

## THE MOST COMMON CONCERNS OF PREGNANT WOMEN

Thank you for selecting the Salem Clinic for your obstetric care. It is normal that you will have many questions and concerns throughout your pregnancy. Many of these questions and concerns will occur when you are at home or at work. In order to save you time and peace of mind, this guide has been designed to serve as a quick reference to the most common concerns of a pregnant woman. To reach the Obstetrics department triage nurse regarding these concerns, please call (503) 399-2424, option 2, between 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. We will do our best to return your call promptly. AFTER HOURS EMERGENCY NUMBER IS 503-399-2424.

### **ALLERGIES (Hayfever):**

If you are having problems with seasonal allergies, after your 12<sup>th</sup> week of pregnancy you may try:

- Sudafed PE (phenylephrine) (for sinus congestion)
- Chlorpheniramine 2-4 mg three times a day (do not exceed 36 mg/day)
- Benadryl (Diphenhydramine) 25-50 mg every 6 hrs as needed.
- Claritin (loratadine) (10 mg – 1 every 24 hrs)
- Zyrtec (cetirizine hydrochloride)(10 mg – 1 every 24 hrs)

### **BLEEDING:**

Blood tinged mucous can be common in early labor and is not a concern after 36 weeks. If any significant vaginal bleeding occurs, please call us immediately. Do not wait for office hours.

### **BODY PIERCING:**

We do not recommend body piercing during pregnancy.

### **CAFFEINE:**

Moderate consumption (0-24 ounces) of caffeinated or diet beverages is safe for you and your baby.

### **COLDS:**

- Increase your oral intake of fluids to at least 8-10 glasses (64-80 ounces) of fluid(water) per day.
- Run a cool-mist vaporizer.
- Increase your rest.
- Ocean Nasal Spray (saline nasal spray).
- Tylenol or Acetaminophen for headache or pain (not to exceed dosage on box).
  - Regular strength – 325 mg 1-2 tablets every 4-6 hours as needed
  - Extra strength – 500 mg 1-2 tablets every 6-8 hours as needed

The following medicines may be used without prescription after the first 12 weeks of pregnancy, but not to exceed the recommended dosage:

- Sudafed PE (decongestant tablets).
- Afrin nasal spray (decongestant nasal spray), limit to less than 1 week of use.
- Robitussin (plain/regular) for cough.

For Sore Throat:

- Gargle with ½ teaspoon of salt in a 16oz glass of warm water.
- If sore throat is severe or persists for over a week, or you have had a history of strep throat exposure, call the office for a throat culture to rule out a strep infection.

Coughs:

- Mix equal parts of honey and lemon juice, and sip one to two teaspoons every 12 hours.
- It is safe to use cough drops as directed on the package.
- Robitussin (Plain) may be used after the first 12 weeks of pregnancy, but not to exceed recommended dosage.
- Chlorpheniramine 2-4 mg three times a day (do not exceed 36 mg a day).

**COMMUNICABLE DISEASES:** (Chicken-pox, German Measles, Measles, etc.)

- If you have had the childhood illnesses, especially chicken pox, you are immune and your immune system will protect your infant.
- If your immunity is lacking or unknown for any of these illnesses, avoid any situation where you might be exposed to these childhood illnesses. If you **are exposed** and are **not** immune, please notify the office immediately.
- CHICKEN-POX: Chicken-pox is a viral infection, which is highly contagious. The virus is air-borne and may be spread by direct contact or coughing/sneezing. Before a rash appears and for many days after the rash appears, **you are contagious**. When the rash turns to blisters, the virus is also carried in the fluid of the blisters. If you have not had chicken-pox, it is probably best to stay away from those known to have been exposed to the disease or in the early days of it, and to avoid direct contact with individuals when they are in the blister stage. (If you have had chicken pox, you are immune. Please see above paragraph.)
- If you feel you have a communicable disease (such as influenza), please **call** the office for advice. We do not recommend you come into the office unless advised to so by our advice nurse.

**CONSTIPATION:**

- Drink 8–10 glasses (64 – 80 ounces) of fluids (water) per day.
- Exercise regularly.
- Increase fiber content of diet (i.e., fruits, vegetables, and whole grains).
- The following medicines may be used without prescription (follow the directions on the label):
  - Colace, Surfak – (stool softeners)
  - Metamucil, Citrucel, Konsyl and Benefiber – (bulk forming stool softener)
  - Milk of magnesia can also be used if the above are not successful.

