

Natural Tips for Common Pregnancy Issues

Constipation

It is no fun to not be eliminating regularly. Talk to doctor or midwife and see what he/she recommends. Here are some other home remedies you can try with doctor ok.

Tip #1: Consume 1/2 lemon juiced in warm water first thing upon awakening. Repeat right before bed. The lemon helps to stimulate bile and bowel function.

Tip #2: Soak 4 prunes in warm water for several hours until they are soft. Consume on an empty stomach. You can also try 2 dates instead.

Tip #3: Take 200-400 mg of Magnesium Citrate powder for a short-term solution. For regular supplementation, use Pure Encapsulations - Magnesium (Glycinate).

Tip #4: Consume 2 pears a day for three days in a row.

Tip #5: Take a 30 minute brisk walk daily.

Tip #6: Put 1 tablespoon of chia seeds in water or juice. Let sit for at least 4 hours or until the seeds have swelled. Drink first thing in the morning and/or right before bed. This should produce a bowel movement. If you experience any bowel pain, discontinue immediately.

Tip #7: Get regular chiropractor care.

Heartburn

Thanks to pregnancy hormones, our digestion is slowed and our muscles are more relaxed, including the flap that closes our stomach causing many mamas heartburn. Here are some simple tips that you can try with doctor or midwife approval.

Tip #1: Make homemade lemonade and drink 4 ounces with each meal. Sip remainder of lemonade throughout day. **Recipe:** Juice 2 organic lemons. Add to 1 quart of water. Add in 15 drops or natural stevia or 1 TB of honey or maple syrup. Add a dash of [sea salt](#). Mix vigorously.

Tip #2: Add 1 tsp. of [raw apple cider vinegar](#) to your lemonade (see above). You can work up to 1 tablespoon of the vinegar. Consume 4 oz. of the lemonade concoction with each meal and sip the remainder throughout day.

Tip #3: Take [HCL and Pepsin supplement](#) with each meal and, if needed, with snack. Follow the supplement's directions on dosage.

Tip #4: Take 1/2-1 tsp of [bentonite clay](#) on an empty stomach and 4 hours away from any food/supplements. Drink plenty of water when taking the clay.

Tip #5: Get regular chiropractor care.

Anemia

Know that blood tests that show slight dip in iron stores is normal as your blood is highly diluted with excess fluid when pregnant. However, if true anemia is present, you can try these tips with midwife or doctor approval.

Tip #1: Consume grass-fed red meat at least 3 times a week. Best to pair with Vitamin C rich foods (see below.)

Tip #2: Take [grass-fed liver pills](#). Follow the supplement's direction on dosage.

Tip #3: Eat foods high in Vitamin C regularly like citrus fruit, kiwi, strawberries, peppers, kale and broccoli. Best to be eaten in raw state.

For vegetarians or vegans:

Tip #4: Consume 1 tablespoon of blackstrap molasses daily.

Tip #5: Take [MegaFood Blood Builder](#). Follow the supplement's direction on dosage.

Tip #6: Eat Iron-rich foods like spinach (and other leafy greens), sesame seeds, raisins, and beets. It's best to pair them with Vitamin C rich foods like kiwi, peppers, and organic strawberries.

Swelling

Pregnancy can cause edema (or swelling) simply because we have such an increase in bodily fluid and blood volume. Additionally, our expanding uterus can put extra pressure on the vena cava. Here are some natural tips which can help to ease swelling. Of course, talk to doctor or midwife *first* as swelling can sometimes signal a more serious issue, like preeclampsia.

Tip #1: PROTEIN. Shoot for at least 80 grams per day and some women need as much as 120 grams! This is the #1 way to treat swelling! Did you know that protein helps to keep salt and water inside the blood vessels so fluid does not leak out into the tissues? If albumin, a blood protein, is too low, fluid is retained and swelling, especially in the ankles and feet.

Greek yogurt, all different types of meats, [nutritional yeast flakes](#), nuts and seeds, legumes, and [gelatin protein powder](#) are all great and easy ways to boost your protein levels. Pea protein is good if you are a vegetarian or vegan.

Tip #2: Proper salt consumption. You also want to be sure you are consuming enough [high-quality sea salt](#). Some moms are tempted to reduce salt consumption because they think it's causing the swelling. While it might sound counterintuitive, our kidneys will excrete less water (which creates more bloating) in the urine to keep salt concentrations within normal limits. Salt plays an important role in a healthy pregnancy. It builds blood volume, supports placenta growth and nourishes the growing baby.

