

# SOUTH CAROLINA OB-GYN ASSOCIATES, P.A.

## COMMON DISCOMFORTS OF PREGNANCY

The discomforts of pregnancy are normal accompaniments of the dramatic changes that are taking place in your body. Many of these changes may produce uncomfortable symptoms. Knowing that these are normal and will disappear or improve as the pregnancy progresses makes them more bearable. South Carolina OB-GYN does not recommend freely using medications during your pregnancy.

Many suggestions are offered in this handout to help make you feel better. If all recommendations have been tried, but have not helped, you may use medications from this list. We still advise that no medications be used in your first trimester (12 weeks) if used, to do so sparingly. NEVER exceed the recommended dosage on any medication! Remember, you cannot make the symptoms go away, but the following recommendations may make them more tolerable for you.

### NAUSEA

CAUSES: High hormonal levels; increased stomach acids; stomach empties slowly; low blood sugar. Continue to drink even if you cannot tolerate food to prevent dehydration.

FIRST TRY: Frequent small meals, 6-10 mini meals instead of the normal 3; eat a small snack before going to bed and before rising in the morning. Complex carbohydrates (rice, potatoes, breads, pasta, cereal, crackers) and a protein make you feel better. Avoid highly seasoned, spicy or fried foods. Sip on fluids and nibble all day. Lemon, ginger, peppermint and raspberry may help your nausea (i.e., ginger snaps, ginger ale, lemon-lime Gatorade, lemon added to water, lemonade, raspberry tea; lemon, ginger or peppermint candies).

MAY USE: Emetrol, Emecheck, vitamin B 25-50 mg. 3 times a day, seabands (accupressure bands used for years to help motion sickness; found at most pharmacies). **IF YOU ARE UNABLE TO KEEP FLUIDS DOWN OR YOUR VOMITING IS MORE THAN OCCASIONAL, THEN CALL- 799-BABY (2229).**

### INDIGESTION / HEARTBURN

CAUSES: As above. Reflux of stomach contents into the esophagus.

FIRST TRY: Small frequent meals. Do not overeat! Do not use baking soda. Try a bland diet and avoid citrus drinks; eat slowly; do not lie down for several hours after a meal; do not eat right before going to bed; elevate the head of your bed on bricks.

MAY USE: Tums, Roloids, Mylanta, Gaviscon, 2 tablespoons of Maalox Plus, Zantac, Pepcid, Axid, Tagamet or Mylanta II 30 minutes after each meal, or sip a few ounces of milk or cream.

### GAS

CAUSES: As above.

FIRST TRY: As above. Avoid gas-producing foods (i.e., cabbage, onions, beans, broccoli). Avoid chewing gum or the use of straws, both of which increase air swallowed.

MAY USE: Mylicon, Gas X, Phazyme or Simethicon.

## **CONSTIPATION**

CAUSES: Slower passage of food; pressure from the uterus on the colon; hormones may cause bowel to relax; dehydration.

FIRST TRY: Increase fluid intake,(i.e., juices and water); high fiber diet; exercise.

MAY USE: Bulk additives such as Metamucil or Citrucel; stool softeners such as Colace, Surfak or Dialose. Use Senekot-S, Kaopectate or Milk of Magnesia if no bowel movement in three days.

## **HEMORRHOIDS**

CAUSES: As above. Pressure from the uterus on the veins of the rectum and straining during a bowel movement.

FIRST TRY: Avoid constipation; drink plenty of fluids; Sitz baths; soaking in 2 to 3 inches of warm water several times a day; witch hazel compresses (may chill in the refrigerator).

MAY USE: Anusol HC suppositories; Preparation-H suppositories or cream; Colace; Surfak (Docusate); Tucks hemorrhoid pads.

## **DIARRHEA**

CAUSES: Virus; change in eating habits; travel; certain foods; hormones of pregnancy.

FIRST TRY: Liquid diet then progress to binding foods such as bananas, rice, applesauce, toast and Gatorade or sport drinks.

MAY USE: Imodium AD and Kaopectate.

IF LASTS MORE THAN 24 HOURS THEN CALL 799-BABY(2229).

## **YEAST INFECTIONS**

If you have never had a yeast infection before, call 799-BABY(2229) before self-treating. If you have had yeast infections and feel sure that this is what you have, you may use Gyne-Lotrimin or Monistat. Use a full applicator, but only insert applicator half way in the vagina. You may use creams externally as needed.

## **DIZZINESS / LIGHT HEADEDNESS**

CAUSES: Change in blood volume and blood flow to the brain; hormonal changes; dehydration; low blood sugar; low iron level.

TRY THIS: Move slowly; if lying down, arise slowly; lie on left side; avoid lying flat on your back after your 4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> month; frequent small meals. If prolonged standing then rest for awhile. Stay well hydrated. Eat a high carbohydrate / high protein snack. Eat iron rich foods. IF YOU ARE FAINTING THEN CALL 799-BABY(2229).

