



Changes During Pregnancy

Many women commonly experience some discomfort during pregnancy as the fetus grows. Some physical changes include:

Breast Changes: Your breasts may begin to grow and become firm or tender. Be sure to wear a bra that fits well and provides support.

Frequent Urination: Throughout pregnancy the kidneys work hard to flush waste products out of your system and must filter more blood as your body adapts to the growing needs of the fetus. As the uterus increases in size, it may put pressure on the bladder, causing you to leak a little urine when you sneeze or cough. To help avoid problems with urination, maintain hydration by drinking plenty of water each day (approximately three liters daily) and avoid caffeine.

Mouth and Tooth Changes: Pregnancy hormones can make your gums swell and bleed. Switching to a softer toothbrush can lessen the irritation. Dental care during this time is important. Make sure you get adequate calcium for fetal bone development in order to not compromise the strength of your teeth. Brushing is important, especially if you experience frequent vomiting or reflux.

Lower Abdominal Pain: It is common to feel a dull ache or even a sharp pain briefly on one side of your belly as the uterus grows and the supporting muscles and ligaments stretch. Resting or changing your position may help relieve the discomfort.

Numbness and Tingling: Sometimes the uterus can put pressure on the nerves connecting your legs to your spinal cord. This may cause pain in the hip, thigh or buttocks (sciatica) leading to numbness, tingling or pain.

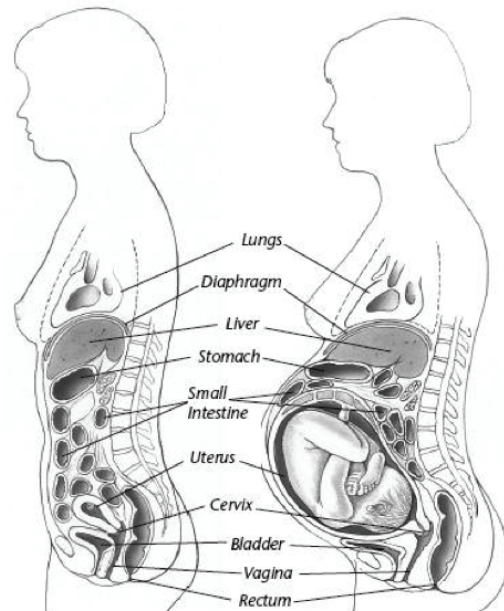
Carpal Tunnel Syndrome: Extra fluid volume and tissue swelling in the wrist may cause your hands to tingle or feel numb. This is usually short-term and should return to normal after delivery.

Shortness of Breath: By the 3rd trimester, the growing uterus often puts pressure on the stomach and the diaphragm causing mild shortness of breath. It is helpful to slow down your activity and stand upright so you can breathe easier.

Skin Changes: The hormones in your body may cause some areas in your skin to change or darken.

Heartburn: A “burning feeling” in the throat and chest is a common problem during pregnancy. To decrease symptoms of heartburn:

- eat less more often
- avoid drinking liquid with your meals (drink fluids between meals)
- avoid fried, greasy, spicy or fatty foods
- remain upright for 3 hours after your last meal
- stay away from carbonated drinks, citrus fruits and juices and caffeine
- Tums or Roloids can provide relief if necessary



As the uterus grows from the beginning (left) toward the end of pregnancy (right), it takes up more room in your abdomen, pressing against the other organs.

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for additional information on other interesting health topics.



CANYON VIEW
Women's Care

Constipation: Pregnancy hormones may slow the digestive system and cause constipation. The painful gas and bloating associated with this may be compounded by the growing uterus. Frequently, pregnant women also have hemorrhoids (*painful, itchy, enlarged veins in the rectal area*) which are worsened by constipation.

To treat constipation and hemorrhoids:

- drink plenty of liquids (*at least 8 to 12 glasses of water per day*)
- eat high fiber foods (*raw fruits, vegetables, beans, whole-grain bread, and bran cereal*)
- exercise regularly

Work: Most women can continue to work throughout pregnancy unless you are exposed to specific work hazards or have specific complications during pregnancy. If you have concerns about your workplace, contact your personnel officer or look for tips on the following websites:

- Occupational Safety and Health Administration (<http://www.osha.gov>)
- National institute for Occupational Safety and Health (<http://www.cdc.gov/niosh>)

To ease back discomfort:

Wear low-heeled shoes with good arch support.

Avoid lifting heavy objects and bend at the knees.

Wear a maternity belt.

Sit in chairs with good back support and sit up straight.

Avoid excess weight gain.

Do stretches and exercise to help strengthen back muscles.

Use a heating pad on a low-temperature setting.

Insomnia Help:

Limit daytime naps.

Take a warm bath or shower before bed.

Sleep on your side with supportive pillows under your abdomen and between your knees.

Practice relaxation techniques.
(yoga, meditation or guided imagery)

LEG CRAMPS may be lessened by gently stretching for 5 to 10 minutes before going to bed and by getting adequate calcium and magnesium.

Symptoms of Pre-Term Labor (20 to 37 weeks gestation)

- regular uterine contractions every 15 minutes that won't stop with rest or hydration
- menstrual-type cramping
- vaginal bleeding or continual leaking of fluid
- pelvic pressure
- backache
- intestinal upset

Some of these symptoms may be normal during pregnancy. Please contact us if you have questions or concerns.