Tip #3: Citrus [essential oils](#). You can dilute (1 drop per 1 1/2 tsp. of carrier oil) and apply to legs. This can help to re-establish a positive energy flow throughout the body. Do not apply these oils if you will be exposing your bare legs to sun as they can increase sun sensitivity. Either cover legs or avoid direct sunlight for 24 hours after application.

Tip #4: Drink to thirst. Be sure your consuming plenty of spring water throughout day and eliminating or greatly reducing caffeinated drinks like coffee and soda.

Tip #5: Daily exercise can help boost circulation and keep blood from pooling in ankles.

Tip #6: Elevate feet at night. After a long day, pregnant women's feet can naturally swell, especially if they're on their feet all day. Nurture yourself and prop feet up on some pillows to encourage balanced blood flow.

Tip #7: Massage your legs daily with oil and/or lotion to boost circulation.

Tip #8: Skin brush at least once per day to support your circulation and healthy blood flow.

Tip #9: With midwife or doctor's approval, you can also do the "health bounce" on a rebounder for 2 minutes total, up to 3 times a day. Your feet should never leave the rebounder and it is a very, very gentle movement. Best to do only in 2nd trimester on and only with doctor's approval. This motion does help with lymph and circulation systems.

Tip #10: If the issue is acute, talk to your doctor or midwife about compression hose.

Hemorrhoids

Hemorrhoids can be a common and annoying side effect of pregnancy due to the excess blood volume, pressure on our pelvic veins and constipation. Here are some natural suggestions which may ease the discomfort.

Tip #1: Be sure to have at least 1 complete bowel movement a day. (See tips for constipation above.)

Tip #2: Use a [squatty potty](#) or stool to elevate your legs when going to the bathroom. This will reduce unwanted pressure on your anus and hemorrhoids.

Tip #3: Clean your anus well after each elimination. You can use a [peri bottle](#) and spray liberally after each bowel movement.

Tip #4: Use a [sitz spray](#) on inflamed area several times a day.

Tip #5: Take daily sitz baths. Sit in a warm bath daily to soothe your tissue. You can add a little baking soda or Epsom salt if desired.

Tip #6: Ice daily. The cold will calm inflammation and inflamed tissue. The combination of ice and warm baths will help heal the hemorrhoids.

Tip #7: Avoid sitting for long periods of time. Do daily squats, if cleared by doctor or midwife, to keep blood flow moving to encourage healing.

Morning sickness

There are mixed opinions on what causes morning sickness... weakened adrenals, magnesium deficiency, excess pregnancy hormones, sluggish liver and the list goes on. Here are some suggestions that may provide relief. Check with doctor or midwife before implementing. **Note: if your morning sickness is becoming serious and you are unable to keep any food or beverages down, talk to your doctor immediately.**

Tip #1: Up your magnesium intake. For deficiency issues, [this magnesium oil](#) is most effective at repleting you since it doesn't have to go through digestive tract. Apply to skin (~ 10 squirts) morning and evening. You can also do Epsom salt baths.

Tip #2: Consume 50 mg of [Vitamin B6](#) with each meal. This vitamin is known to help offset feelings of nausea in some women.

Tip #3: Drink ginger tea, natural ginger ale, or ginger candies to help with queasy stomach.

Tip #4: Consume coconut water daily. Add a dash of [sea salt](#) to balance out minerals.

Tip #5: Eat your first meal within 30 minutes of awakening. Be sure each time you eat, you are balancing protein, carbohydrates and fats

Tip #6: Take your [cod liver oil](#) regularly as some believe morning sickness is due to EFA deficiencies. (Hold your nose while you choke it down :)

Tip #7: Drink peppermint tea or [natural mints](#) throughout day. Peppermint is a known digestive aid and good for nausea.

Tip #8: Sleep, sleep, sleep. Getting extra sleep with help to restore adrenal function and perhaps help with the morning sickness.

Tip #9: Consume 1/2-1 tsp. of [bentonite clay](#) with plenty of water. This can help to absorb excess endotoxins which may be contributing to the nausea. Be sure to take 4 hours away from other food/drinks with midwife or doctor's approval.

Tip #10: Drink homemade lemonade daily with plenty of [sea salt](#). (see recipe in Heartburn section.) Put lemon on as much food as possible from salads, to fish, to yogurt. You can also suck on natural lemon drops.

Tip #11: Get outdoors. The fresh air and sunlight can help shift mood and overall wellness.

Tip #12: Wear acupressure or [sea-bands](#) 24/7. You can also look into acupuncture which has helped some moms.

