

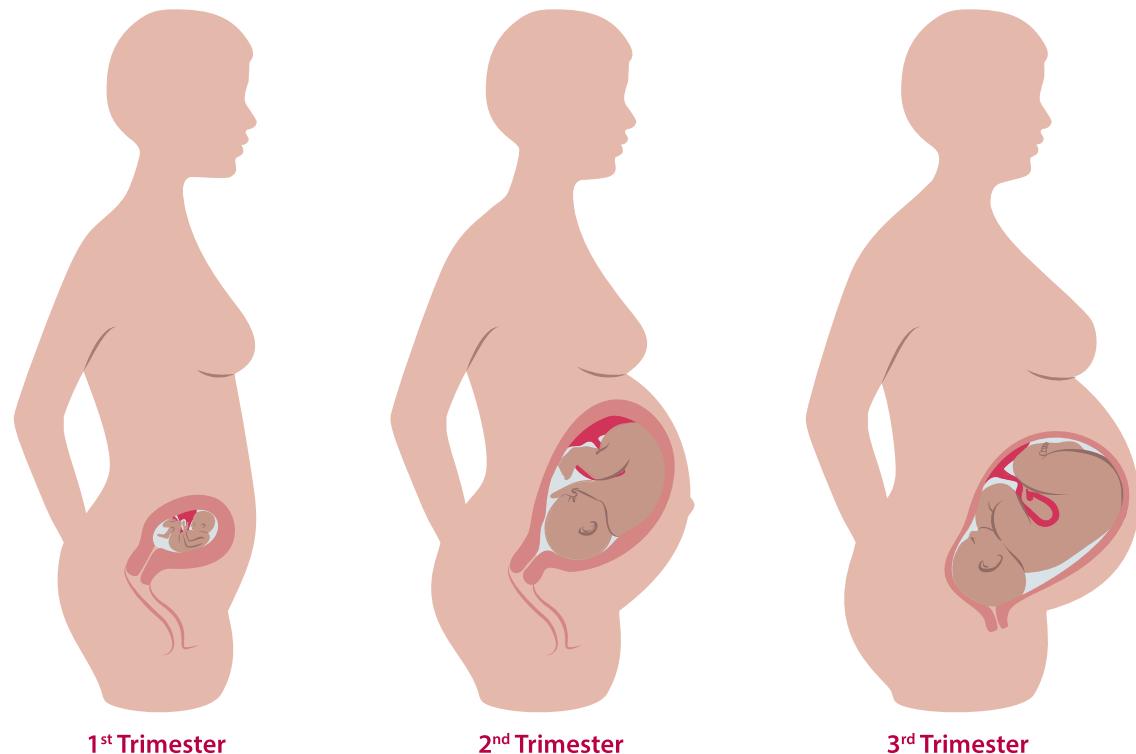
# Stages of Pregnancy

When you're pregnant, it's not just your belly that's growing. Your whole body is going through a variety of normal changes.



## TRY THIS

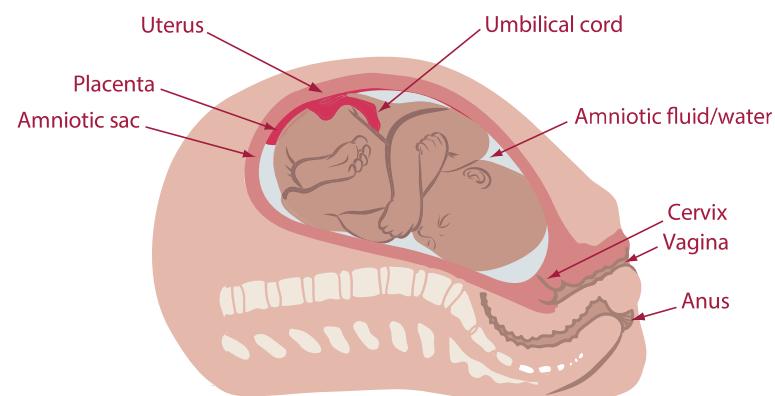
Whatever changes you're experiencing, you'll feel better throughout your pregnancy if you stay active, rest when you're tired, drink plenty of water and eat well.



1<sup>st</sup> Trimester

2<sup>nd</sup> Trimester

3<sup>rd</sup> Trimester



## Common Changes and What You Can Do

### First Trimester: 0 to 14 weeks

Common Changes	What You Can Do
Menstrual period stops	Wear pads if you have spotting. While spotting in the first trimester is very common, call your health care provider or HealthLink BC at 8-1-1 if you have concerns.
Tender nipples, breast or chest tissue	Wear a comfortable, supportive bra. If you have concerns, talk with your health care provider.
Mood changes	Share your feelings, eat well and exercise. Call your health care provider if you think you might be depressed.
Fear, uncertainty, excitement	Find support groups for pregnant people or new parents and caregivers.
Tiredness	Rest when you can.
Headaches	Use good posture. Drink lots of water. Don't strain your eyes. Put a cool or warm washcloth on your forehead or neck. Get a massage. Try Tylenol (acetaminophen).
Need to pee a lot	Limit caffeine. See <a href="#">Lifestyle</a> .
Morning sickness, nausea	Eat smaller amounts more often. Have a small snack, like crackers, a few minutes before you get out of bed. Sip water, unsweetened apple juice, sparkling water or ginger ale. Eat cold meals, avoid greasy food and have someone else cook. Wear loose clothing and let fresh air into your home. Switch to liquid prenatal vitamins. To protect your enamel, don't brush teeth right after vomiting. Instead, rinse with water, mouthwash or baking soda mixed with water. If you're considering using cannabis to help with morning sickness, learn about the risks and talk with your health care provider about safer options (see <a href="#">Lifestyle</a> ).
Thin, milky vaginal secretions	Wear small pads, cotton underwear and looser pants. Contact your health care provider if you're itchy or have frothy, smelly or coloured discharge.
Shortness of breath	This is normal, but contact your health care provider if you have a family history of heart problems. Seek emergency care if your symptoms come on suddenly and you have chest pain or if the shortness of breath makes it hard to lie flat or speak.
Light-headedness	Stand up slowly and eat regularly.

