hand smoke
May take two Tylenol (325mg) every four hours as needed
May take guaifenesin 10cc (two teaspoons) every four hours
May take pseudoephedrine (Sudafed) one tablet every four hours
Increase rest
Gargle with honey and lemon
Flu vaccine may be given during the second and third trimesters

Danger Signs

Fever higher than 102
Chest pain associated with coughing
Nasal drainage which is yellow or green
Severe sore throat or white/red spots in throat

Symptoms lasting longer than 7-10 days

Dizziness

The physical and physiological change during pregnancy may cause periods of lightheadedness, a disturbed relation to space or the sensation of being about to faint. In addition to these changes pregnant women may experience supine hypotension- lowered blood pressure associated with lying on back with little or no elevation of the head shoulders. Supine hypotension causes rather dramatic symptoms including: feeling cold and clammy, intense sweating, nausea and dizziness.