**CONTRACTIONS:**

A contraction is the tightening of the uterine muscle. Contractions occur normally throughout pregnancy. Beware of painful contractions that occur before the 37<sup>th</sup> week of pregnancy. It is normal for contractions to occur at the rate of four or less an hour. If you are having regular uterine tightening at the rate of five or more per hour, we advise that you drink two glasses of water and lie down on your side for one hour. If contractions continue at a rate of five or more per hour or if you are having more painful contractions, call us right away.

### **CRAMPING:**

If you experience severe cramping or abdominal pain, with or without bleeding, please call us immediately.

### **DENTAL WORK:** (after 12<sup>th</sup> week of pregnancy)

- It is safe to have dental cleanings anytime during pregnancy.
- It is better to have dental problems treated during pregnancy than to postpone and risk deterioration of teeth.
- Inform your dentist of your pregnancy before any x-rays or procedures.
- If dental x-rays are required, your abdomen should be shielded.
- Fillings and/or extractions may be performed under local anesthetic.
- If your dentist is considering a general anesthetic or gas, please have him/her contact your doctor first.
- If needed, your dentist may prescribe antibiotics or pain medication.

### **DIARRHEA:**

The most important part in treating common diarrhea, that goes along with the flu-like illnesses, is to be careful about what you eat and avoid dehydration. Generally, no treatment is needed, but if symptoms are severe, you may use Immodium as directed on the bottle. If no relief after 12 hours, please call the office.

### **DIET:**

Your diet is important for your health and for your baby's development. Plan to eat a normal well balanced diet. You need to increase your calcium intake to 4-5 servings/day, both for pregnancy and breastfeeding. Avoid high fat, high caloric & salty foods. Ideal weight gain is 20-30 pounds during your pregnancy, if you start your pregnancy at a normal weight. Limit sugar substitutes (i.e. Equal, Nutrasweet, Splenda) to 1-2 servings a day. Other foods to avoid:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Unpasteurized soft cheeses</li><li>▪ Unpasteurized milk</li><li>▪ Lunch meat (if it is at room temperature)</li><li>▪ Unwashed vegetables</li><li>▪ Raw or undercooked meat</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Sushi (raw fish or seafood)</li><li>▪ Raw eggs (homemade mayonnaise, dressing, ice cream)</li><li>▪ Shark, swordfish, king mackerel or tilefish</li></ul> |
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### **DIZZINESS:**

This usually occurs with a sudden change of position. Keeping well hydrated and consuming small amounts of food every 2-3 hours will reduce your susceptibility to being dizzy or fainting symptoms. Do not become overly fatigued, dehydrated or overheated.

### **EXERCISE/FITNESS:**

- Exercise is good for you. 30 active minutes daily is recommended.
- Low impact aerobic activity may be continued during pregnancy if you are accustomed to doing it.
- If any unusual symptoms appear (i.e. bleeding or abdominal cramping), stop the activity and notify us immediately.
- Listen to your body as you exercise. Stop when fatigued. Adjust the intensity of exercise to

match your energy level and prevent over-exertion. Gentle stretching before exercising may reduce your risk of injury to joints and muscles.

- Be sure to drink water before and after exercise to prevent dehydration.
- If your doctor considers your pregnancy high risk, he/she may have different recommendations.
- We recommend that you avoid tanning beds, jacuzzis, hot tubs and saunas.

### **HAIR & NAIL TREATMENTS:**

Hair dye, perms and nail treatments are permissible during pregnancy. When having any kind of treatment, the area should be well ventilated.

### **HEADACHES:**

- Increase your rest and fluids.
- Apply cold applications to your face and/or forehead.
- Massage your head and/or neck.
- Tylenol (or Acetaminophen) not to exceed dosage on box.
  - Regular Strength - 325 mg 1-2 tablets every 4-6 hours as needed
  - Extra Strength - 500 mg 1-2 tablets every 6-8 hours as needed
- If you have severe headaches that are not relieved by the above methods, please notify us.

### **HEARTBURN:**

- Avoid overfilling of stomach. Eat multiple (6-8) small meals each day, rather than 3 large ones.
- Sleep in a semi-reclined position if it is worse at night.
- Avoid foods containing fat, caffeine and chocolate. We also recommend that you limit your intake of highly seasoned foods (spicy) and acidic foods (tomatoes, citrus). Do not treat heartburn by taking milk products.
- Tums, Riopan, Mylanta or Gaviscon are safe anytime during pregnancy.
- Pepcid AC may be used after 12 weeks.

