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# Advanced OB/GYN

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## *Pregnancy & Post-Partum Care*

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Keep a copy at home and a copy  
in your purse.

This packet is located on our website  
@ [advancedobgynhuntsville.com](http://advancedobgynhuntsville.com)

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## **NURSING RECOMMENDATIONS FOR QUESTIONS MOST OFTEN ASKED DURING PREGNANCY**

*If you seek medical care from your family doctor or an urgent care facility and have questions regarding a prescription, please give us a call.*

**\*NOTE: No medications are considered 100% safe during pregnancy. Even if no medications are taken during pregnancy, there is a 1-2% congenital anomaly rate. Using nothing is better, but, when the patient herself decides that her symptoms are severe enough, based on years of experience, the following are the safest recommendations we know:**

- **Alcohol, Cigarette Smoking, Marijuana and Cocaine:** and other “street” drugs such as downers or uppers should be avoided during pregnancy to prevent harmful effects to the growing baby and mother. Please let us know if you have a problem stopping alcohol or drugs.
- **Antibiotics:** You may use Penicillin, Cephalosporin or Erythromycin if ordered by a dentist or a physician and you have no allergies to the medication.
- **Backache:** Maintain good posture, squat instead of bending over. Rise from lying down by rolling on your side and pushing yourself up with your hands. Exercise daily (especially pelvic rock). Wear comfortable low-heeled shoes. Sleep on a flat, firm mattress. Wearing a maternity girdle may help.
- **Bleeding Gums:** Later in pregnancy, inflamed gum tissue may occur. Increase Vitamin C intake and continue gentle brushing.
- **Breast Tenderness:** Wear a good support/cotton bra. Later in pregnancy you may need 1-2 size larger cup. Anytime from the fifth month on you may produce colostrum (yellowish fluid) which is the beginning of breast milk. Avoid plastic shields; instead, tuck a cotton handkerchief or gauze into each bra cup.
- **Cats:** Have someone else change your cat’s litter box to avoid exposure to cat feces.
- **Constipation:** First try increasing fluids to 6-8 glasses per day and increasing fiber and bran in your diet and increasing your exercise. If these efforts are unsuccessful try Metamucil (as directed on container) and/or stool softeners such as Colace. If you have gone for over three days without a bowel movement, you may use Milk of Magnesia. We do not recommend laxatives such as Ex-Lax or use of enemas.
- **Contractions:** As early as your 5<sup>th</sup> month, uterine tightening --Braxton Hicks contractions or false labor can occur. Relieve false labor by alternating walking with resting. Tylenol, heating pad, liquids and relaxation techniques may also help. Between 26 and 36 weeks, if you think you are having more than 4 contractions (false or real) an hour over a 2-3 hour period and have tried the above recommendations, call for additional advice and/or an appointment. After 36 weeks, go to Labor and Delivery if you have increasingly strong contractions every 5 minutes for an hour and you cannot make them go away or if you bleed or have a sudden gush of fluid from your vagina.
- **Cough:** Use Regular-Strength Robitussin DM, Chloroseptic spray or any throat lozenges. Increase fluid intake. If a smoker, stop smoking. Use a vaporizer. If cough is accompanied by a fever, phlegm is discolored or shortness of breath or chest pain occurs, call for further advice.
- **Cramping:** Most cramping in early to mid pregnancy is due to pressure from the enlarging uterus and stretching ligaments. Exercise, a heating pad, Tylenol and relaxation techniques may help. Call for advice or an appointment if vaginal bleeding occurs. After a cervical exam, it is common to have a bloody discharge and increased cramping. Call the office if you feel that your cramping is more than normal.

