

Common Discomforts of Pregnancy

What to tell the patient when you
don't have a magic pill

Shortness of Breath

- Slow deep breaths, don't panic
- Avoid sleeping or resting flat on your back
- Try a recliner
- Lift arms to shoulder level to open the rib cage a bit to allow more expansion
- May need to change position, if sitting stand, if lying down sit up
- Climb stairs slowly

Nasal congestion/ Stuffiness

- Cool mist humidifier at home especially for nighttime sleep
- Normal saline drops; Netie pot irrigation
- NO NEOSYNEPHRINE SPRAY
- Explain cause during pregnancy

Heartburn/ GERD

- 5-6 smaller meals instead of 3 typical
- Avoid drinking large amounts of fluid with meals, especially carbonated beverages
- TUMS prn, especially at bedtime, may also help with leg cramps
- Avoid eating or drinking large amounts within 2 hrs of bedtime
- Avoid spicy, hot, fried or greasy foods, especially in evening hours

GERD cont'd

- Avoid tomato based foods, caffeine and chocolate
- Zantac 150 mg BID or daily, prn, especially near bedtime; PPI's ; Antacids (all Cat B)
- Sitting in recliner or elevate HOB with pillows or on blocks 10-30 degrees

Edema/ Swelling

- Differentiate feet and ankle edema from hands and face; also differentiate swelling from large weight gain
- Elevate legs when possible, use pillow under legs when lying down
- Avoid crossing your legs when sitting
- Avoid knee high, thigh high sock causing a band like constriction to blood flow

Swelling cont'd

- If you stand a lot at work ask employer for permission to sit for 10 minutes every 2-3 hours or allow to move from cash register to doing something that puts you in motion like stocking or straightening shelves, give note if needed
- Use a box or book on the floor to prop and alternate feet when standing
- Lie on side for sleeping and resting

Swelling con'd

- 35-80% dependent edema, venous stasis secondary to pregnant uterus
- Fluid intake adequate
- Sodium too much/ too little
- Protein adequate intake

Nausea and Vomiting

- Vit B6 – pyridoxine 10-25mg po TID
- Can add doxylamine succinate (Unisom) 12.5mg (1/2 tab) PO QID or after meals only
- Ginger 1 g daily in divided doses (250mg in capsule form QID)
- Diclegis
- Peppermint tea
- IV hydration

Nausea and Vomiting cont'd

- Antihistamines (Benadryl, Dramamine, Atarax, all Cat B)
- Phenothiazines (Phenergan and Compazine, Cat C)
- Serotonin Antagonists (Zofran, Cat B)
- Take vitamins at night
- More frequent meals, smaller in amount, bland, high protein, every 2-3 hours

Nausea and Vomiting cont'd

- Increase intake of protein and complex carbs
- Limit dietary fat
- Drink fluids between meals and only sips with meals
- Avoid dehydration
- Avoid trigger such as strong odors, fatigue, heat