



Australian Government

Department of Health,
Disability and Ageing

Common conditions during pregnancy

These conditions may not be harmful to your baby, but can affect your daily life during pregnancy



During your pregnancy, you may experience one or more common conditions. These are described in this fact sheet.

While these conditions may not be harmful to your baby, they can be distressing, uncomfortable, and for some people, they can affect your daily life during pregnancy.

This fact sheet includes information on common ways to manage these conditions.

Talk to your chosen healthcare provider(s) for extra information about these conditions, and more detailed advice on managing the symptoms, especially if any of them are persistent or severe.

Nausea and vomiting

Nausea and vomiting are common in pregnancy, particularly in the first trimester, and may come and go throughout pregnancy.

The severity varies greatly, and you might not only vomit in the morning. Symptoms generally start around 4-9 weeks of pregnancy and mostly stop within 16-20 weeks.

Severe nausea and vomiting is called hyperemesis gravidarum (HG). It can be serious and cause dehydration. Talk to your chosen healthcare provider(s) about how to manage severe vomiting.

TRY

- ✓ Drink plenty of fluids
- ✓ Eat small amounts of food regularly during the day

AVOID

- ✗ Fatty and spicy food



*Talk to your
chosen healthcare
provider(s) for
more information*



Reflux (heartburn)

Reflux (heartburn) is common during pregnancy, affecting 30-50% of pregnant women. The causes are different for everyone, and symptoms tend to become more severe and frequent as pregnancy progresses.

TRY

- ✓ Sleeping on your left side
- ✓ Raising the head of your bed
- ✓ Eating smaller, more frequent meals

AVOID

- ✗ Foods and drinks that cause your reflux
- ✗ Lying down after eating
- ✗ Alcohol
- ✗ Tobacco
- ✗ Medications that could make reflux worse

Constipation

Constipation makes it hard to pass stools (poo) and your bowel movements might become less frequent. It is common in pregnancy, particularly in the first trimester, causing pain and discomfort. It can also cause haemorrhoids.

Constipation usually improves as pregnancy progresses.

TRY¹

- ✓ Including more fibre in your diet
- ✓ Drinking more fluids
- ✓ Staying active

AVOID²

- ✗ Straining with bowel movements
- ✗ Waiting to go toilet - go when you have the urge

Haemorrhoids

Haemorrhoids are enlarged, swollen veins around the anus. They can cause pain, itching, bleeding and painful bowel movements.

Haemorrhoids are common in pregnancy, particularly in the second and third trimesters. Around 25-35% of women get haemorrhoids during pregnancy.

AVOID

- ✗ Constipation
- ✗ Straining with bowel movements



¹Pregnancy, Birth and Baby

²Pregnancy, Birth and Baby



Mental wellbeing

Pregnancy and preparing for a baby are exciting times, but changes to your mental wellbeing can occur during pregnancy. Symptoms tend to become both more severe and frequent as pregnancy progresses.

Mental health conditions like depression and anxiety occur in 30-50% of pregnancies, affecting around 1 in 5 people during pregnancy or in the first year after giving birth.

If you're feeling low, anxious, concerned or overwhelmed at any time – and it's affecting your daily life or lasting more than two weeks – talk to your chosen healthcare provider(s) about available support.



Pelvis and lower back pain

Some people experience muscle and joint pain in the back, hips, legs and pelvic area or genitals during pregnancy.

This isn't dangerous for you or your baby but can be uncomfortable or cause severe pain that makes it hard to move around.

The pain usually resolves on its own after the birth, although symptoms may recur if you go through pregnancy again.

TRY

- ✓ Staying active
- ✓ Find ways to reduce stress
- ✓ Get enough rest
- ✓ Eat well
- ✓ Talking to friends or family
- ✓ Seeking help and treatment from places like:
 - Lifeline - 13 11 14 / Text 0477 13 11 14
 - Perinatal Anxiety & Depression Australia (PANDA) - 1300 726 306

TRY

- ✓ Exercise
- ✓ Physiotherapy
- ✓ Pelvic support belts or underwear

AVOID

- ✗ High-heeled shoes
- ✗ Non-essential weight-bearing activities

*Talk to your
healthcare provider(s)
for more information*

Varicose veins

Varicose veins are blue swollen veins on the calves, the inside of the legs and the genitals, and may cause itching and aching. Feet and ankles can also become swollen.

Varicose veins are common during pregnancy. They appear in the first trimester for 70-80% of pregnant women.

Risk factors include a family history of varicose veins, how many full-term pregnancies you've had, and increasing age.

TRY

- ✓ Elevating your feet while resting
- ✓ Compression stockings

AVOID

- ✗ Standing for long periods of time



To learn more visit health.gov.au/pregnancy-information-resources or scan the QR code.



These resources provide general information about pregnancy care. They are based on the best practice, evidence-based Australian Pregnancy Care Guidelines. You can use them to discuss your own pregnancy care with your healthcare provider(s) and decide together what is best for you.