

Frequently Asked Questions In Pregnancy

Congratulations on your pregnancy! We hope you will find the following questions/answers helpful. If you have other questions or would like to discuss this information further, please make notes from this list and bring to your next appointment.

1. **WHAT CAN I TAKE FOR A HEADACHE?**
Tylenol (regular or extra strength) is safe to take for a headache, fever, or any general discomfort. Do not take aspirin, ibuprofen or related medications.
2. **WHAT CAN I TAKE FOR A COLD?**
Sudafed or Actifed is safe to take for a decongestant. Robitussin is safe to take for a cough. Tylenol is safe to take for fever, aches, and pains. Sore throat lozenges are safe to take for a sore throat. Imodium is safe to take for diarrhea.
3. **WHAT DO I DO IF I HAVE BEEN EXPOSED TO CHICKEN POX?**
There is no danger to your baby if you have had the chicken pox. If you are not sure, a blood test can be done to determine if you are immune. If you are not immune, please call your physician.
4. **WHAT DO I DO IF I HAVE BEEN EXPOSED TO FIFTH'S DISEASE?**
It is likely that you have had the disease as a child and are therefore immune. If you are not sure, a blood test can be done to determine if you are immune. It is not likely that you will contract the disease with casual contact. Good hand washing and hygiene are important to prevent infection. Please call your physician if you have been exposed.
5. **CAN I FLY IN AN AIRPLANE?**
You should not fly after your 32nd week of pregnancy. Remember to drink plenty of water and to walk about the cabin every 30 minutes.
6. **CAN I SLEEP ON MY BACK?**
You may sleep on your back until you are 20 weeks pregnant as long as you are comfortable. After that time, if your uterus compresses your major blood vessels, you may become nauseated or dizzy. Placing a pillow under one hip should prevent these symptoms.
7. **WHAT CAN I DO IF I AM CONSTIPATED?**
Increase oral fluids, dietary fiber (fresh fruits and vegetables), and exercise (walking). You may try Citrucel, Metamucil or Fibercon. Coffee and herbal teas can also have a laxative effect and alleviate constipation. In an emergency, Dicolax suppositories or Fleet's enema may be used.
8. **IS IT NORMAL TO HAVE ACHES AND PAINS IN THE PELVIS?**
Early in pregnancy, it is normal to feel cramping as the uterus grows and discomfort as the ligaments stretch. During the second trimester, it is normal to feel pains in the pelvis as the uterus grows, your skin stretches and the baby moves around. During the third trimester, it is common to have a backache and sciatica. Sciatica causes shooting pains down the back of the leg and buttocks. Toward the end of the third trimester, ligaments in the hips and pelvis loosen, causing discomfort. The baby may kick nerves on the inside of the uterus causing shooting pains toward your upper abdomen or vagina. Areas of numbness may also occur on your abdomen.
9. **WHEN CAN I EXPECT TO FEEL THE BABY MOVE?**
You can expect to feel the baby move at 20 - 22 weeks of pregnancy. You may not feel regular movements until 28 weeks of pregnancy.
10. **IS IT NORMAL TO HAVE VAGINAL SPOTTING OR BLEEDING AFTER MY VAGINAL EXAM (during the later part of the third trimester) OR AFTER INTERCOURSE?**
Yes. It is common to have spotting or bleeding in these situations as a result of cervical softening. The cervix must soften before dilation can occur.
11. **I HAVE ASTHMA (OR ALLERGIES). CAN I CONTINUE MY REGULAR MEDICATIONS?**
Yes. You need to be healthy for the baby to be healthy. Use of inhalers such as Ventolin, Asmacort, Proventil, or Flonase will help to keep the breathing passages open. If you are on an antihistamine such as Claritin, Zyrtec or Allegra, you may continue using it.
12. **WHEN A PHYSICIAN SAYS I AM 20 WEEKS PREGNANT, HOW MANY MONTHS IS IT?**
Obstetricians have standardized timing a pregnancy to 40 weeks so that it is easier to communicate and determine due dates as well as testing. The first day of your last menstrual period is used to calculate your due date. Twenty weeks is exactly half way through your pregnancy or about 4 1/2 months along.
13. **IS IT SAFE FOR MY DENTIST TO TAKE X-RAYS?**
You should continue to care for your teeth in the normal manner. If x-rays are necessary, your dentist will shield the baby. Filling cavities or taking antibiotics for dental procedures is safe and desirable, as pregnancy can increase dental disease. Local anesthetics (like novocaine) are safe. Your dentist should not use nitrous oxide (laughing gas) while you are pregnant.
14. **MY FEET ARE SWOLLEN. IS THIS NORMAL?**
Mild swelling of the ankles and legs is related to the normal increase in body fluids. To ease the discomfort, elevate your legs or lie down when you can, wear comfortable shoes, and avoid elastic-top socks or stockings. Drinking at least eight to ten 8 oz. glasses of water a day will help you to avoid excess water retention. Support hose may also help to ease the discomfort.
15. **IS IT SAFE TO COLOR, HIGHLIGHT OR PERM MY HAIR? WHAT ABOUT ARTIFICIAL NAILS?**
There is no information that any of these procedures will hurt your baby, but we suggest waiting until after the first trimester (about 13 weeks) is complete.

(continued on page 2)

