

TOPIC 2: MINOR DISCOMFORTS OF PREGNANCY

Minor discomforts of pregnancy are the expected physiological changes during pregnancy. These changes are normal, however, bring discomfort. There are measures on how to alleviate these discomforts.

Nausea and vomiting

- Occur in 1st trimester.
- Due to elevated levels of HCG and changes in carbohydrate metabolism.
- Eat dry toast or crackers before rising from bed.
- Eat small frequent meals rather than 3 large meals.
- Dry, low fat and high carbohydrate diet. ▪ Take vitamin B6 supplements.

Urinary Frequency

- Occurs in the 1st and 3rd trimester.
- Due to pressure of the uterus on the bladder.
- Void frequently at regular intervals.
- Use perineal pads if urine leaks.
- Avoid diuretic beverages: coffee, carbonated beverages.

- Limit fluid intake before bedtime.
- Kegel's exercise to improve tone of muscles that controls urination.

Syncope

- Occurs in the 1st trimester.
- **Supine Hypotension Syndrome** occurs in 2nd and 3rd trimester.
- Due to hormonal changes, increased blood volume, anemia, fatigue, sudden change of position or lying supine.
- Sitting with feet elevated.
- Changing position slowly.
- Changing position to left lateral recumbent.

Fatigue

- Occurs in the 1st and 3rd trimester.
- Due to hormonal changes.
- Take at least 8 hours of sleep at night and frequent rest periods during the day.

- Avoid standing for long periods, work while seated as much as possible.
- Eat a well-balanced diet to provide enough energy.

Nasal Stuffiness

- Occurs during 1st through 3rd trimester.
- Result from increased estrogen, results from swelling of nasal tissues and dryness.
- Avoid allergens and smoke-filled rooms.
- Normal saline nose drops (1/4 tsp salt in 1 cup water).
- Breathe steam from pot of boiling water.

Breast Tenderness

- Occurs from 1st through 3rd trimester.
- Due to increased level of estrogen and progesterone.
- Encourage to wear support bra.
- Avoid use of soap on the nipples and areola to prevent drying.

Leukorrhea

- Occurs during 1st through 3rd trimester.
- Due to hyperplasia of vaginal mucosa and increased mucus production.
- Proper cleansing and hygiene.
- Wearing cotton underwear.
- Avoid douching.

Heartburn

- Occurs in the 2nd and 3rd trimester.
- Result from increased progesterone levels, decreased gastric motility and esophageal reflex, and displacement of the stomach by the growing uterus.
- Take small meals rather than 3 large meals
- Bend at knees not at waist when picking objects from the floor.
- Avoid lying flat after meals.
- Drink milk between meals.
- Taking antacids only if recommended by the physicians.
- Avoid fatty and spicy foods.

Leg Varicosities

- Occurs in the 2nd and 3rd trimester.
- Due to weakening walls of the veins and venous congestion.
- Periodic rest with elevation of the legs.
- Lie with feet against the wall.
- Avoid prolonged sitting or standing, constricting garters, knee high socks.
- Wear support hose.
- Apply elastic bandage before getting up in the morning starting at the distal ends but do not wrap toes.
- Do not cross legs at knees.

Vulvar Varicosities

- Rest with pillow under the hips.
- Modified knee chest position.

Hemorrhoids

- Occurs in 2nd and 3rd trimester.
- Due to increased venous pressure and constipation.
- Sim's position several times a day.

- Avoid constipation.
- Hot sitz bath 15 to 20 minutes.
- Avoid bearing down.
- Observe good bowel habits.
- Use of topically applied anesthetics, stool softener and warm soaks.

Constipation

- Occurs in 2nd and 3rd trimester.
- Results from decreased intestinal motility, displacement of the intestines and taking iron supplement.
- Drink at least 8 glasses of water each day.
- Avoid carbonated drinks, coffee, and tea.
- Additional fiber in the diet.
- Restrict cheese consumption.
- Do not discontinue iron supplement if prescribed.
- Brisk walking of at least 1 mile/day.
- Establish a regular pattern of elimination each day.

Backaches

- Occurs in 2nd and 3rd trimester.
- Due to exaggerated lumbosacral curve resulting from enlarged uterus.
- Pelvic rocking or pelvic tilt exercise to relieve low backache.
- Frequent rest and avoidance of fatigue.
- Low heeled shoes.
- Correct posture.

Leg Cramps

- Occurs in 2nd and 3rd trimester.
- Due to altered calcium-phosphorus balance.
- For immediate relief, push toe upward while applying pressure on the knee to straighten the leg.
- One quart of milk a day to meet calcium needs or oral calcium supplements as prescribed by physician.
- Exercise regularly but avoid pointing of toes.

Ankle Edema

- Occurs in the 2nd and 3rd trimester.

- Due to vasodilation, venous stasis, and increased venous pressure below the uterus. ▪ Elevating the legs at least twice a day.
- Sleeping on the left side.
- Wearing supportive stockings.
- Avoid sitting or standing in one position for long periods of time.

Headaches

- Occurs in the 2nd and 3rd trimester.
- Due to changes in blood volume and vascular tone.
- Changing position slowly.
- Applying cool cloth to the forehead.
- Eating a small snack.
- Using acetaminophen only if prescribed by the physician.

Shortness of Breath / Dyspnea

- Occurs in the 2nd and 3rd trimester.
- Results from pressure on the diaphragm.
- Allowing frequent rest periods.

- Sleeping with head elevated or on side.
- Avoid overexertion.
- Perform tailor sitting exercises.