Varicose Veins

Varicose veins can pop up due to increased hormone and blood volume levels, weight gain, and the increased pressure on your leg veins. Varicose veins can ache or even itch and can get more uncomfortable by the end of the day. Talk to your midwife or doctor if you're concerned. Here are some natural things you can try.

Tip #1: Avoid staying in one position for too long of period, whether that's standing or sitting. Also avoid crossing legs when sitting.

Tip #2: With midwife or doctor's approval, consider [skin brushing](#) twice daily to help support healthy circulation.

Tip #3: With midwife or doctor's approval, you can also do the "health bounce" on a rebounder for 2 minutes total, up to 3 times a day. Your feet should never leave the rebounder and it is a very, very gentle movement. Best to do only in 2nd trimester on and only with doctor's approval. This motion does help with lymph and circulation systems.

Tip #4: Elevate legs a few times a day with pillows to help remove some of the leg/vein pressure.

Tip #5: Be sure you're consuming enough protein and healthy [sea salt](#). Without enough protein in blood, fluid can leak out into the tissues. (See edema section above.)

Tip #6: Massage your legs daily. This stimulation can help blood flow and circulation. Look into certain essential oils that may be safe and helpful to include in your massage oil. Be sure to get doctor's OK before doing.

Tip #7: Wear support hose as necessary. If problem is severe, your doctor can write a prescription for the right ones for you.

Tip #8: Consider sleeping with legs elevated. Your doctor should be able to advise.

Lower Back Pain

It makes perfect sense that some mamas would suffer from back pain. We have a human growing in our pelvis and he/she is putting some major pressure on our lower back! Here are some natural tips to help offset your discomfort.

Tip #1: See a chiropractor regularly. He/she can keep your pelvis balanced and help to reduce sacral pressure and pain.

Tip #2: Do your daily [baby positioning exercises](#). These will also help to keep your pelvis balanced and strong.

Tip #3: Apply ice up to 3 times a day to your lower back to help reduce inflammation.

Tip #4: Be sure you have the right pillow support when you sleep. Look into [a body pillow](#) or put a pillow between your legs to keep your pelvis balanced.

Tip #5: Take Epsom salt baths regularly. The warm water combined with magnesium can help to loosen tense muscles. You can also take magnesium orally.

Tip #6: Apply soothing balms to your lower back. [Arnica montana](#) is a wonderful and safe homeopathic that calms tense and aching muscles. If your sore back is due to overexertion, you could dilute certain [essential oils](#) to help with occasional discomfort.

Tip #7: Walk and stretch daily. By doing these daily practices, you will keep your body limber and less likely to “lock up” with pain.

Insomnia

Because melatonin is tied to our sex hormones and endocrine system, sleep can be disrupted while pregnant. Add in weight gain and difficulty getting comfortable in the third trimester, and pregnancy can really do a number on our sleep! Here are some natural things to try.

Tip #1: Implement [these strategies](#) with the exception to supplements.

Tip #2: Consume 2 - 8 ounce servings of [tart cherry juice](#) a day. Learn more about [here](#).

Tip #3: Wear [these glasses](#) as soon as the sun sets.

Tip #4: Drink 1 mug of Chamomile tea with 1 scoop of [gelatin](#) 1/2 hour before bed.

Tip #5: Be sure your consuming enough of the essential fatty acid, DHA

Tip #6: Diffuse Lavender in your bedroom at night to create a relaxing, soothing and calming atmosphere.

Tip #7: Support yourself with pillows to ease discomfort when sleeping. Learn more [here](#).

Food cravings

FOOD! It never tasted so good! Well, once you get past the first trimester nausea phase... Overall, if we are craving healthy things, embrace them. **Listen to your body.** It's usually your body showing you what it needs. Here are some helpful insights into common cravings.

If you're craving sugar:

If you're craving sugar and junk food with little to no nutritional value (think Fruit Loops and Ding Dongs), this is usually due to three things.

1. It could be emotional. Are you stressed? Do you have anxiety around being a mom? Are you worried about your baby? Or childcare once you've given birth? Or any other fear? Do you feel supported by your partner? Are you happy in your life? Was this child a surprise? Get honest with your feelings and feel them rather than stuffing them down with junk food. Journal, pray, talk to a close friend... you may want to talk to a counselor if needed. The point is, these feelings and concerns can be dealt with and you can become a stronger and better mom as a result.

2. It could also be tied to a yeast overgrowth. Are you prone to yeast infections? Athlete's foot? Do you crave sweets all the time? Or yeasty foods/drinks like bread, aged cheese, beer, and vinegar? If so, a yeast/flora imbalance could be the culprit of your cravings. Invest in a good probiotic and take regularly. Eliminate sugar from your diet. Avoid sweet and dried fruits. Get support (if needed) or an accountability partner. Be sure to eat balanced meals and snacks. Drink plenty of spring water and get regular exercise. Finally, check with doctor for additional help and guidance.

