

Kehamilan



ARTIKEL

## Pregnancy concerns and diet solutions

**Pregnancy is exciting, exhilarating and totally different for every woman.**

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Below is a list of some common pregnancy concerns plus some positive action steps you can take that might help make your pregnancy all it can be.

### **Cravings**

Though no one really knows why they occur, countless mums have had them, for everything from watermelon and chocolate to hot sauce on ice cream.

Action steps for when you have a craving:

- Don't judge them – they are a normal part of pregnancy!
- Keep your portions reasonable and maintain an otherwise healthy diet.

### **Morning sickness**

Nausea and vomiting are the plight of many mums-to-be, especially in the first trimester. The cause is unknown and may be due to hormonal changes or lower blood sugar during early pregnancy. As the name suggests, it often occurs in the morning but can strike at any time of the day!

Tips to put into action to help manage morning sickness:

- Eat smaller amounts of food.
- Think nutritious foods but in a snack-portion size.
- Your sense of smell may be heightened when pregnant, so avoid potential triggers like food with strong aromas, perfume and cigarette smoke.
- Go for mild flavours over spicy. Have a small snack at bedtime and upon waking, such as dry toast or saltines.
- Take prenatal vitamins with or after food.
- For severe nausea, talk to your doctor.

### **Constipation**

Pregnancy hormones relax your intestinal muscles and slow the movement of food through your intestine. Your baby is also putting pressure on your intestines, slowing down the process even more.

Act on these simple remedies that may help to get things moving again:

- Drink plenty of fluids every day including water, decaffeinated tea, prune juice, milk and soups. Vegetables and fruits with lots of moisture—like celery, berries and watermelon— can also help.
- Eat more fibre-rich foods such as fruits, vegetables, and whole grains.
- Be more active – exercise, such as regular walks, can help keep food moving!

### **Swollen ankles**

Ankle swelling is a common side effect of pregnancy. Your body is naturally accumulating more fluid for both you and your baby. Hormonal changes may also contribute to the swelling. Swollen ankles seem to be more noticeable in the evening, especially if you've been standing all day.

These tips may help bring relief:

- Drink plenty of fluids.
- Put your feet up whenever possible.
- Don't wear tight shoes.

If the swelling is concerning you, discuss with your doctor.

## **Heartburn**

Heartburn—a burning sensation in the middle of your chest—can occur because your baby's weight is pushing on your stomach and intestines. Because stomach acids are squeezed into the oesophagus and the muscle at the top of the oesophagus relaxes, it creates the uncomfortable burning sensation we know as "heartburn."

See if these dietary changes act to ease your heartburn:

- Eat smaller meals more frequently and eat slowly.
- Avoid greasy and spicy foods.
- Try to wait at least an hour after you eat before lying down.

Check with your doctor before taking any over-the-counter antacids because many contain high levels of sodium.

## **Being vegetarian**

Vegetarian and vegan diets are safe during pregnancy—if they're well planned with high-quality proteins and a good balance of whole grains, fruit, vegetables and healthy fats.

Follow-up with these additional action steps:

- Ask your doctor for a prenatal supplement containing Vitamin B12, Vitamin D, Folic Acid, Iron, Calcium and Zinc to add nutrients that might be missing from your diet.
- Let your obstetrician know if you are (or are planning to become) vegetarian or vegan.

## **Avoiding dairy foods**

If you don't eat dairy, don't worry, you can still get enough Calcium!

Consider these options when you go shopping:

- Select Calcium-fortified products like orange juice, soy milk, almond milk and cereals are good non-dairy choices.
- Find a Calcium supplement. Non-dairy sources of Calcium are not absorbed as well as dairy-based Calcium, so a Calcium supplement might still be needed.
- Look for a Vitamin D supplement as well. Vitamin D is found mostly in dairy products, so this, too, may

need to be supplemented if you are not in the sunlight most days.

### **High blood pressure**

Gestational hypertension (high blood pressure that occurs during pregnancy) requires the attention of your healthcare provider.

In the meantime:

- Try to keep to the proper rate of weight gain.
- Stay active.
- Of course, avoid alcohol and tobacco.
- Tell your healthcare provider if you're taking any over-the-counter or prescription medications.

### **Gestational diabetes**

If you have gestational diabetes, always follow the advice of your doctor. No one knows for certain, but it seems that pregnancy hormones interfere with Mum's insulin. This, in turn, causes an imbalance with your baby's insulin, resulting in high blood glucose (sugar) levels. Babies born with imbalanced insulin can be at greater risk of becoming obese or diabetic later on. Treatment for gestational diabetes aims to keep blood glucose levels equal to those of pregnant women who don't have gestational diabetes. Treatment for this condition always includes special meal plans and scheduled physical activity.

#### **One pro-active step you can take:**

- Ask your doctor for a referral to a registered dietician. A registered dietician specialising in gestational diabetes can customize a meal plan and teach you how to manage the condition.

### **Having more than one**

Having twins or other multiples means needing more calories. To find out what your calorie and nutrient needs will be:

- Ask your healthcare provider because calorie needs may differ if you started pregnancy under- or overweight.

### **Leg cramps**

Leg cramps, often occurring at night, can be a pregnancy side effect, more often in the third trimester and most likely caused by all the additional weight you're carrying.

Try these action steps for relief:

- Stretch your calves and flex your ankles.
- Get enough Calcium. Yes, it's good for bone health, but it also plays a role in muscle contractions. If your healthcare provider recommends a Calcium supplement to help relax the muscles, it may also contain Magnesium, a mineral that works to balance Calcium.

You may have some of these issues during your pregnancy or none at all. Just know that most are manageable – there are things you can do to stay healthy and comfortable. You should always follow

the advice of your healthcare provider, however – they know you and your pregnancy best!