

What Medications May I Take When I'm Pregnant?

When you are pregnant, you are naturally more concerned with medications and any effects they may have on you or your baby. You may also hear different information about what medications are safe. This list includes medications with history of safe use in pregnancy. Use any medication for the minimal length of time necessary to obtain relief of your symptoms.

Cold/Flu, Allergies or Respiratory Symptoms

- Rest, drinking lots of fluids, and a humidifier can relieve many symptoms.
- **Tylenol (acetaminophen)**: use for fever and aches and pain of flu-like syndrome. Follow package dosing, not more than 4000mg per day. Remember that some cold medicines contain acetaminophen so be sure to read labels.
- **Sudafed (pseudoephedrine)**: use according to package instructions. You will have to ask for this medication at the pharmacy counter and sign for it. Variations include: **Mucinex-D, Tylenol Cold and Sinus**
- **Benadryl(diphenhydramine)**: use according to package instructions, available in adult and pediatric (liquid form) dosing
- **Robitussin, Mucinex (guaifenesin)**: a cough syrup and expectorant, good to help thin mucus
- Any cough drops or throat sprays, choose sugar-free if you have Gestational Diabetes
- **Claritin (loratidine) Zyrtec** are available over the counter to treat seasonal allergies
- **Nasal Crom** or **saline spray** use according to package directions
- **Neti Pot**: very useful to relieve stuffiness and sinus symptoms
- **Vaporub** or heating pads on your back to help soothe aching muscles
- **DO NOT USE Afrin**, prolonged use of Afrin can actually make sinus drainage worse. Avoid **AlkaSelzer Cold, Aleve Cold and Sinus, and Advil Cold and Sinus** (any product that contains aspirin, ibuprofen, or naproxen)

Nausea/Vomiting

- Clear liquids and popsicles. Do not go more than 2 hours without eating something small like crackers or bland fruit. **If you are unable to keep fluids down or if you are unable to eat/drink without vomiting for more than one day, call the office.**
- Ginger is an excellent anti-nausea treatment. It is available at Trader Joe's and Whole Foods in candy form, the pickled ginger with sushi may work, and ginger snap cookies may be a good alternative to saltines.
- Peppermint is a natural way to settle your stomach. It may work if you eat an Altoid mint in the morning (getting rid of the bad taste in your mouth), eat some breakfast, **THEN** brush your teeth. Brushing your teeth on an empty stomach is an easy way to trigger nausea when you are pregnant.
- **Sea Bands or Motion Sickness bands:** these are available in most pharmacies or health food stores and use pressure points on the wrists to relieve nausea.
- **Bonine:** an over-the-counter medication for motion sickness
- **B-6:** 50mg daily will help relieve nausea
- **Unisom:** sometimes this helps some women- ½ tablet with 50mg Vitamin B6. Follow the package dosing instructions on Unisom regarding frequency of dosage.
- If your nausea becomes intolerable, call the office to see if prescription medication is appropriate in your case.

Diarrhea

- The most common reason for diarrhea is eating something disagreeable or coming in contact with a minor stomach virus. When this happens, the best treatment is to let the diarrhea run its course.
- Drink LOTS of water to avoid dehydration, it happens faster than you think
- Electrolyte replacers such as **Pedialyte** and **Gatorade** may be helpful to prevent dehydration

- The **BRAT diet (bananas, rice, applesauce, tea & toast)** is the staple for treating diarrhea. It will allow your stomach and intestines to rest while giving you some food that is easy to digest
- Avoid dairy products and fruit juices–these will make the diarrhea worse!
- Warm tub soaks for your irritated behind! Use moist wipes and keep your bottom clean.
- **Kaopectate**: use according to package instructions if the diarrhea is persistent
- If the diarrhea persists more than 2–3 days call your doctor or primary care physician

