

Pregnancy Wellness: Third Trimester

You are in the last stage of your pregnancy, from week 28 until birth. Your body and baby are getting ready for delivery. Your care team is here to help you through these changes.



What You May Feel

Body changes in the third trimester may make you feel uncomfortable, but most are normal. You may notice:

- **Back pain:** Your growing belly puts extra weight on your back. Try using a pillow for support, avoid lifting heavy things, and rest when you can.
- **Hemorrhoids:** These are swollen veins near your rectum. Eat foods with fiber, drink water, and do not strain when using the bathroom. Warm baths and witch hazel pads can help.
- **Heartburn:** You may feel a burning in your chest after eating. Eat small meals, avoid spicy or fried foods, and do not lie down right after eating. If these steps do not help, ask your care team about treatment options.
- **Leg problems:** You may have leg cramps or swelling. Stretch your legs, drink water, and rest with your feet up. Wear comfortable shoes, and avoid standing for long periods.

- **Frequent urination:** Your baby presses on your bladder, so you may need to urinate more often. Go to the bathroom when you feel the need. Ask your care team about Kegel exercises to help control leaks.
- **Vaginal discharge:** It is normal to have more clear or white discharge. Call your care team if you notice a sudden gush of fluid or if the discharge is green, yellow, or smells bad.
- **Feeling tired:** Rest when you can. Ask for help from family and friends.
- **Balance changes:** You may feel clumsy as your belly grows. Move slowly, and use support if needed.

Healthy Habits

- Eat healthy foods like fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean proteins, and dairy.
- Drink plenty of water.
- Take your prenatal vitamin every day.
- Get enough rest and sleep.
- Avoid smoking, alcohol, and drugs that are not prescribed by your care team.
- Wash your hands often, and cook food well.

Exercise

Exercise is generally OK in low-risk pregnancies, but always follow your care team's advice.

Moving your body can help:

- Ease back pain and swelling
- Improve sleep and mood
- Make labor and delivery easier
- Keep your heart and lungs strong

Good choices for exercise include:

- Walking at a comfortable pace

- Swimming or water aerobics
- Prenatal yoga or gentle stretching
- Light housework or daily tasks

Avoid activities that:

- Have a high risk of falling, like biking, skiing, or horseback riding
- Involve contact or jumping
- Make you feel too tired or overheated

Stop right away if you feel:

- Dizzy
- Short of breath
- Pain or cramping
- Bleeding or leaking fluid

Always listen to your body and rest when needed. It is OK to slow down or take days off. You are doing a lot by growing a baby.



Work or School

Most people can keep working or going to school during the last part of pregnancy. However, your body is going through many changes, and you may need to slow down.

Here are some ways to take care of yourself:

- Take breaks during the day to sit, stretch, or rest.
- Drink plenty of water to stay hydrated.
- Eat small, healthy snacks to keep your energy up.
- Wear comfortable clothes and shoes that support your body.

Tell your care team if:

- Your job involves heavy lifting, standing for long periods, or a lot of walking.
- You feel very tired, dizzy, or in pain during the day.
- School or work is too stressful or hard on your body.

Travel

Travel is generally OK in low-risk pregnancies, but always ask your care team before going on a trip.

If you travel by car:

- Wear your seat belt low on your hips and under your belly.
- Stop every 1 to 2 hours to stretch your legs and use the bathroom.
- Drink water to stay hydrated.

If you fly:

- Check with the airline. Some will not let you fly after 36 weeks of pregnancy or require a medical note for approval.
- Get up and walk every hour to help blood flow.
- Wear loose clothes for comfort. Consider compression socks to reduce leg swelling.

For any long trip:

- Carry a copy of your medical records.

- Know where the nearest hospital is in case you need help.
- Talk to your care team before you go to discuss any risks.

Intimacy

Sex is generally OK in low-risk pregnancies, but always follow your care team's advice.

Your feelings about intimacy may change during this time. You may feel more tired, sore, or uncomfortable. You may also feel closer to your partner and want more emotional support. Every person is different, and your feelings are valid. Being close to your partner can also mean cuddling, talking, or doing relaxing things together. Intimacy is about feeling safe, loved, and supported.

If you choose to have sex:

- Talk with your partner about what feels good and what does not.
- Try new positions to find what is comfortable and does not put pressure on your belly.
- Stop if you feel pain, bleeding, or discomfort. Contact your care team if any of these happen.

Mental Health

Your mental health is just as important as your physical health during pregnancy and after your baby is born. It is normal to feel many emotions, such as excitement, worry, or even sadness. Many people feel tired or overwhelmed, especially in the third trimester.

Sometimes, these feelings can become stronger and last longer. Some people develop depression or anxiety during pregnancy. This is called antenatal depression or prenatal depression. Feeling this way after giving birth is called postpartum depression or postnatal depression.

“Baby blues” are common and usually go away within 2 weeks after birth. These can include mood swings, crying, and trouble sleeping. If these feelings last longer than 2 weeks or get worse, it could be postpartum depression or anxiety, which needs support and treatment.

Postpartum depression and anxiety can start during pregnancy or anytime in the first year after birth. Anxiety can also happen before or after birth. These are medical conditions and are not your fault.



Signs of Depression or Anxiety

- Feeling sad, hopeless, or empty most days
- Losing interest in things you used to enjoy
- Feeling very tired or having low energy
- Trouble sleeping or sleeping too much
- Feeling very anxious, worried, or panicky
- Trouble bonding with your baby
- Feeling guilty, worthless, or like you are not a good parent
- Changes in eating habits
- Having thoughts of harming yourself or your baby

These conditions can affect anyone. While these feelings are common, if they feel especially strong or prevent you from doing normal daily activities, reach out to your care team. Help is available, and you can feel better with support and treatment.

If you ever have thoughts of harming yourself or your baby, call your care team, go to the nearest Emergency Room, or call 911 right away. You are not alone, and help is available.

Thank You for Choosing Us

Thank you for trusting us with your care. We are here to support you and want you to feel your best. Contact us with any questions.

IF YOU HAVE A MEDICAL EMERGENCY, CALL 911 OR GO TO THE EMERGENCY ROOM.

The information presented is intended for general information and educational purposes. It is not intended to replace the advice of your health care provider. Contact your health care provider if you believe you have a health problem.

Last updated May 2025