

MEDICATIONS DURING PREGNANCY

Due to the physiological changes occurring during pregnancy there are several common symptoms that many patients experience. The following is a list of common complaints followed by some helpful hints and safe over-the-counter medications for these problems. These medications are approved for use in pregnancy. If your symptoms are not relieved by over-the-counter medications, our providers may also recommend prescription drugs that are okay to use in pregnancy. In general, we try to recommend avoiding medications in pregnancy unless necessary, especially during the first trimester.

HEADACHES

Tylenol or Extra Strength Tylenol may be taken as directed for occasional mild headaches. If the headaches occur late in pregnancy and are severe, especially if associated with visual changes, please call our office.

HEAD COLDS/ALLERGIES

A humidifier and saline nose drops along with general measures may be used. It is also important to increase fluids when you are experiencing these symptoms. When necessary, cold/allergy medications such as Sudafed, Benadryl, Mucinex, or Chlortrimeton may be taken as directed.

COUGH

Over-the-counter cough drops are permitted during pregnancy. Robitussin DM or Robitussin PE may also be taken as directed.

SORE THROAT

Any over-the-counter sore throat lozenges or throat spray may be used (such as Chloraseptic Spray or Lozenges or Cepastat Lozenges).

*Any persistent respiratory tract infections, especially when associated with a productive cough or high fever (greater than 100.4°) may indicate a bacterial infection and you should notify our office of these symptoms.

LEG CRAMPS

Leg cramps (usually at night) are common in pregnancy and can be treated by increasing the amounts of calcium and potassium in your diet. Spinach & dairy products such as milk, cheese, and yogurt are good sources of calcium. Calcium supplements such as Oscal, Caltrate, and Tums are also good sources. Bananas, cantaloupe, honeydew, nectarines, avocado, spinach, & lima beans are a few good sources of potassium.

NAUSEA

Nausea is very common in pregnancy, especially during the first trimester. After the first three or four months of pregnancy nausea symptoms usually taper off and subside. Eat frequent small meals of foods that sound appealing to you. Try not to eat and drink at the same time—rather sip fluids between meals. Avoid greasy, fatty, or highly seasoned foods. Dry carbohydrate rich foods such as crackers, toast, potatoes or cereal tend to digest easily and can help ease nausea. Always try to sit upright after meals. Over-the-counter medications such as Emetrol, B6, or ginger tablets may be helpful. Unisom is sometimes recommended but may cause drowsiness.

MEDICATIONS DURING PREGNANCY (Cont'd)

CONSTIPATION

Constipation is a very common complaint during pregnancy. Some prenatal vitamins and iron pills may make this worse. Increasing fluid intake is one of the easiest ways to help. Bulk forming laxatives such as Citracel or Metamucil. Fibercon wafers or stool softeners such as Colace may also be helpful. Occasional use of Milk of Magnesia is also a safe remedy.

INDIGESTION

Over-the-counter antacids such as Mylanta, Maalox, Tums or Rolaids are safe to use as directed during pregnancy. Try to avoid spicy or highly seasoned foods as these tend to be associated with stomach upset.

ANEMIA

A low blood count is common in pregnancy especially in the last trimester due to the increase in blood volume which results in a “diluted” effect. We will check your blood count at your initial visit and again at 28 weeks. If you are found to be anemic you will be instructed to take an over-the-counter iron supplement along with your prenatal vitamin. SlowFe and Hemocyte F are good iron supplements, available without a prescription. Eating foods rich in iron stores such as green leafy vegetables and red meats will increase your iron stores.

HEMORRHOIDS

Hemorrhoids are most common in late pregnancy even though some women will experience them throughout pregnancy. Anusol suppositories, Tucks Pads, and Preparation H cream may be used as directed to provide relief from hemorrhoidal symptoms. Remember to drink plenty of fluids and try to avoid constipation as it may make hemorrhoid symptoms worse. Sitz baths (soaking in warm water) may also be helpful in relieving symptoms.