

# Common Complaints and Safe Medications in Pregnancy



During your pregnancy we encourage that you **do not take any medications other than those that are necessary**. Especially, we recommend that you avoid unnecessary medications during the first trimester, when your baby's organs are most actively forming.

Most often, you can remedy small problems with rest or relaxation, or by adjusting your diet or eating habits, rather than with over-the-counter preparations.

Please consult us prior to taking any medication. There are a few medications, however, that we feel are safe to use with discretion.

## NAUSEA AND MORNING SICKNESS

**The problem:** An increase in gastric (stomach) secretions during pregnancy can make you queasy.

**Try this first:** Some moms find it helpful to have a cracker or a piece of toast before getting out of bed. It may help to eat smaller, more frequent meals and try to avoid skipping meals.

**If that doesn't work:** Try a Vitamin B6 supplement (25 mg once or twice a day). Other safe products are Sea Bands (also known as bio bands or motion sickness bands); ginger capsules (2 or 3 in the morning, up to 25 per day); spearmint, raspberry, ginger or fennel teas; or flat ginger ale.

## INDIGESTION OR HEARTBURN

**The problem:** Hormonal changes and the growing baby pressing against your stomach may give you a burning sensation or pain in the chest, or make you feel full or bloated. You may burp or bring up food.

**Try this first:** Sometimes it is helpful to figure out when you experience indigestion. Is it before meals when your stomach is empty? Is it when you finish a large meal? Is it evening, morning or all the time? Often the situation is relieved by eating smaller and more frequent meals, by avoiding alcohol and irritating foods, or by having less in your stomach at bedtime.

Sipping milk or yogurt or taking a spoonful of a natural vanilla ice cream (all high in calcium) can also help.

**If that doesn't work:** You might try Mylanta or Maalox tablets or liquids; Tums are also acceptable and have the added advantage of being a good source of calcium. If all else fails, you may try over-the-counter Pepcid.

## CONSTIPATION

**The problem:** There are many possible causes for constipation during pregnancy: the iron in your vitamins, increased hormones, the increasing size of your uterus, too little bulk or roughage in your diet, or too little water.

**Try this first:** Add bulk and roughage to your diet – good sources are bran cereal, whole wheat bread, leafy green vegetables, fresh and dried fruit. You may also try some caffeine (up to 200 mg per day, roughly that in a 12-oz. coffee). Always drink plenty of water each day – at least 64 oz. (8 cups or about four water bottles) are recommended.

**If that doesn't work:** It is safe to use a stool softener (such as Colace) once or twice a day. You can also use a bulk-forming substance such as Metamucil or Benefiber. If you are still having a problem, you may try Miralax or Senekot. If constipation is a persistent problem, please call us.

## HEMORRHOIDS

**The problem:** Hemorrhoids are enlarged veins in the rectal opening. These often cause itching, burning and irritation. They may develop due to pressure from your growing uterus or problems with bowel elimination.

**Try this first:** Keep bowel movements soft and regular (see suggestions above for constipation). Avoid straining with bowel movements and avoid standing for long periods of time.

**If that doesn't work:** You may try taking warm baths two or three times a day and using Preparation H. Wipe with witch hazel (Tucks) after bowel movements. If you develop rectal bleeding please let us know.



## HEADACHES

**The problem:** Headaches may occur for a number of reasons, such as stress, being overworked or overtired, a change in hormone levels or dehydration.

**Try this first:** Be sure to get enough sleep and take a break during activities. Napping and cold compresses are often the most helpful. Remember it is necessary to drink at least 64 oz. of water daily.

**If that doesn't work:** We prefer you try acetaminophen (Tylenol or Extra Strength Tylenol). DO NOT take aspirin or ibuprofen (such as Advil, Motrin).

## ALLERGIES, COLD OR CONGESTION

**The problem:** Seasonal allergies or common cold can cause a dry or stuffy nose and a cough.

**Try this first:** For a dry or stuffy nose, nonmedicated saline spray or drops, such as Ocean Mist, can be used as often as needed. Cough drops and throat lozenges are also safe to use. Drink plenty of fluids and adjust the humidity level in your home if possible.

**If that doesn't work:** Try diphenhydramine (Benadryl), cetirizine (Zyrtec), loratadine (Claritin) or fexofenadine (Allegra) for allergies. For congestion, try guaifenesin and/or dextromethorphan (Mucinex, Robitussin, Vicks, children's Dimetapp). For a cough, try plain Robitussin or plain Vicks Formula 44. Get prescription medication if the problem gets worse or persists.

## DENTAL PROBLEMS

**The problem:** For some women, pregnancy can lead to gum disease and increased risk of tooth decay. Increased hormones can affect your body's response to plaque (the layer of germs on your teeth).

**Try this first:** With proper dental hygiene at home and professional cleaning from your dentist, your teeth should stay healthy during pregnancy.

**If that doesn't work:** The following procedures are also safe during pregnancy: Tooth extraction, tooth fillings, and wisdom tooth removal. X-rays can be done with appropriate abdominal shielding. You can have local anesthesia (Novocain) without the addition of epinephrine. We can provide a letter if your dentist requires one.

## DIZZINESS

**The problem:** Two common reasons for dizziness in pregnancy are low blood glucose and dehydration.

**Try this first:** Once again, it is important to drink at least 64 oz. of water daily. Try to have three regular meals and three snacks daily. Your meals and snacks

should include some protein along with carbohydrates. Protein bars or crackers with cheese or peanut butter are good snack choices. It is important to not skip breakfast and to start your day with some protein.

**If that doesn't work:** If dizziness is a persistent problem, please call us.

## FIRST AID

**The problem:** Minor cut and scrapes.

**Try this first:** Wash with mild soap and water and bandage as needed. Antibiotic ointment such as Bacitracin or triple antibiotic ointment such as Neosporin are safe and can promote healing.

**If that doesn't work:** For more than a minor injury, call 911 or seek help from a medical professional.

## RASHES

**The problem:** Itchy red patches on the stomach, especially near stretch marks, that may spread to your thighs, buttocks or arms. Common in late pregnancy.

**Try this first:** Apply a cold compress to the affected area. Take an oatmeal (Aveeno) or baking soda bath and use aloe vera gel after you bathe or shower. Wearing loose, soft cotton clothes can lessen irritation.

**If that doesn't work:** Try a hydrocortisone cream or ointment such as Cortisone 10, calamine lotion or cream such as Caladryl, or diphenhydramine cream such as Benadryl.

## YEAST INFECTIONS

**The problem:** Hormone changes can disrupt the pH balance of the vagina. Common symptoms include vaginal itching and a white, thick discharge that looks like cottage cheese.

**Try this first:** Treat with vaginal cream or suppository such as miconazole (Monistat 7).

**To help prevent recurrence:** Wear loose, breathable cotton clothing and cotton underwear. Always wipe from front to back after using the restroom and use only water or unscented, gentle soap to wash your genital area. Change out damp clothes or swimsuits as soon as possible, and shower immediately after swimming. Avoid douches, feminine hygiene sprays, bubble baths, scented soaps, and colored or perfumed toilet paper. Include yogurt with lactobacillus acidophilus in your diet, and limit sugar intake, as sugar promotes the growth of yeast.



*You can find more information about all stages of pregnancy at [redeemberbaby.com](http://redeemberbaby.com).*