## Second Trimester: 15 to 27 weeks



### WHAT YOU CAN DO

Show support by looking into prenatal classes, giving gentle massage and exercising and eating well with your partner.



### DID YOU KNOW?

By the second trimester, your chance of miscarriage is low.



### TRY THIS

Talk or read to your baby or play soothing music – and encourage your partner to do the same. Your baby can hear you and is learning what you sound like.

Common Changes	What You Can Do
Red, inflamed gums	Floss and brush regularly. See a dental professional and tell them you're pregnant.
Larger, darker nipples and areola (the circle around them), with little bumps, leaking nipples	Use pads in your bra and change them whenever they're wet.
Stuffy nose, nose bleeds	Drink plenty of water. Avoid smoke. Massage your sinus area. Breathe in steam or cool mist, place warm, moist towels on your face or try nose drops made of $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon salt in 1 cup warm water. Don't take antihistamines unless recommended by your health care provider.
Feeling baby move ("quickenings")	Note the date and tell your health care provider on your next visit.
Low back pain	Use good posture and wear supportive shoes. Don't lift heavy items. Get a massage (by someone specially trained in prenatal massage only) or apply heat or cold. Sleep on your left side with a pillow between your knees.
Pubic pain	Don't push heavy things with your feet or open your knees wide.
Throbbing legs, varicose veins	Stay active. Sleep on your side with a pillow between your legs. Don't cross your legs. Do ankle and foot exercises and prop up your legs when sitting. Wear support hose if advised by your health care provider.
Swelling of ankles, feet, hands and face and tingling in hands ("edema")	Stay active. Sleep on your left side. Prop up your legs. Avoid tight socks, rings and watches. If you have a lot of swelling or if you also have headache, blurred vision or stomachache, seek medical attention right away.
Constipation	Drink lots of water, eat high-fibre foods and stay active. Don't hold back or force bowel movements. Don't use suppositories, mineral oil, laxatives or enemas unless recommended by your health care provider.
Line running from belly button to pubic area, darkening of face	Line may remain after birth, but will usually fade in a few weeks.

## Third Trimester: 28 to 40 weeks



### WHAT YOU CAN DO

Help prepare your home for the baby, take care of household duties and get ready to give support during labour.



### DID YOU KNOW?

In the third trimester, your breathing will likely improve as your baby moves down to prepare for birth. Take note of when this happens and tell your health care provider at your next visit.

If you're concerned that your symptoms are serious, see [Pregnancy Risk Factors](#) and contact your health care provider or HealthLink BC at 8-1-1.

Common Changes	What You Can Do
Stretch marks on stomach, breast or chest, thighs	Will usually fade over time.
Dry, itchy skin	Try glycerin soap or calamine lotion. Moisturize. Avoid long, hot baths.
Heavy, sore breasts or chest	You may want to wear a supportive bra day and night and during exercise.
Larger, darker nipples and areola (the circle around them), with little bumps, leaking nipples	Use pads in your bra and change them whenever they're wet.
Fatigue	Rest. Get help with chores. Consider stopping work early.
Doubt, fear about labour	Take prenatal classes and think about your plans for labour (see <a href="#">Preparing to Give Birth</a> ) and for feeding your baby (see <a href="#">Breastfeeding or Chestfeeding Your Baby</a> ). Talk with trusted friends, family members and your health care provider or call HealthLink BC at 8-1-1.
Pre-labour contractions ("Braxton Hicks")	As you approach your due date, contractions will increase. Braxton Hicks contractions aren't harmful and aren't a sign that you're about to go into labour. Try physical activity.
Leg muscle cramps	Drink milk and eat calcium-rich foods. Before bed, take a warm bath and stretch your lower legs.
Impatience for the birth	Talk about your feelings.
Hemorrhoids	Apply ice wrapped in a cloth. Avoid constipation and straining. Sleep on your side with a pillow between your knees. Don't sit or stand for long periods. Try pelvic floor Kegel exercises (see <a href="#">Taking Care of Yourself</a> ).
Heartburn	Eat small, frequent meals, avoid greasy and spicy foods and drink plenty between meals. Raise your head and shoulders when lying down. Don't bend over or lie down right after a meal. Avoid tight waistbands. Chew non-peppermint gum with xylitol. If heartburn is making it hard to eat or sleep, ask your health care provider about medications that can help.
Sudden perineum pain	Avoid sudden movement. Bend at the hips when you cough or sneeze.
Shortness of breath	Take deep, slow breaths through your mouth. Wear loose clothing. Use good posture.
Difficulty sleeping	Exercise. Before bed, try a warm bath, a warm decaffeinated drink and snack, deep breathing and relaxing music. Use extra pillows to support your body.
Increased need to pee	Avoid caffeine and try Kegel exercises (see <a href="#">Lifestyle</a> and <a href="#">Taking Care of Yourself</a> ).