

I DON'T FEEL GOOD. WHAT SHOULD I DO?

Just because you don't feel good doesn't mean you are truly sick. During pregnancy, your body will be going through a lot of changes. However, it is possible you have picked up a virus or bacteria.

Respiratory illnesses: Colds, sore throat, bronchitis, and sinus infections are usually caused by viruses. They can last from days to weeks and the symptoms can be managed with over-the-counter medications (see safe medications section). Additionally, you can try the following:

- Cool mist humidifier at night to keep mucous membranes moist.
- Saline nasal drops may be purchased at the pharmacy or made at home by mixing 3 teaspoons of non-iodized salt, such as kosher salt, with no additives, and 1 teaspoon of baking soda in a small airtight container. Add 1 teaspoon of this mixture to 1 cup (8 ounces) of distilled or boiled and cooled water. Store in a small clean jar. Solution is good for 3 days.
- DO NOT use any nasal sprays that contain epinephrine, like Afrin or Neo-Synephrine.
- Nasal strips that help keep the nasal passages open can help alleviate nasal congestion and snoring, and can help increase airflow.

If you develop a persistent fever of or above 100.4 degrees, pain that lasts more than 3 days, wheezing, or shortness of breath, please notify your healthcare provider.

Gastrointestinal virus: These viruses typically cause nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea. Symptoms usually last for a couple of days. If you are unable to keep fluids down for 24 hours, have persistent fever of or above 100.4 degrees, symptoms that last for more than 3 days, or you experience abdominal pain, please notify your healthcare provider.

Breast tenderness: Increased levels of estrogen and progesterone can cause the breast to change in preparation for breastfeeding. As a result, breast tenderness can occur very early in pregnancy. It is important to wear a good supportive bra, without underwire or seams. The straps and back should be wide so the tension your bra supplies is even.

Fatigue: Fatigue early in pregnancy is very common. It can be caused by hormonal changes, as well as stress, anxiety, depression, and decreased sleep. Getting at least 8 hours of sleep per night can help, as can decreasing stress and including exercise in your daily routine. The addition of relaxing activities, like meditation, before bedtime can help.

Bleeding gums: Estrogen can cause an increase in blood vessel formation and an increase in blood flow to vascular areas of the body. You may notice your gums bleeding more than normal. It is important to practice good oral hygiene and obtain regular dental checkups. Continue brushing and flossing teeth with a soft bristle brush two to three times a day.

Constipation: The hormones of pregnancy slow down the movement of food through your GI tract, causing some women to have trouble with constipation. To help, eat bran or high fiber cereals, lots of fruits and vegetables, and drink plenty of water. You may try prunes, prune juice, and/or hot drinks to stimulate a bowel movement. See the list of approved medications for additional remedies.