**QUIETING COMMON DISCOMFORTS**

NAUSEA

* Nausea can be due to low blood sugar. High protein foods, fruits or juices may help stabilize blood sugar.
* Try eating something starchy (crackers, bread, pasta, rice, potatoes) when getting up in the morning. Just before going to bed at night, have a high protein snack For example, eat a handful of almonds, drink a glass of milk or have some yogurt.
* Try deep breathing until the feeling passes. Consider it a labor rehearsal!
* Some herbal teas may help. Try peppermint, chamomile, and red raspberry.
* Ginger may also be helpful in relieving nausea. Steep 2 quarter-sized pieces of fresh ginger root in boiling water for five minutes to make a stomach-settling tea.
* Graze, just like many toddlers do. Eat small, nutritious snacks throughout the day, about every 2 hours, rather than waiting for three big meals.
* Try finger foods: fresh veggies, cheese, crackers, fruit, nuts.
* Smelling essential oil of peppermint can also be helpful. NEVER EAT OR DRINK PEPPERMINT OIL. A big sniff of peppermint can help to calm a queasy stomach.
* Inform your midwife or doctor if vomiting becomes severe.

HEARTBURN

* Avoid trigger foods, usually spicy, greasy or fried foods.
* Avoid caffeine.
* Eat some fresh papaya or try papaya enzyme tablets.
* Eat smaller, more frequent meals.
* Elevating the head of your bed 4 to 6 inches may help.
* Remain upright for at least one hour after eating.

CONSTIPATION AND HEMORRHOIDS

* Drink plenty of fluids, preferably water, at least 8 cups every day.
* Eat lots of whole grains, fruits and vegetables.
* Eat prunes or other dried fruits, such as figs and papayas.
* Don’t delay when you get the urge to move your bowels.
* Kegel exercises can help by increasing circulation to your perineal area.
* Avoid iron supplements in tablet form. Instead, eat iron rich foods, cook in cast iron pots, or use an herbal iron supplement.

FATIGUE

* You may find that you need more rest than usual. Your body is working hard to grow your baby.
* Rest when you are tired. If you have older children, try bringing them with you to bed for a short nap. If naps for the children are not possible, have them join you on your bed while you nap. Let them entertain themselves with quiet toys or books while you sleep next to them.
* Make sure you are not anemic. Anemia will require increased iron intake.
* Don’t overdo. Listen to your body.

BACKACHES

* Pregnancy hormones loosen your joints and a pregnant belly and larger breasts will throw off your center of balance.
* Pay attention to your posture. Good posture can alleviate some of your discomfort.
* Don’t sit or stand for prolonged periods. Move around or at least change position.
* Pelvic rocks can help.
* Sleep on your side, knees bent with a pillow between them. Tuck a pillow under your belly to give your muscles a rest. A body pillow will be the best investment you can make; it will fit between your knees, tuck under your belly and you can rest your arm on it.
* Stick to flat-heeled, supportive shoes.
* Use good body mechanics for lifting. Bend at the knees, lift with your legs.
* Try the knee press to offer temporary relief.
* Cold and/or hot therapy can be helpful.
* Consider a visit to the chiropractor or acupuncturist.
* Consider a msaage, from Dad or a professional.

SWELLING OR WATER RETENTION

* Water, water, water. It sounds contradictory, but drinking more water will help your system to better regulate your body’s changing fluid volume. Drinking plenty of water now is good practice for when you are breastfeeding.
* Try increasing your protein intake. Almonds, almond butter, even peanut butter can help.
* Avoid prolonged standing. Put your feet up only when lying on your side. (When your feet are up while you are sitting, you compress veins in your groin compounding the swelling problem.)
* If swelling becomes bothersome or persistent, discuss it with your caregiver. It may be a sign of pregnancy-induced hypertension.

DANGER SIGNALS - CONTACT YOUR CAREGIVER

* Abdominal pain
* Vaginal bleeding
* Persistent vomiting
* Illness or high temperature
* Painful urination or vaginal discharge
* No movement of baby for 24 hours
* Dizziness
* Persistent headaches
* Excessive puffiness in hands or face

Discuss any concerns you have with your caregiver.

Debbie Hull

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