- **Dental Preparation**: Routine dental care is fine; you should be shielded for X-rays. Local anesthesia may be used. Do not use nitrous oxide (gas).
- **Diarrhea**: Drink lots of clear liquids. Keep a bland diet. The “BRAT” Diet—bananas, rice, applesauce, plain toast is a good diet to follow as well. If the symptoms persists greater than 3 days, consult your doctor.
- **Diet**: Limit caffeine and NutraSweet to 2 servings per day or avoid altogether. Daily eat 3-4 servings of milk or dairy products. 4 servings of fruits and vegetables. 4 servings of whole grain or enriched bread. 3-4 servings of meat, poultry, eggs, nuts or beans. Avoid eating raw meats to prevent contracting Toxoplasmosis, a disease that can be harmful to your baby. Drink 6-8 glasses of water daily. Normal weight gain is 10 pounds in the first 20 weeks and one pound per week during the rest of pregnancy. Women who are overweight should gain less and those who are underweight or carrying twins should gain more. Do not try to go on a diet to lose weight during pregnancy. Eat sensibly and avoid cravings. A low birth weight baby can have problems during labor and the first few months. Vitamins may be prescribed to help supplement your diet (NOT *in place* of your diet).
- **Exercise**: Whatever exercise you were used to before you were pregnant is okay during pregnancy unless contractions, bleeding or other symptoms occur. Prenatal exercises to promote good posture, good body mechanics and strengthening for labor are highly recommended. If you have never exercised before, begin with low intensity activities and advance slowly. Your heart rate should not exceed 140 beats/minute and strenuous activities should not exceed 15 minutes duration. Avoid exercise in hot, humid weather or during an illness when you have fever. Avoid jumping, jarring motions and rapid changes in direction (due to your normal joint instability). No exercise that involves lying down and pulling up should be done after the 4<sup>th</sup> month. Always include a 5-minute warm-up and cool down.
- **Eyes**: Visine drops if needed.
- **Faintness**: When standing for long periods of time, move around frequently to stimulate your circulation. Take frequent rest periods. Eat healthy foods in small amounts throughout the day. Drink plenty of fluids. Avoid getting overheated. Call if dizzy spells with fainting occurs.
- **Hair Perming or Coloring**: There is a tendency to lose hair during pregnancy and hair becomes slightly more brittle. A permanent or coloring may cause hair to break or may not “take”, but will not harm baby.
- **Headaches**: Use Regular-Strength Tylenol and increase fluids. Headaches are common during pregnancy but if blurred vision or spots before eyes accompany the headache or if unrelieved by Tylenol, call for further advice.
- **Heartburn**: Use antacids (Maalox, Mylanta, Tums or Rolaids; NOT baking soda or Alka Seltzer) after meals and eat small, frequent, high-protein meals of bland quality. Eat slowly, and do not lie down immediately after eating. Avoid peppermint.
- **Hemorrhoids**: Use Tucks Medicated Pads, Anusol suppositories, Preparation H, sitz baths and above mentioned measures to prevent constipation. If you experience rectal bleeding or significant pain call for further advice.
- **Hot Tubs/Saunas**: Animal experimentation suggests that extreme body temperatures can damage developing babies. Since no controlled studies on humans are available, we suggest you avoid hot tubs and saunas. Baths are fine but the water temperature should not be over 100 degrees.
- **Household Products**: Avoid products like oven cleaners that have label warnings about toxicity, but most day-to-day products probably won’t harm your baby. Most latex paints are safe, but you should use any products that have strong fumes in a well-ventilated area. (Smells may bring on nausea.) Don’t climb to paint hard-to-reach areas. Wear gloves.
- **Increased Salivation or “Metal Taste”**: This is normal. Try using throat lozenges.
- **Leg Cramps**: Leg massage, heating pad, avoid pointing toes and walking “heel first”. Avoid lying on your back. If severe, call for advice.
- **Nasal Spray**: Vicks Vapor Rub or ¼% Neosinephrine or Ocean Spray.