3. It could also be that you're not eating enough carbohydrates. Some Paleo or low-carb women really struggle with sugar cravings when pregnant. By boosting their intake of healthy carbs, they feel much better and the cravings dissipate. Our pregnant bodies do best with a balance of all three macronutrients. After all, carbohydrates help our liver with thyroid and blood sugar regulation. Carbohydrates also boost serotonin levels for good sleep and stable moods. Try increasing your intake of carbs like fruit, sweet potatoes, beets, yams, and even incorporating some soaked/sprouted grains. Be sure to always balance with protein and fat. Finally, you can look into Chromium and B vitamin supplementation.

If you're craving fatty/dairy products like cheese, ice cream. etc.:

This could actually be because you're eating too little fat or not enough calcium. Remember that our bodies need ample fat to grow our baby. This nourishes baby's entire body, especially his/her brain. Be sure your taking your [cod liver oil](#) or other EPA/DHA supplements so that you're getting all of your essential fatty acids. For calcium, eat full-fat yogurt. Drink full-fat milk. Shoot for 4 servings a day. No is not the time to diet or cut back. Your body needs the extra fat and calcium to build a healthy baby. If you are lactose intolerant, you can make your own [24 hour fermented yogurt](#) which eats out all of the lactose. You can also drink [bone broth](#) daily and lots of leafy greens. Salmon and sardines are also helpful.

If you're craving chocolate:

This is usually tied to a magnesium or endorphin deficiency. Boost your magnesium intake with leafy greens and nuts/seeds. Use a magnesium supplement daily, as this is one of the most common deficiencies in the US due to depleted soils.

To boost your endorphins, be sure to get regular exercise and a little sweat with each workout. Sex, cuddling and massage are also a wonderful ways to boost your endorphins.

And by the way, dark chocolate is a superfood and can certainly be included in a healthy and balanced pregnancy diet!

If you're craving salt:

This could actually be because you need it. Stressed adrenals are nourished by adequate salt consumption. Pregnancy is definitely a stress on the body and salt can help to blunt the stress response. Try incorporating naturally fermented pickles, miso, fish eggs, celery, dairy products and seafood, all rich and natural sources of sodium.

If you're craving non-foods like rocks, dirt, or laundry detergent:

May sound weird but pregnant moms can have some crazy cravings! If you find yourself craving non-foods, this could be an iron deficiency. (See suggestions in anemia section.) You also would want to boost your mineral consumption by drinking [bone broth](#), coconut water and even adding in a [trace mineral supplement](#).

Want more? Check out [this post](#) which shows you the sources of more food cravings.

Leg cramps

Ever woken up with a Charlie horse that gripped you in pain? These muscle cramps are usually in our legs— calves, feet and upper thigh, and due to a mineral imbalance. Here are some natural things that might ease your pain.

Tip #1: Boost your potassium intake with coconut water. Drink 16 ounces a day for three days and then go to a maintenance dose of 1 cup every other day. If you can't stomach coconut, try bananas.

Tip #2: Take Epsom salt baths regularly and apply [magnesium oil](#) nightly. This will help to boost your magnesium stores which can reduce muscle cramping.

Tip #3: Drink 1 quart of [bone broth](#) for 2 days and then 1 cup daily for maintenance. [Bone broth](#) has many different minerals (silica, calcium, etc.) which can offset cramping.

Tip #4: For some mamas, the cramps are actually a calcium issue. The Weston A. Price Foundation recommends 1 quart of milk a day! The American Pregnancy Association recommends 3-4 servings and many women aren't used to consuming this much. I loved doing kefir and yogurt since they also have the good probiotics for me and baby. Grass-fed cheese is also a good option that is rich in calcium.

Tip #5: Be sure to salt your foods to taste. [Sea salt](#) provides sodium which is essential for a growing baby. Some moms who try to limit their salt intake end up with terrible leg cramps. Follow your body's cues... salt food to taste and drink water to thirst. Of course, check with doctor if blood pressure is an issue.

A final note

I hope some of these tips help you feel your best during pregnancy! You might have noticed that I linked to several products on Amazon. I do the majority of my health product shopping there! So much so that I'm an affiliate for them. This means if you purchase any of the linked products, I receive a very small commission. You will never pay more and I will never recommend a product that I don't use or believe in myself. Thanks for your support!