

# Headaches in pregnancy

Headaches are common in pregnancy. They are more common in the first trimester (0 to 13 weeks) or third trimester (27 to 40 weeks).

Headaches can be unpleasant for you but are usually not dangerous for your baby. They can be a sign that you need to get checked out by your GP, midwife or obstetrician. It's important to be aware of what to look out for.

## Causes of headaches during pregnancy

Headaches during pregnancy can be caused by:

- hormonal changes - levels of certain hormones increase during pregnancy
- [stress](#)
- lack of sleep
- dehydration
- low blood sugar
- [caffeine withdrawal](#)
- [high blood pressure](#)

If you suffer from [migraine](#) headaches, you may get migraines more often or less often than usual when you are pregnant.

Talk to your doctor or pharmacist about what medicines for migraine are safe to use during pregnancy.

## To treat headaches

If you experience a headache, there are a few things you can try at home that may help:

- rest in a dark room and take long, slow deep breaths
- apply hot or cold packs to your head and neck
- eat small meals often
- get a massage
- relax in a warm bath or warm shower

## Using painkillers when pregnant

Some medicines, including painkillers, can harm your baby's health.

[Paracetamol](#) is generally considered safe during pregnancy. Always check the packaging for the correct amount of tablets to take, and how often you may take them.

If you find you need to take paracetamol for more than a couple of days, you may need to speak to your GP.

### ⚠ Important

Check with your GP, pharmacist, or midwife before taking any medicine while you are pregnant.

## When to get help

Tell your doctor or midwife if you often have bad headaches. It could be a sign of a more serious problem.

### Contact your midwife or GP immediately if you have:

- a severe headache with upper stomach pain, nausea, or swelling
- generalised swelling, especially if this is sudden
- flashing lights in your eyes or blurred vision
- been told your blood pressure is increasing
- a sudden severe headache
- a headache that is worsening
- a migraine that feels different from the migraines you usually have

[Tiredness and fatigue in pregnancy](#)

[Exercise during pregnancy](#)

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