



مؤسسة الرعاية الصحية الأولية
PRIMARY HEALTH CARE CORPORATION

MANAGEMENT OF COMMON **Health Problems** DURING PREGNANCY



Your body goes through a lot of changes during pregnancy. Sometime these changes bring discomfort or irritation to the expectant mother.

But it is important to provide information on how these common minor problems related to pregnancy can be managed so the pregnant woman can enjoy this special moment with her growing child.

Some of the Common Minor Health Problems related to Pregnancy

1. Indigestion and Heartburn:

Indigestion is caused by hormonal changes and in later pregnancy by your growing fetus pressing on the uterus.

You should:

- Eat five to six meals throughout the day rather than three large meals
- Sit up straight when eating
- Avoid fried and spicy food
- Avoid eating and drinking a few hours before going to bed

A. Nausea & Vomiting:

Nausea & vomiting is a common health issue during early pregnancy, and it is related to pregnancy hormone.

You should:

- Eat dry food items of easily digested carbohydrates like dry unsweetened biscuit or toasted bread.
- Eat small frequent meals.
- Avoid fried and fatty foods.
- Limit water/liquids with meals.
- Eat protein snack at bedtime.
- Watch for signs of dehydration which include dry sticky mouth, feeling thirsty, decreased need to urinate, headache, constipation, dizziness and tiredness.
- If symptoms of nausea and vomiting worsen, seek medical care advice for support.



3. Constipation:

Constipation may occur in the early stages of pregnancy because of the hormonal changes; and sometimes, iron tablets may also contribute to constipation.

You should:

- Adopt a high fiber diet, including whole wheat breads, wholegrain cereals, fruits and vegetables, and pulses such as bean and lentils
- Take up regular exercise like walking, and swimming
- Drink plenty of water

4. Hemorrhoids:

Hemorrhoids are swollen veins around your anus which may itch, ache or feel sore and may bleed a little. It is usually resolved within weeks after birth.

You should:

- Adopt a high fiber diet, including whole wheat bread
- Eat plenty of fruits and vegetables.
- Drink plenty of water
- Avoid standing for long periods
- Take up regular exercise to improve circulation



5. Vaginal Discharge:

Most women have more vaginal discharge during pregnancy; it should be clear, white and not smell unpleasant. If the discharge is colored or smells strong or if you feel itchy or sore that means you may have vaginal infection.

You should:

- Wear loose cotton underwear to decrease thrush infection
- Avoid tight underwear
- Always wipe from front to back
- Seek medical help if the discharge is colored, smells strong or feels itchy or sore



6. Itching:

Mild itching is common in pregnancy because of increased blood supply to the skin, in addition to abdomen stretching. Severe itching can be a sign of a serious problem. Therefore, seeking medical advice is necessary.

You should:

- Wear loose clothing
- Avoid synthetic materials

7. Urinary Tract Infection:

Passing urine often is normal; it may start in early pregnancy and continue throughout till later pregnancy as result of the baby's head pressing on the bladder.

Urinary tract infections are common, and this maybe due to hormonal and mechanical changes that occur during pregnancy.

You should:

- Drink plenty of water; 6-8 glasses per day
- Wipe from front to back
- Avoid using soaps, douches, antiseptic creams or powders
- Avoid tight underwear
- Wear all cotton or cotton crotch underwear
- Seek medical advice if you experience pain or blood in the urine.



8. Leg Cramps:

A cramp is a sudden, sharp pain usually in your calf muscles or feet. It commonly happens at nights.

You should:

- Exercise regularly during pregnancy, particularly ankle and leg movement to improve circulation
- Exercise calf muscles
- Massage calf muscle and feet
- Apply local heat
- Choose proper footwear



9. Varicose veins:

Varicose veins are veins which have become swollen. The veins in the legs are most commonly affected, but they usually get better after delivery.

You should:

- Avoid standing for long periods of time
- Try not to sit with legs crossed
- Avoid gaining too much weight
- Sit with the legs up as often as you can
- Use compression stockings
- Sleep with legs higher than the rest of the body
- Do feet exercises

10. Swelling:

Ankles, feet and fingers often swell a little in pregnancy, as your body is retaining more water than usual.

You should:

- Avoid standing for long periods of time
- Wear comfortable shoes and avoid high heels
- Elevate feet while resting
- Do feet exercises
- Wear supportive tights or stockings
- Avoid clothes that are tight around the wrist or ankles

Note:

Severe swelling all over the body needs to be taken seriously. Seeking medical advice is necessary.



11. Gingivitis

The inflammation of the gums is called Gingivitis, which may be sore and more susceptible to bleeding. Pregnancy hormone may increase the blood flow to the gum tissues and cause your gums to be more sensitive, irritable, and swollen.

You should:

- Frequent oral hygiene.
- Increase Vitamin C intake.
- Visit your Dentist to rule out underlying medical condition



12. Anemia

Anemia is a common health problem during pregnancy that may affect your fetus' growth and development, which can cause complications during pregnancy for both of you and your baby. But it is preventable.

You should:

- Take Iron, Folic acid supplements as prescribed by your Doctor.
- Consume Vitamin C rich foods such as orange juice, citrus fruits and fresh raw vegetables, along with Iron supplements to help increase absorption.

- Eat foods rich-in Iron, Folate and Vitamin B12 namely meats, fish, poultry, dairy products, eggs, green leafy vegetables, dried beans, legumes, grains, nuts/seeds and fruits.



- Avoid drinking tea/coffee with meals.
- Do not take Calcium rich foods which include milk or yogurt at the same time as Iron supplement because calcium reduces iron absorption. Wait for at least 2 hours.



13. Backache

During pregnancy, your ligaments become softer and stretch to prepare you for labor. This can put a strain on the joints of your lower back and pelvis which can cause backache. There is a list of potential causes of back pain or discomfort during pregnancy including increase of hormones, additional weight and center of uterus gravity.

You should:

- Avoid lifting heavy objects
- Bend the knee and keep the back straight when lifting or picking something up from the floor
- Avoid twisting the spine, so it is advised to move the feet when turning around
- Wear flat shoes
- Sit with back straight and well supported
- Have enough rest during pregnancy



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