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PREGNANCY: FREQUENTLY DISCUSSED TOPICS

Back Pain

Back pain is a common discomfort for pregnant women. Please refer to your pregnancy booklet or the web site for exercises to relieve discomfort. You may take Tylenol and use a heating pad on low setting up to 20 minutes. If you experience intermittent back pain that comes and goes more than 4-6 times in an hour, please call the office.

Breast Changes

In preparation for breastfeeding your breasts may leak fluid during pregnancy. Breasts usually enlarge and are tender during the first trimester. These are normal changes.

Constipation

Constipation can be a common discomfort of pregnancy; it can be corrected by drinking plenty of liquids, exercise, eating fruits and vegetables, and fiber (Example: celery, apples, prune juice, and high fiber cereals like Kashi and Raisin Bran). Stool softeners (Colace, Metamucil) are safe to take. **Never use laxatives during pregnancy.**

Dental Concerns

Please call your dentist for any teeth concerns, i.e. tooth pain, sensitivity to hot and cold.

Diarrhea

Diarrhea in pregnancy can be fairly common. We advise to increase your fluid intake and you should try to follow a BRAT diet, which includes bananas, rice, applesauce and toast. Imodium AD is also OK to take while you are pregnant. If you have diarrhea that lasts longer than 48 hours (24 hours if you are also vomiting), please call the office for an appointment.

Exercise

With an uncomplicated pregnancy you may exercise. Be sure to warm up and cool down, increase calories and fluid, exercise with light to moderate intensity. Stop immediately if pain, shortness of breath, rapid heart rate, dizziness, or cramping occurs.

Fatigue

Pregnant women experience fatigue during the 1st and 3rd trimesters. You may need to adjust activities, eat properly and increase rest periods to accommodate fatigue.

Frequent Urination

Frequent Urination is usually worse during the 1st and 3rd trimesters and is normal. Call for an appointment if you notice pain or burning with urination. If the office is closed, please go to your nearest urgent care.

Heartburn

Heartburn can be relieved by eating a small bland snack and by keeping your head elevated when you are resting. However, it may be necessary for you to use an antacid such as Tums, Maalox, Riopan, or Gaviscon. Alka-Seltzer should NOT be used during pregnancy, since it contains aspirin.

Medications

There are several over-the-counter medications that are safe to take while pregnant: Tylenol and all Tylenol products, Sudafed, Robatussin DM, Benedryl, Tums, Pepcid, Zantac, Colace, and Metamucil. Do NOT use aspirin or Ibuprofen products. If you are pregnant and have a cold, you may use the above medications for your symptoms. If you have a fever, please take Tylenol to bring it down.

Mucus Plug

During pregnancy there may be an increased discharge from the vaginal area. You may sometimes pass thick mucus that can be blood tinged near the end of pregnancy, as the cervix dilates. This is normal. If you notice itching, burning or foul odor call for an appointment.

Nausea and Vomiting

Nausea is a very common and normal symptom, which usually can be controlled by eating small, frequent meals and eating bland foods such as toast, crackers, Jello, and carbonated beverages at room temperature. Greasy and spicy foods are best avoided if you are nauseated. Fortunately, nausea usually resolves around 14-16 weeks gestation. If you are suffering from persistent and frequent vomiting or go more than 24 hours without keeping anything down, you may need IV hydration and or medication. Please call our office for an appointment if this happens.

Round Ligament Pain

The round ligament is the ligament that supports the uterus. As it stretches with pregnancy, you may experience pain in the lower abdomen and groin area, which is usually sharp and lasts a few seconds to a couple of minutes; usually caused by quick movement changes, coughing or sneezing. If pain does not resolve with rest, call the office.

Sex

Sexual Intercourse is permissible at any time during pregnancy unless you have vaginal bleeding, ruptured membranes or a tendency toward premature labor. Many couples experience a decrease in sexual desire late in pregnancy. This is very normal. **Do not douche after sexual intercourse or anytime throughout the pregnancy.**

Smoking

We strongly recommend that all pregnant women stop smoking, or, if this is impossible, cut down as much as possible. Exposure to secondary smoke also must be minimized. Cigarette smoke contains a variety of poisons including nicotine, cyanide and carbon monoxide, all of which cross over the placenta to the baby. In addition, cigarette smoking has been associated with an increased risk for miscarriage, stillbirth, fetal growth retardation and sudden infant death syndrome.

This may be your best opportunity to give up the smoking habit. Please feel free to discuss smoking cessation with us.

Swelling

Normal swelling, which is also called edema, is experienced in the hands, face, legs, ankles, and feet. Swelling may be experienced at any point during pregnancy, but it tends to be noticed around the fifth month; and can increase while you are in the third trimester.

Slight swelling is expected during pregnancy, but can also be associated with preeclampsia. Thus if you have swelling and are having problems with headaches that do not go away with Tylenol, see spots before your eyes or are not feeling well, please call the office. Otherwise you should avoid standing for long periods of time, rest with feet elevated, wear supportive stockings, avoid clothes that are too tight around waist or legs, increase your fluids, and minimize your salt intake.

When to Call PWHealth at 614-268-8800



- Intermittent back pain that comes and goes more than 4-6 times in an hour.
- Diarrhea that lasts longer than 48 hours (24 hours with vomiting).
- Pain or burning with urination -- go to Urgent Care if our office is closed.
- Persistent or frequent vomiting or more than 24 hours without eating or drinking
- Round ligament pain that does not resolve.