Constipation

- Drink lots of water
- Mild to moderate exercise 20–30 minutes per day can help, just a nice walk around the block in the evening!
- **Colace (docusate)**: 100mg take one once or twice a day. Available as a generic in any drug store or grocery store, Colace is a stool softener not a laxative.
- **Senokot (senna)**: a vegetable laxative, safe for use in both pregnancy and lactation
- **Miralax**: now has a generic, it's tasteless when mixed with any liquid including water. If Senokot has not helped, Miralax can be very effective; however, its safety in lactation has not been clearly established.
- **Fleets enema**: available over the counter both as a brand and generic
- **Milk of Magnesia or Phillips Caplets**: may be used according to package directions.
- **Dulcolax**: laxative may also be used in both pregnancy and lactation

Reflux/Indigestion

- This is a common concern in pregnancy. Small, frequent meals can help
- **Zantac (ranitidine) 75–150mg** daily: Zantac is available as a generic in any pharmacy and works by reducing the amount of acid your stomach produces

- **Pepcid (famotidine) 20mg:** daily works like Zantac also available as a generic
- **Tums & Roloids:** generally don't help much but are helpful sources of additional calcium and can be good to keep in your bag for an emergency 'flare up' of indigestion
- **Mylanta, Maalox, Gaviscon:** these are available as liquids and chewable tablet forms. They are good for symptom relief and all available as generics
- Peppermint (Altoids) can relieve indigestion
- DO NOT TAKE Pepto-Bismol

Hemorrhoids

- Over the counter cream such as **Preparation H** (or a generic) apply to hemorrhoids several times daily.
- Over the counter cortisone cream can be applied to hemorrhoids to relieve swelling and irritation.
- **Tucks/Witch Hazel** pads applied as needed. Keep them in the refrigerator, the cold is very soothing. Tucks pads also make good compresses when combined with
- Use flushable wipes after bowel movements to avoid irritation
- Sitz baths/warm tub soaks are soothing and can help decrease swelling and irritation

Muscle Pain

- **Tylenol(acetaminophen):** use according to package directions, do not take more than 4000mg per day
- **Bengay, Icy Hot, Tiger Balm:** these 'sports-type' rubs are safe and often soothing for back or hip aches (sciatic nerve pain). Avoid using them on the abdomen. Some of them are available as a patch that can be applied to the skin.

- Heating Pads: again avoid them on your abdomen. Alternating heat with cold (ice packs) can also be helpful in relieving muscle pain. 10 minutes heat, 10 minutes cold.
- Warm baths
- Massage
- Chiropractic care

Pain, Headache or Fever

- **Tylenol** (acetaminophen) is the drug of choice for pain or fever. Follow the dosing instructions on the bottle, no more than 4000mg per day.
- Drink 8–12oz of WATER an hour if you have a fever to help avoid dehydration.
- Call for a fever over 101.0 AFTER taking Tylenol and drinking water.
- **DO NOT TAKE Advil, Aleve, Aspirin, or Ibuprofen to relieve your fever.**
- Migraines are a common occurrence in pregnancy, particularly if you have a history of them. Lie down in a dark room, use cold compresses, but do not take **Excedrin Migraine**.

Insomnia

- Try to establish a regular sleeping schedule
- Maintain a cool, calm environment in your bedroom.
- Avoid distracting, stimulating activities such as video games, the internet, and television prior to bedtime
- Moderate, regular exercise will help you sleep better. A moderate walk 20 minutes a day will make for an easier labor and help you sleep better.
- Use pillows for support and comfort
- **Tylenol PM (acetaminophen & diphenhydramine):** can be used as a sleep aide
- **Benadryl (diphenhydramine):** may also be used for sleep, follow package instructions

Yeast Infection

- Over the counter yeast creams/inserts which contain **Miconazole** such as **Monistat** may be safely used during pregnancy. The best kind provides both a cream/ovule which is inserted into the vagina, plus an extra tube of cream to apply to the outside of the vagina for relief from external itching.
- In pregnancy, 7 day treatments are most effective.
- If no relief occurs 48 hours after self treatment, call the office.

Remember: If you have routine questions about medication, call during office hours to speak to a nurse!