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Come and see what all of the buzz is about!

Taking medications and supplements in pregnancy

Before taking any kind of medication, please remember:

- If you have been prescribed a medication that you must take, (such as diabetes medication, or medication for your mood, and thyroid), then you should keep taking them. You can discuss this with your family doctor, your midwifery team, and your pharmacist at anytime during your pregnancy.
- During the first trimester:
 - o Try to avoid medicine unless your pregnancy care provider says it's okay
 - o Be sure your doctor/pharmacist know you are pregnant if you get sick
- Natural and herbal remedies are types of medication – you can take a picture of the label of the natural/herbal remedies so you can have your pregnancy care provider and/or a pharmacist check to see if the medication is safe to take
- Take all medications as directed and if you experience any problems, or questions, then call the pager to speak to your midwifery team

You can buy all of the medications listed here at a pharmacy. You should never take more than the dose shown on the package, and you should not take it more often than the label indicates. You can ask the pharmacist to double-check that the medications, supplements, vitamins, and herbal remedies that you plan to buy are safe to take.

- Help you and your family prepare for a baby who may have special needs/considerations for labour, birth and postpartum
- Not influence your decisions, whatsoever

Medications for nausea and vomiting (morning sickness):

Avoid taking prenatal vitamins and other supplements in the morning, and try having them at lunch, or at dinner). Try to eat some protein at every meal/snack. Try to incorporate some

protein instead of eating bread and crackers (carbohydrates). Carbohydrates move quickly through your stomach and peaks your blood sugar, followed by your blood sugar dropping suddenly which can trigger your nausea (and sometimes vomiting). Protein will slow the digestive process and there it will help to stabilize your blood-sugar, and limit the highs and lows that you will experience if you eat carbohydrates only.

- Try having a handful of nuts, or nut butter with toast/crackers as soon as you wake up, and before you get out of bed.
- Drink small sips of clear fluids to avoid feeling overly full with fluids.
- Keep your food and drink separate by at least 15 minutes to avoid the churning sensation in your stomach (which can cause nausea)
- Lokhia supplement – B-Vitamins and Ginger (safe to take in pregnancy, and for children, too)
- Gravol with ginger
- Acupuncture and pressure wrist bands
- Your care provider can write you a prescription for Diclectin if these strategies do not work for you.

If you cannot tolerate fluids for more than 24 hours, then you need to go to the emergency room/urgent care department for intravenous (IV) fluids.

Medications for the common cold:

- Rest and drink plenty of clear (and preferably warm) fluids. A vaporizer/humidifier can help.
- You can use a Netipot and do saline rinses to keep your nasal passages clear
- You can take Tylenol safely in pregnancy

Medications for a sore throat:

Gargle warm salted water in your mouth and try cough candy and ice, or frozen popsicles to soothe your throat. You can try eating soft and soothing foods. Cold and warm liquids can help with inflammation. You can also try:

- Throat lozenges such as Halls, Ricola, or Cepacol
- Guaifenesin (Mucinex, plain Robitussin) for a dry cough
- Dextromethorphan (plain Robitussin Delsym) to suppress a cough

Medications for allergies (sneezing and runny nose):

- Diphenhydramine (pain Benadryl)
- Chlorpheniramine (Chlor-Trimeton)
- Second-generation antihistamines such as Claritin (loratadine) or Zyrtec (cetirizine)
- **Avoid Allegra (fexofenadine)**

Nasal congestion (stuffy head)

It is normal to feel more congested during pregnancy – It is caused by increased blood flow in your nasal passages.

- Saline rinse (like a Netipot)
- Steam shower
- Afrin nasal spray (do not use this for prolonged periods of time – no more than 4 consecutive days)
- Do not get the FluMist vaccine (inhaled through the nose) because the FluMist vaccine contains a live-virus

Flu (influenza) prevention

Flu season (when you have the greatest chance of being exposed to the flu virus) is from October through May. It is recommended that all pregnant people get the flu vaccine early in the flu season, and as soon as the vaccine becomes available.

- It is safe to get the flu shot at any stage of pregnancy
- Do not get the FluMist vaccine (inhaled through the nose) because the FluMist vaccine contains a live-virus

Headaches, pain, and inflammation

Do not take ibuprofen (Advil and Motrin), naproxen sodium (Aleve), Aspirin, or salicylates without first speaking to your maternity care provider and pharmacist. These may not be safe at anytime during your pregnancy. Instead, you can use:

- Acetaminophen(Tylenol)
- Heat (hot water bottle, heating pads)
- Cold therapy (ice packs)

- Acupuncture and Massage therapy
- Physiotherapy

For headaches: try Acetaminophen (Tylenol), resting, caffeine, avoiding bright lights, and hydrating. If your headache does not improve despite these strategies, then you should call your maternity care provider to rule out other causes of your headache (high blood pressure).

Constipation:

Eat more fibre such as whole grains, prunes, fruits and vegetables. Drink at least 10-12 glasses of fluids each day (limit caffeine). Increase physical activity (like walking and swimming) whenever possible. You can also try:

- Docusate sodium (Colace) to soften your stools. It takes approximately 1-2 days to take affect.
- Metamucil (plain), Effersyllium, Citrucel or Fibercon, to increase the fiber in your diet. Do not use for more than 7 consecutive days
- Miralax (may take a day or two to have an affect)
- Senna (Senokot) or bisacodyl (Dulcolax). This will encourage a bowel movement soon after you use it. Do not use it regularly unless directed to by your care provider
- Glycerin suppository – this will encourage a bowel movement soon after you use it
- Milk of Magnesia – to soften your stools, and it is best taken at night. Do not use regularly

Hemorrhoids:

Fill a bath tub, or sitz bath container with warm water and soak your bottom for 5-10 minutes. Then use either a cold pack, or a cloth soaked in witch hazel that has been cooled (in the freezer for 15-20 minutes) close to the rectum. To help prevent hemorrhoids try to avoid straining if you are constipated, and take 400-600 mg of Magnesium before bed (to soften your stool) You might also try:

- Anusol, Anusol HC, Preparation H, Tucks Pads, Americaine, benzocaine, and tronolane.
- Your care provider can write a prescription for “Rectal Rockets” – a suppository that can be used overnight a few times in a week (not for prolonged use).

Diarrhea:

Drink plenty of clear fluids and avoid caffeine. Replenishing with electrolytes (Emergen-C sachets, and Pedialyte/Gatorade)

- Loperamide (Imodium AD)

Heartburn or indigestion:

Eat small meals often. Avoid food and drink within 2 hours of bedtime. Raise your head with an extra pillow when you go to bed at night. Try not to wear tight clothing around your waist. Avoid caffeine, chocolate, tomatoes, fatty foods, alcohol, tea, coffee, soft drinks, citrus juices, and large meals. Do not eat and drink at the same time (can add to the churning sensation in your stomach). You can also try:

- A shot (one ounce) of Apple Cider vinegar in the morning
- Gaviscon (primary ingredient is algae)
- Mylanta, Maalox
- Calcium carbonate (do not take daily, and not for long-term use)
- Your family doctor may need to write you a prescription for a long-term strategy if the above does not help with symptoms