### **HEMORRHOIDS:**

- Avoid constipation.
- Drink at least 8–10 glasses (64-80 ounces) of fluids (water) per day.
- Use Tucks or moistened cotton balls for cleansing after each bowel movement.
- Anusol, Anusol HC, Preparation H, or Preparation H with hydrocortisone may be used as directed without prescription.

### **INTERCOURSE:**

- Intercourse is permissible during pregnancy as long as it is comfortable.
- Avoid intercourse in cases of threatened miscarriage, premature labor, bleeding or leakage of fluid from the vagina and notify your doctor if experiencing any of these symptoms.

### **NAUSEA/VOMITING:**

- Nausea and vomiting may happen in early pregnancy and also less frequently in the later months. Eat small amounts of food more often. Keep something in your stomach. Avoid fruit juices, liquids and solids that cause you nausea.
- You may try Pyridoxine (Vitamin B6) 50 mg every 6-8 hours, not to exceed 200mg in 24 hours.
- You may use Seabands (motion sickness wrist bands), as directed on the box.

- If nausea is severe, try sips of water, Gatorade, popsicles, ginger ale or ginger snaps.
- You may try doxylamine succinate (plain Unisom) 25mg ½ to 1 tablet every 6 hours. Read package label carefully as this can contain diphenhydramine, which may not help your nausea.
- If you are unable to keep anything down or are dehydrated, please call the office.

### **PAIN:**

If you have severe abdominal pain, please call us immediately. Do not wait for office hours.

### **PAINTING:**

- Optimally, home renovation should not be done while pregnant.
- Avoid removal of old paint (due to concern for lead exposure).
- Paint in well ventilated areas only. Prolonged inhalations of vapors should be avoided.

### **PESTICIDES:**

Avoid exposure to chemicals such as pesticides, flea dips or bombs, insecticides and herbicides. Standard housecleaning supplies are acceptable to use while pregnant.

### **PETS:**

Do not empty cat litter boxes during pregnancy to prevent a possible toxoplasmosis infection from feline feces. This infection can cause miscarriage or birth defects. Avoid any contact with pet hamsters and other rodents to prevent possible infection. Avoid any contact with rodent feces, which may carry a virus that could be harmful to the fetus. Avoid contact with lizards or reptiles because of potential transmission of Salmonella.

### **RUPTURED MEMBRANES:** (Loss of fluid from vagina)

If you feel like you are losing fluid from the vagina, please call during office hours (8:00-5:00, M-F). If you feel that you are leaking fluid and it is after office hours, a weekend or a holiday, go to Salem Hospital Family Birth Center.

### **TATTOOS:**

We do not advise getting tattoos during pregnancy.

### **TEMPERATURE:**

- For a temperature greater than 101°, with or without cold/flu symptoms, please call the office.
- For a temperature less than 101°:
  - Monitor temperature to see if a fever greater than 101° F. occurs.
  - Increase your rest and oral fluid intake.
  - Tylenol (see dosage under headaches).

### **TRAVEL:**

- Flying in a commercial airplane presents no unusual risk to your pregnancy.
- We do not recommend long distance travel in the last month of pregnancy (36 weeks).
- Seat belts – lap & shoulder belts both need to be worn, even in late pregnancy. Lap belt should be across your hips.
- During long drives or flights you should get up and stretch your legs every 1½ - 2 hours and increase water consumption.

**UNUSUAL VAGINAL DISCHARGE:**

Call the office if you have vaginal discharge that burns, itches or has a bad odor. If you have had recurrent vaginal yeast irritation and feel you have this condition: Monistat and generic OTC antifungal treatment for vaginal yeast irritation can be used after 12 weeks of pregnancy.

**URINARY TRACT INFECTIONS:**

Call us if you have one or more of the following:

- Pain or burning on urination.
- A feeling of urgency to urinate.
- Blood in your urine.
- Severe one sided back pain.
- A fever of 101° F or chills with any of the above symptoms.

Or if these symptoms persist for more than 48 hours while being treated with antibiotics for a urinary tract infection.

**VIDEO:**

We want to work with you to make your birth experience as comfortable and pleasant as possible for you and your family. We have found that continuous videotaping during delivery can affect our ability as physicians to interact well with you and your family. Based on this feeling, as well as the recommendations of our professional association, we are unable to allow videotaping or audiotaping during the birth. You are of course encouraged to bring cameras for still photos. You can videotape the baby immediately after the birth if you desire. Please avoid videotaping hospital staff.

**VITAMINS:**

Take one non-prescription prenatal vitamin every day, and then on your first OB visit, you will receive a prescription for prenatal vitamins. If you prefer, you may take a multi-vitamin and 800 mcg of folic acid each day.