

# COMMON PREGNANCY DISCOMFORTS



South Health  
Maternity & Wellness

## CONSTIPATION

Constipation is very common in pregnancy and with breastfeeding. Please do not use laxatives unless discussed with your doctor.

### Possible solution:

Increase your intake of fibre and avoid refined foods (eg, white bread). Replace refined foods with whole grain sources. Have plenty of vegetables and fruit. If you are currently avoiding vegetables and fruit because of taste changes during pregnancy, try taking smaller bites, which may be better tolerated. Incorporate it into dishes eg vegetable soup.

Increase your fluid intake to 2.5 litres per day. Most of your fluid intake should be from water. GET ACTIVE! When you're moving, your bowels move too.



## NAUSEA AND VOMITING

Nausea and vomiting are very common in pregnancy. Over half of all pregnant woman suffer from this common ailment. Symptoms can be very unpleasant and can interfere with your daily routine.

Usually the symptoms starts around the sixth week of pregnancy and improve by week 12th, but may last longer, maybe even until the end of the pregnancy.

About 1% of women will have "hyperemesis gravidarum". This is when you are so sick that the lack of fluids and nutrients being taken in may be dangerous for you and your baby. The biggest worry will be dehydration. If your urine is dark yellow and you cannot correct it by drinking enough liquid, call your health-care provider.

### TIPS:

- \* Eat a few crackers and rest for 15 min before getting up. Get up slowly
- \* Eat small meals or snacks often
- \* Eat what you feel like and eat when you are hungry.
- \* Avoid cooking smells by opening windows, turn on the stove fan or try cold food preparations
- \* Sniffing lemons or ginger can sometimes help an upset stomach
- \* Eating salty potato chips can help settle the stomach enough to eat a meal
- \* Sip small amounts of fluid often during the day, avoid drinking fluids during a meal
- \* Get enough rest. Try napping during the day, nausea tends to worsen when you are tired.
- \* Get help from family and friends
- \* Get plenty of fresh air and avoid warm places
- \* Acupuncture can help some women
- \* Try ginger, an alternative remedy thought to settle the stomach. Doses up to 250mg four times a day appear to be safe.
- \* If multivitamins make your nausea worse, try taking your prenatal vitamins with food or just before bed. If you cannot take ANY multivitamin, take folic acid alone (1.0 mg) daily, till you feel better. There are prescription multivitamins that is better tolerated.

# COMMON PREGNANCY DISCOMFORTS (continues)



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## FOOD IDEAS TO HELP RELIEVE NAUSEA

Salty:	chips/pretzels
Tart/sweet:	pickles, lemonade
Earthy:	brown rice, mushroom soup, peanut butter
Crunchy:	celery sticks, apple slices, nuts
Bland:	mashed potatoes, gelatin, broth
Soft:	bread, noodles
Sweet:	cake, sugary cereals
Fruity:	watermelon, fruity popsicles
Liquid:	juice, seltzer, sparkling water, ginger ale
Dry:	crackers.



Many women want to avoid taking medicine when they are pregnant. However, changing your diet and daily routine might not be enough to relieve your symptoms. You shouldn't feel guilty about wanting to feel better, and your health-care provider can prescribe medication to help reduce your nausea and vomiting.

Ask your health-care provider before taking any herbal remedies. Many of the natural or herbal products have not been clinically tested to evaluate their safety and effectiveness.

Adopted from: NAUSEA AND VOMITING IS A NORMAL PART OF PREGNANCY  
SOGC, MARCH 2012.

## HEARTBURN AND ACID REFLUX

Pregnancy hormones can slow down digestion, causing indigestion. Symptoms include burping, burning, feeling like something is stuck at the back of your throat, hunger at night, or bloating.

### Possible solutions:

Eat smaller amounts every one to two hours. Don't overfill the stomach, which may lead to heartburn. Add a source of protein to meals and snacks to calm the stomach (eg unsalted nuts, egg white, lean meats). Keep your upper body and head elevated for a few hours after you've eaten and let gravity do its job to digest food. Lying down right after eating can make reflux worse. Try to avoid spicy/fried/high-fat foods and caffeine containing fluids. Also avoid fluids at meals - have fluids 20 minutes before or after your meal or snack.

