

# Common Discomforts & Problems in Pregnancy

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

Many women notice pain, bleeding after bowel movements (BM), and tenderness or irritation at the rectum from this condition. Straining while trying to have a BM can also lead to hemorrhoids. To prevent them, eat a diet high in fiber and stay well hydrated. If you suffer from hemorrhoids, you can use a stool softener daily, as needed. Tucks pads often help. To make your own, soak a disposable cosmetic pad or 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.

## Varicose Veins in the Legs

Resting often with your legs elevated can help reduce the pressure in your leg veins. Wearing a maternity belt or knee high compression stocking may help.

## Vaginal Discharge

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

## 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.

## Can't Feel Baby Moving

Most women usually begin to feel movement, such as a flutter, kick, swish, or roll, between 16 and 24 weeks. There is no set number of normal movements you should be feeling - every baby is different. 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 drop-off in your baby's usual fetal movements, please call us.





### Morning Sickness or Nausea

Luckily for most women, it resolves by about 13 weeks or so. If you can keep down some food and fluids, it should not cause any long-term problems for you or the baby. Be sure to stay well hydrated. Try drinking about 1 ounce of Gatorade, water, or diluted fruit juice every 15 minutes. See the Safe Medications list for over-the-counter options. Some women also find that ginger tea, ginger ale, ginger candy, lemon candy, the scent of fresh-cut lemon, cotton balls soaked in lemon extract, or wearing Sea Bands provides some relief. 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 (bananas, rice, applesauce, and toast) may help. If you become dehydrated, 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.

### Swollen Feet and Ankles

Swelling of the feet and ankles is caused by fluid retention and usually gets worse late in the day. Drinking enough water, limiting your salt intake, and elevating your feet periodically during the day can help reduce swelling. We recommend wearing comfortable shoes and compression stockings.

### Round Ligament Pain

Usually a sharp, sudden pain on one or both sides of the lower belly, hips, or groin area, most women primarily experience round ligament pain in the second trimester as your uterus outgrows your pelvis and pushes up into the abdomen. Typically felt after quickly changing positions, the actual pain lasts only a few seconds at a time, but overworked ligaments, from an especially active day, can leave you feeling achy for hours. Different from cramping, round ligament pain can usually be relieved by shifting your position. We recommend wearing a maternity belt, avoiding sudden movements, flexing your hips before sneezing or coughing, and planning lower intensity exercises. If resting in a comfortable position doesn't bring relief to your aches or your symptoms become severe, please call us.

### Cramping

Some cramping and uterine contractions are normal in pregnancy if they are mild and do not occur every 10 minutes or closer. 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.