- **Nausea and Vomiting:** Keep crackers or dry toast at bedside to eat before getting up. Drink juice with breakfast and eat small, frequent, high-protein meals of bland quality. Drink fluids between meals instead of with them. Take Vitamin B6 tablets twice daily. You can try the over-the-counter products Mylanta, Maalox, or Unisom. If nauseous only, consider purchasing a “Sea Band” (a non-drug acupressure method for controlling nausea). “Preggie Pops” have also been found to help with these symptoms. Other options / suggestions are: Ginger, Peppermint, or Lemon-flavored candies or teas; diffusers or candles. If vomiting is persistent for more than 24 hours call for further advice.
- **Nosebleeds:** Place a cold compress to your nose. Lie down. Tilt head back. Pinch nose. Adequate intake of Vitamin C, use of a humidifier in the home and a thin coating of Vaseline to each nostril at bed time may help prevent future nosebleeds.
- **Palpitations:** May be normal later in pregnancy but call if palpitations are persistent or associated with chest pain, fainting or fatigue.
- **Sex:** Will not harm the baby. The baby is floating in amniotic fluid, which protects the baby and absorbs the shock. If bleeding or contractions happen with sex, report this to the OB staff. Desire may be lessened in the 1<sup>st</sup> trimester, which may be normal.
- **Sinus Congestion:** After 14 weeks gestation, you may take Claritin-D, or then try Sudafed (ask your pharmacist for the version containing pseudoephedrine hydrochloride). Increase fluid intake. Use throat lozenges if needed. Plain nasal saline is also a good option. If a smoker, stop smoking. Use a vaporizer. Sinus congestion during pregnancy may be common, but if sinus congestion is accompanied by a fever or if drainage is discolored, call for further advice.
- **Skin Changes/Stretch Marks:** A brown discoloration over your face and nipples, as well as a line from your naval to your pubic bone, is normal. Avoid sunburn, which could deepen the skin discoloration. The spots will disappear after your baby is born. Stretch marks MAY be minimized if your skin is kept soft and supple with lotion, cream or cocoa butter. They may fade after delivery but probably won’t disappear. If you have a persistent RASH, hydrocortisone cream may be used. It is normal to experience increased acne during pregnancy. It is recommended that only a mild soap, with no additives, be used during pregnancy.
- **Swelling:** Wear loose, non-constrictive clothing. Elevate your legs at frequent intervals during the day. Bed rest for 2 hours daily on side. Eat a diet rich in protein. Drink plenty of fluids. Avoid salty foods and don’t add salt to foods. Report any hand or face swelling immediately.
- **Swimming:** Will not harm the baby and is safe throughout pregnancy.
- **Tampons/Douching:** Do not use during pregnancy due to the potential of infection and damage to your developing baby if fluid or air gets up inside your cervix.
- **Tiredness:** Fatigue during pregnancy may be normal. Daily exercise and an adequate night’s rest are important. Iron supplements may be recommended if anemic. Shortness of breath during the end of you pregnancy, due to pressure of the growing uterus, may cause fatigue and is helped by lying on your side or propped up on pillows.
- **Travel:** Toward the end of your pregnancy stay close to home so that your doctor can be available for delivery. After 34 weeks, any trips greater than 100 miles from Huntsville, needs to be approved by your physician. Otherwise for a normal, healthy pregnancy, travel by air or car is fine. Use a shoulder strap and seatbelt fastened loosely under your protruding abdomen with the belt more on your thighs than your abdomen. Eat and drink sensibly in route. Elevate your feet if possible. Avoid sitting still for prolonged periods of time. Take frequent stops if traveling by car. If flying, walk around inside of plane at intervals. Be sure and check with your airline carrier for any special requirements and/or restrictions that they may have.
- **Urinary Symptoms:** A feeling to urinate frequently is normal especially at the beginning of pregnancy and toward the end. Call for an appointment if painful urination, bloody urine or fever occurs.

- **Vaccines**: You may receive a flu shot, Tdap (Tetanus, diphtheria, and pertussis), and/or TB skin test during pregnancy. You should NOT have MMR shot during pregnancy. You should discuss recommendations regarding the Covid vaccine with your doctor at a visit prior to receiving the 1<sup>st</sup> vaccine.
  - **Vaginal Infections**: A yellowish-clear mucous discharge may be normal during pregnancy. If burning, itching, pain, swelling or foul odor occurs, call for an appointment. You may use a non-deodorant pad. If you know you have a yeast infection, use Monistat or Gyne Lotrimin externally ONLY in the 1<sup>st</sup> trimester and either internally or externally after the 1<sup>st</sup> trimester.
  - **Varicose Veins**: Avoid standing for long periods of time. Elevate your legs at frequent intervals during the day and do leg exercises. Wearing support hose may help.
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## Instructions for After Delivery

**Swelling:** It is normal for you to have swelling in your legs / feet for up to 4-6 weeks after delivery. The swelling should be the same in both extremities. To elevate the swelling, prop your feet with 3 to 4 pillows and increase your water intake. You need to call the office if any of the following are noted: swelling is significantly greater in 1 leg / foot, you are experiencing headaches (that Tylenol, rest, or caffeine does not resolve), or blurred vision.

**Bathing:** Refrain from sitting in a bathtub. You will only take showers until you have had your 6 week post-partum exam and are cleared by a physician.

**Swimming / hot tubs / lakes / ocean:** Refrain from these areas of water until you have had your 6 week post-partum exam and are cleared by a physician.

**Bleeding:** Bleeding after delivery can vary. It may wax and wane daily; passing of clots and bleeding 6-8 weeks post-partum is normal. If you bleed through a full size pad (not a pantyliner), in less than 1 hour, you should call the office. Additionally, if you notice a foul vaginal odor or a temp greater than 100.2, you should call the office.

**Lumps / knots in breast(s) / Mastitis:** Nursing or not, you may notice some lumps or knots in your breast(s). This is normal. If you are not nursing, leaving the breast unstimulated, you should notice it dissipates. If you are nursing, you can use certain positioning with the baby during feeding to help massage the breast and release what is probably a clogged duct. If you notice red streaks, area is warm to touch ( "feverish"), or you have a fever greater 100.2, you should call the office.

**Weaning:** If you decide to stop nursing or not nurse at all, apply cold cabbage leaves to both breasts, and wear a tight-fitting sports bra. You will wear this bra, changing out the leaves, continually for a couple of days. It is recommended you shower while wearing a sports bra. It is important that when you do shower, you keep your back to the water. Don't stimulate the breasts in any way (don't hold the baby in a nursing position, hot water in the shower, manual stimulation, etc)