



## Medicines for Moms

This guide will answer some of your questions about treating common problems in pregnancy at home. This is not a complete list and we may recommend or prescribe medications not listed here. Please feel free to ask us any questions.

**Prenatal Vitamins:** Every pregnant woman should take a prenatal vitamin. Over the counter vitamins are fine, but should contain at least 800mcg of folic acid and 200mg of DHA. If your prenatal causes nausea or constipation, please discuss it with us so we can find a solution. Taking the vitamin with a meal or at bedtime can help.

**Calcium:** Most prenatal vitamins do not contain all the calcium you need. You need 1200mg of calcium to build your baby's bones. The extra calcium can come from your diet or a supplement. Through diet, you need 4 servings a day, where a serving is 300mg of calcium. This can be an 8 oz glass of milk, cup of yogurt, serving of cheese, or bowl of ice cream. If you cannot tolerate dairy, try fortified orange juice (350mg) or Viactive chocolate chews (500mg per square). At the end of each day, count how much calcium you had and take the rest from a supplement or Tums.

**Allergies:** Many women can stay on their allergy medicine during pregnancy. Safe medications include:

- **Benadryl** (diphenhydramine)
- **Claritin** (loratidine)
- **Zyrtec** (cetirizine)
- **Chlortrimaton** (chlorpheniramine)
- Some nasal steroids such as **Rhinocort** (budesonide)

**Back & Sciatic pain:** This is very common in pregnancy! Try hot water bottles, heating pads, baths, or a massage from a family member or friend. Back support belts can be found at maternity stores. See "Pain relief" for other suggestions.

The sciatic nerve is the largest nerve in the body, and runs from the buttocks down the back of the legs. It gets very easily irritated in pregnancy and produces sharp pain down the legs which can make movement difficult. Pain relievers and physical therapy can help. You may need to limit your activity.

**Colds:** Colds are usually caused by a virus, so antibiotics won't help. Instead, treat each symptom.

- Aches: Rest is the best. See "Pain relief"
- Congestion: **Sudafed\*** (pseudoephedrine) may help. Do not use it in the third trimester without consulting with us first, as it can raise your blood pressure. You may also try **Mucinex\*** (guaifenesin) to break up congestion. Make sure any old decongestants you have at home do not contain phenylpropanolamine. **Avoid** decongestants such as Afrin (oxymetazoline) as they can cause dependence or rebound congestion.
- Cough: Use **Robitussin\*** (guaifenesin) with or without **DM** (dextromethorphan). Be sure it does not contain alcohol. **Cough drops** are fine.
- Runny nose: **Antihistamines** work well. See "Allergies" section. Drink extra fluids.
- Sore throat: Try **Cough drops, throat lozenges**, or a hot steam vaporizer. Please see your primary care provider if the sore throat persists, as this could be strep throat.



**Constipation:** The first line of defense is your diet. Eat foods high in fiber, plenty of berries, and drink water or fruit juices (prune is best). Try a prenatal vitamin with a stool softener in it and drink plenty of fluids. Buy **Colace\*** (docusate sodium) and take 1 or 2 at night with a half glass of water if you do not have a soft, painless bowel movement that day. It is safe to take a stool softener every day as it will not harm the baby or cause dependence. If you continue to have hard stools, drink one teaspoon of **Metamucil** (fiber) every morning with a glass of water. High fiber cereal such as “All Bran with Extra Fiber,” “Raisin Bran” or “Fiber One” may help. If your constipation is bad, you may use **Milk of Magnesia**, **Dulcolax\*** (bisacodyl), **Fleet enema\***, or **rectal glycerine suppositories**.

**Diarrhea:** Eat natural constipators, such as cheese and rice. Try over the counter **Imodium\*** (loperamide). If this is not working, ask us for a prescription. Diarrhea causes dehydration, so drink lots of fluids to replenish electrolytes, such as sports drinks or Pedialyte. Do NOT use Pepto-Bismol.

**Fever:** Call the office for a temperature above 100.4°F. For lower fevers, use **Tylenol** (acetaminophen). Increase your fluid intake and rest.

**Gas pain:** Use products containing **simethicone\*** or **mylicon** like Mylanta Gas or Maalox Anti-Gas.

**Heartburn:** Consider the following options based on the severity of your symptoms.

- For mild heartburn: **Tums\***, **Maalox\***, **Mylanta\***. **Aluminum hydroxide & magnesium hydroxide** are safe.
- For moderate heartburn: **Pepcid** (famotidine), **Zantac** (ranitidine)
- For severe symptoms and prevention: **Nexium** (esomeprazole) or **Prevacid** (lansoprazole)
- Do NOT use Pepto-Bismol (bismuth) or Alka-seltzer (it contains aspirin).

**Headaches:** Try **Tylenol** (acetaminophen), but ask us about a prescription if you have migraines. See “Pain relief.”

**Hemorrhoids:** The best way to prevent hemorrhoids is to prevent constipation. If you already have them and they are painful or bleeding, you need to treat them. **Ointments** are better than creams and they should contain **1% cortisone**. **Tucks medicated pads** (witch hazel) can also help. For severe pain, ask about prescription medications.

**Ligament pain:** This is most common from 15-20 weeks of pregnancy, and occurs because the ligaments holding the uterus are stretching. These pains are sudden, sharp, and in the lower pelvic area. These are harmless and should resolve quickly. Call us if you have pain that persists or if you develop a fever.

**Nausea and vomiting:** Try **Vitamin B6** (50mg) with one **Unisom** (doxylamine) at night. You can take this up to every 8 hours as needed. Ginger and peppermint are helpful. Ask for a prescription if you begin to lose weight.

**Pain relief:** **Tylenol** (acetaminophen) is the ONLY safe over-the-counter pain reliever. See package insert for dosing instructions, and never take more than the recommended amount.



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If this does not help, ask us about a prescription. NSAID's such as Motrin/Advil (ibuprofen), Aleve (naproxen), and aspirin are generally not safe in pregnancy. We may use them in certain situations, but **only** take them when we advise it.

Sleeping difficulty: Women commonly have trouble sleeping in pregnancy. Try one to two **Benadryl** (25mg) 30 minutes before bed. If you need more help, ask us.

Yeast: In pregnancy, you are more susceptible to yeast infections because the body is sweeter. Prevent yeast by avoiding a sugary diet and taking **acidophilus** (a healthy milk bacteria) through a tablet or in low sugar yogurt. If you are on an antibiotic or have a yeast infection, you can take acidophilus up to twice a day. Over the counter medications such as **Monistat** (miconazole) are safe throughout pregnancy.

Prescription Medications: Over the course of your pregnancy, you may be prescribed medicine by your primary care doctor, dentist, or other provider. Please call the office to find out if the medication you have been prescribed is safe.

\*Some medications listed are considered "Category C," meaning there are no studies proving either safety or harm in pregnancy. Those that are listed have been used for years with good success. Please feel free to discuss them with us if you have any concerns.