## **FREQUENCY OF URINATION**

CAUSES: Pressure on the bladder from the uterus (early pregnancy) or the baby (later pregnancy).

AVOID: Holding back if you feel the urge to void. Do not drink caffiene. Do not drink large amounts of liquid 2 to 3 hours before bedtime. Drink the bulk of your fluids early in the day. IF YOU HAVE PAIN ON URINATION, FEVER, BURNING OR BLOOD IN URINE THEN CALL 799-BABY(2229).

## **LOW BACK PAIN**

CAUSES: Weight of uterus causes change in center of gravity; uterus pressing on nerves; a tilted uterus; poor body alignment; lack of exercise; improper lifting.

TRY THIS: Pelvic tilt exercises and stretching and muscle strengthening exercises; yoga; pilates; prenatal massage. Ask for our book, "Back Pain in Pregnancy". Use good posture; wear low-heeled shoes or flats. CALL 799-BABY(2229) IF PAIN IS ACCOMPANIED BY FEVER OR URINARY SYMPTOMS.

## **INSOMNIA**

CAUSES: Frequent problem for pregnant women; pressure of baby on blood vessels and nerves; concerns about changes, baby, labor and delivery, etc.

TRY THIS: Change positions; use of pillows for support; avoid napping late in the day; exercise early in the day rather than close to bedtime; read; warm shower; warm milk; soothing music; back rubs; relaxation techniques; yoga. Avoid caffeine (coffee, teas, colas, chocolate).

MAY USE: Unisom, Tylenol PM or Benadryl.

## **VARICOSE VEINS**

CAUSES: Pressure from uterus on veins; softening and enlargement of veins due to hormones; prolonged sitting; stricture from tight fitting hose, knee-highs, socks, etc.; family tendency.

TRY THIS: Frequent rest periods with legs elevated; maternity support hose. Avoid excessive weight gain; avoid crossing legs.

## **SINUS TROUBLE/ COLDS / ALLERGIES**

CAUSES: Seasonal allergies; hormones tend to increase secretions and swelling of mucus membranes in pregnancy causing allergy or sinus symptoms.

TRY THIS: Push fluids; cool mist humidifier; plain saline nose drops; warm shower. Avoid exposure to known allergens.

MAY USE: Tylenol regular or extra strength; Tylenol Cold & Sinus; plain Sudafed; Tavist D; Benadryl; Chlortrimeton. CALL 799-BABY(2229) IF SYMPTOMS ARE ACCOMPANIED BY A TEMPERATURE OF MORE THAN 100.4 OR IF DISCHARGE IS GREEN OR YELLOW GREEN.

## **COUGH**

CAUSES: Allergies; colds or flu; irritants such as smoking; cessation of smoking.

TRY THIS: As above. Avoid irritants.

MAY USE: Cough syrups (Sudafed, Robitussin DM at bedtime, Benylin) and cough drops.

## **SORE THROAT**

CAUSES: Dehydration; colds; cough; virus; irritants; smoking.

TRY THIS: As above. Warm salt-water gargles; throat lozenges; Chloraseptic spray; Tylenol. CALL 799-BABY(2229) IF TEMPERATURE IS MORE THAN 100.4.

South Carolina OB-GYN does not recommend freely using medications during pregnancy. If you have tried all other recommendations and they have not helped, you may use the following medications after the first trimester (12 weeks).

### **COLDS / COUGH / SINUS CONGESTION**

May Use:	Extra Strength Tylenol	Benadryl
	Sudafed (plain)	Robitussin (plain)
	Tavist D	Chlortrimeton
	Actifed	Mucinex
	Tylenol Cold & Sinus	Claritan

### **INDIGESTION / HEARTBURN**

May Use:	Tums	Zantac
	Rolaids	Pepcid
	Mylanta	Tagamet
	Maalox	Axid
	Gaviscon	Prilosec

### **CONSTIPATION**

May Use:	Senokot	Kaopectate
	Colace (stool softener)	Dulcolax
	Milk of Magnesia	Uncle Sam's Cereal w/ mixed berries
	Metamucil	
	Citrucel	

### **HEMORRHOIDS**

May Use: Anusol HC suppository or cream  
Preparation H suppository or cream  
Tucks Hemorrhoid Pads (put above cream on pad, place on hemorrhoid).

### **GAS**

May Use:	Mylicon	Phazyme
	Gas X	Simethicone

### **NAUSEA**

May Use: Emecheck  
Emetrol

### **DIARRHEA**

May Use: Imodium AD  
Kaopectate

### **YEAST INFECTION**

May Use: Monistat  
Gyne-Lotrimin

Only insert applicator half way into vagina just before going to bed. You may use some cream externally if needed.