

# Dizziness and fainting in pregnancy

Dizziness is when you feel light-headed, weak, unsteady or as if you might faint.

Many pregnant women feel dizzy at times. It is sometimes the first sign that you are pregnant.

Dizziness is common in weeks 0 to 13 of pregnancy.

## When to get medical help

### Contact your GP or midwife if:

you feel dizzy or feeling faint, and:

- have a mild headache
- your vision is slightly blurry at times

### Contact your maternity hospital or emergency department immediately if

you are dizzy or feeling faint, and you have:

- [bleeding from your vagina](#)
- [pain in your tummy](#)
- severe dizziness that does not go away
- [shortness of breath or chest pain](#)
- irregular or too fast heart beat
- [severe headache](#)
- severe blurred vision
- been diagnosed with high blood pressure or pre-eclampsia

## What to do if you faint

Go to your GP immediately if you have fainted and hurt yourself, especially if you hit your head.

Contact your maternity unit if:

- you have fallen and landed or injured your tummy, or your bump or your abdomen
- your baby's movements have changed since you fainted
- you have been diagnosed with high blood pressure or pre-eclampsia

Contact your GP or your out-of-hours GP if:

- you hit your head when you fainted
- this is the first time you have fainted

## If a pregnant woman faints

If a pregnant woman has fainted you should:

1. Gently put them on the ground.
2. Roll them onto their left side, with their left knee pulled up towards their chest.

Call 112 or 999 if they:

- have not woken up after 1 minute (make sure they are not on their back)
- are having a fit, or a convulsion, or jerking movements
- have injured themselves seriously during the fall

Stay with them until they wake up or help arrives.

## What to do if you feel faint

If you feel faint then you should tell someone. They can support you and get help if needed.

Sit or lie down. If you sit, lower your head towards your knees. If you lie down, lie on your side.

Take deep breaths. Breathe out slowly. Get someone to open a window.

Do not try to move from where you are. Loosen any tight clothing.

Do not eat or drink anything if you are feeling very dizzy or faint. But as the dizziness starts to improve, drink some water and have a snack.

## Signs you might faint

You might faint if you feel any of the following signs:

- feeling light headed
- feeling confused

- blurred vision or spots in front of your eyes
- ringing sound in your ears
- sweating or feeling cold and clammy
- feeling sick
- fast or unusually deep breathing

If you faint you will usually be unconscious for 20 seconds. It is normal to feel disorientated for a few seconds after you wake. You may feel tired and weak for 30 minutes or more after fainting.

It is a good idea to rest. If possible, get somebody else to drive you home. It is best not to drive.

## Causes of dizziness and fainting

The main causes of dizziness and fainting during pregnancy are:

- hormone changes - this can cause your blood pressure to drop, allowing less blood to get to your brain
- overheating
- low blood sugar - keep a snack with you and avoid skipping meals
- low iron levels

You may also get dizzy if you lie on your back during the second and third trimesters. This is because as your womb grows, it can put pressure on a major blood vessel leading to the heart.

## Prevent dizziness and fainting

You can help prevent dizziness and fainting by:

- getting out of bed slowly - sit on the side of the bed for a minute before standing
- avoiding very hot baths or showers
- getting out of the bath or shower slowly and carefully
- avoiding standing for long periods of time
- never skipping meals - even if you have [morning sickness](#), eat small amounts of food often
- drinking plenty of fluids
- doing small amounts of physical activity often, to improve your circulation
- avoiding lying on your back, especially from your second trimester onwards

# Sláintecare.

This project has received funding from the Government of Ireland's Sláintecare Integration Fund 2019 under Grant Agreement Number 8.

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