

# Medications in Pregnancy

In general, women should avoid most medications in pregnancy. However, some medications have a long history of safe use. If you are on a medication, please discuss it with your doctor. A few medications are dangerous in pregnancy, so be sure all your health care providers including your dentist, know you are pregnant. Listed below are medications which we feel are safe in pregnancy. We recommend you try to avoid all medications in the first trimester (first three months) of pregnancy unless absolutely needed.

## Safe Medications:

### For sleep:

- Benadryl (diphenhydramine), Tylenol PM, or Unisom (doxylamine)

### For pain/headache, or muscle soreness:

- Tylenol (acetaminophen) - may take two regular strength capsules every four hours or two extra-strength every six hours as needed

### For morning sickness:

- Vitamin B6 (25mg three times a day) - works best when also taken with Unisom (1/2 tablet once or twice a day)
- Emetrol
- Benadryl (diphenhydramine) 25-50mg
- Motion sickness medication such as Dramamine

### For nausea, stomach upset, or gas:

- Emetrol, Mylanta (aluminum hydroxide), or Gas X (simethicone)

### For heartburn:

- Tums (calcium carbonate), Zantac (ranitidine), Pepcid AC (famotidine), Mylanta or Maalox

### For constipation:

- Fiber source such as Metamucil or Citricel or another source of added fiber
- Stool softener such as Colace (docusate)
- Glycerine suppository, Milk of Magnesia, or Senekot

### For hemorrhoids:

- Tucks medicated pads, witch hazel compresses, Anusol or Preparation H

### For upper respiratory illnesses (cough, cold, sore throat):

**Note:** Avoid pseudoephedrine in the first trimester of pregnancy (first three months)

- Nasal saline spray, Benadryl (diphenhydramine), Actifed (chlorpheniramin and phenylephrine), Afrin
- Nasal Spray (oxymetazoline hydrochloride), Zyrtec (cetirizine hydrochloride), Sudafed (pseudoephedrine), Tylenol Cold and Sinus (acetaminophen and pseudoephedrine)

### Cough:

- Halls cough drops or other cough drops such as Ricola, Robitussin DM (dextromethorphan and pseudoephedrine), Dimetapp (brompheniramine and pseudoephedrine)

### Sore throat:

- Chloraseptic throat spray, Tylenol (acetaminophen) and Luden's throat drops

### For diarrhea:

- Imodium AD (loperamide)
- Kaopectate



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### For yeast infection:

- Monistat or other vaginal yeast creams.

*Please contact our office if you suspect a vaginal infection, especially if it does not respond to the over-the-counter yeast medications, because other infections can cause itching or vaginal discharge.*

### For allergies:

- Benadryl (diphenhydramine), Claritin (loratadine) or Zyrtec (cetirizine)

### For rashes or skin conditions:

- Benadryl cream or ointment, Calamine lotion, hydrocortisone cream 1%, Aveeno oatmeal baths, Neosporin as first aid ointment

**Please AVOID taking:** *Nyquil, ibuprofen (Motrin or Advil), Pepto Bismol, or Aspirin.*

Sleep medications should be used as a last resort in pregnancy and avoided in the first trimester. Don't use sleep medications on a regular basis. Unisom and Benadryl can be used for sleep in pregnancy. Avoid melatonin, valerian root and your prescription sleep medications in pregnancy.

*Remember, try to avoid sleeping flat on your back, especially in the second half of pregnancy.*

### Diarrhea or stomach flu:

Diarrhea can cause intense cramping and discomfort and can lead to dehydration. Begin treatment by consuming only clear liquids, such as Gatorade, ginger ale and broth soups for 24 hours, and then gradually introduce a bland diet for the next 24 hours. If your diarrhea is not improving over time, or your urine becomes scant and dark, please call us for advice. You can take Imodium AD for diarrhea, if needed.

### Cold, flu, sinus problems and allergies:

During pregnancy, women are more susceptible to respiratory ailments like colds and flu, and these illnesses tend to last longer. Most over-the-counter medications are safe to use, as long as they do not contain aspirin or ibuprofen (see the list in the medication section). If you develop a fever over 100.4 degrees F, green nasal discharge or are coughing up blood or bloody colored sputum, please let us know (or call your primary care provider). We want to remind you that most colds are viruses that do NOT respond to antibiotic therapy. During the flu season, it is recommended pregnant women get the flu vaccine. It is safe and strongly encouraged for pregnant women and new parents, and you need one each year. We also recommend that you wash your hands frequently, don't touch your face unless you have just washed your hands and try to stay away from people who are sick. Please see the medication section of this booklet for safe allergy medications to take in pregnancy.

### Insomnia:

The physical and hormonal changes of pregnancy contribute to the quality of a pregnant woman's sleep. In addition, our minds during pregnancy can be never ending, especially when we attempt to sleep at the end of a long day. Each trimester of pregnancy brings its own unique sleep issues. Most sleep problems occur in the third trimester. You have growing discomfort from the baby and your due date is quickly approaching. It is more common for pregnant women to be able to fall asleep initially, but then wake after a few hours and then remain awake until the morning. This causes a great deal of fatigue throughout the day-time hours.



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Here are some suggestions to help you get to sleep in pregnancy:

- Pillows! Pillows! Use as many supportive pillows as you need to support your tummy and back. Also place a pillow or wedge between your knees for low back support. A full-length body pillow is often popular because it can snake around your body entire body in several different ways.
- Eat a light snack before bed. Warm skim milk and turkey contain a natural sleep inducer called L-tryptophan
- Exercise. Regular exercise promotes physical and mental health. It can help with sleeping more deeply. Avoid exercising 2-4 hours before bedtime.
- Relaxation techniques. Deep breathing, stretching, massage, yoga, soothing music, or a warm bath helps promote relaxation to ease your mind.
- Take short naps (15-30 minutes) during the day, if possible.
- Practice good sleep hygiene:
  - Avoid alcohol, caffeine and nicotine (which you should be doing anyway - you are pregnant).
  - Establish a regular bed time and waking time. Do not go to bed when you are wide awake.
  - Take your television and computer out of your bedroom.
  - Avoid staying awake in your bed for long periods. If you have not fallen asleep or become drowsier within 20 minutes of lay in bed, get out of bed and do activities that make you sleepy, such as reading or a warm bath. Once you feel sleepy, try going to bed again.



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