Pregnancy - Common Symptoms and Care Tips
Article

Third Trimester of Pregnancy: To-dos & Don'ts

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Congratulations, you've made it to the finish line! You will soon have a lovely new addition to your family. You may have been feeling more tired and uneasy in recent weeks, but you have a lot to look forward to!

Second trimester to-dos and don'ts

Many women feel energized and well during this second trimester of pregnancy. **You will become visibly pregnant,** but you will not be too heavy to move around. **This is also a period of rapid growth and development for your baby,** and you may find yourself preoccupied with health checks and birth preparations.

THE DOS

Regular antenatal visits[1]

Prenatal visits are a vital component of staying well and ensuring **the health of your baby.**

The frequency with which you see your doctor will be determined by your individual circumstances, **however many women will see their doctor every 4 to 6 weeks.**

Your blood pressure will be examined at each visit during your second trimester, as well as **the swelling in your hands and feet. You may be weighed, blood drawn for tests,** and your urine examined.



Your doctor or midwife will examine your abdomen and listen to your baby's heartbeat to track his or her growth. If you didn't get an ultrasound during the first trimester, **you might get one around 18 to 20 weeks.**

Stay Healthy[1]

It's as vital as ever to eat well and stay active while pregnant; **it's beneficial for your physical and emotional health,** as well as your baby's.

In your second trimester, **consider walking, swimming, yoga, and stationary cycling** as light-to-moderate-activity options.



High-affected activity and activities that put you in danger of falling, being harmed **(particularly in your stomach),** or overheating are not advised.

It's also crucial to eat well during your pregnancy - but that doesn't imply 'eating for two.' **What you consume during pregnancy has been shown to affect your baby's growth** and health later in life.

Ease sleep problems.[2]

New challenges await you in the second trimester.

- Due to hormonal changes, many women experience **a clogged nose and a feeling of being stuffed up.**
  - Nasal saline sprays can help.



- **Leg cramps might sometimes make it difficult to sleep. Leg cramps aren't completely understood, but there are a few things you can do to help them go away, such as**
  - stretching your calf muscles,
  - staying active during the day,
  - and drinking enough of water.
- **Some women have more dreams, odd dreams, or nightmares than they would normally have. It could be related to stress, or it could be caused by inconsistency in sleep.**
  - Try to stick to a routine and try different sleeping positions or a pregnancy pillow.
  - If you are having disturbing dreams, talk to your partner or a friend about it, or **consider seeing a counsellor.**
- **For the first time in their lives, some people begin to snore.**
  - **Sleeping on your side** with your head slightly elevated can be beneficial.
  - Maintaining a healthy diet and not gaining too much weight can also be beneficial.

THE DON'TS

Don't Smoke.[1]

It is never too late to give up.

- **Advantages of Quitting**
  - When you quit, the harmful gases (such as carbon monoxide) and other chemicals will quickly leave your body.
- **Some of the reasons to quit smoking are as follows:**



  - You're doing what's best for your baby's health.
  - The likelihood of having a miscarriage or stillbirth is reduced.
  - You will reduce the possibility of cot death.
  - Your baby has a lower chance of being born prematurely or underweight.
  - Stopping smoking will benefit your baby later in life – some children suffer from asthma and other serious illnesses as a result of their mother smoking while pregnant.

DON'T drink too much caffeine.[1]

You can have caffeine, but only 200mg per day is allowed.

- **There's:**
  - In a mug of instant coffee, **100mg**
  - In a mug of filter coffee, there is **140mg.**
  - 75 mg per mug of tea (green tea can have the same amount of caffeine as regular tea)
  - A can of cola has **40 mg** of caffeine.
  - In a 250ml can of energy drink, there are **80mg.**
  - A 50g bar of basic dark chocolate contains less than **25mg of caffeine.**
  - A 50g bar of plain milk chocolate contains less than **10mg of caffeine.**



THINGS TO BE AWARE OF

While every woman's pregnancy is different, you should talk to your doctor if you have any of the following symptoms:[1]

- Abdominal pain or severe cramping
- A fever of more than 38 degrees Celsius (100 degrees Fahrenheit)
- Fluids or vaginal bleeding
- Swelling that occurs suddenly or unexpectedly
- Vaginal discharge that smells
- Urination that hurts
- Headaches that are severe and persistent
- Blood in the vomit
- Breathing problems
- Palpitations in the heart



THINGS TO CONSIDER

Parental leave — talk to your partner first, then to your boss:[1]

- How will you and your partner (or other family members) share the responsibility for your baby's care?
- When do you intend to begin your vocation?
- When do you plan to resume work?
- When is the best time to inform your boss about your pregnancy?
- Will your job role change once your child is born?



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Here are tips for the last trimester of pregnancy.

The Do’s

Eat Healthily[1]

- It's critical to eat healthy foods throughout your pregnancy to give your baby a healthy start.
- Make sure your diet is varied and includes a variety of fresh fruits and vegetables, as well as protein, iron, and calcium sources.
- Remember to drink plenty of water on your third period of pregnancy as well.
- Weight gain is a normal part of pregnancy, with most women gaining between 11 and 16kg.

Stay Active[1]

- Try to stay active throughout your pregnancy, even if you are in your third trimester.
- While it's important to stick to safe, gentle exercise as your due date approaches, recommendations state that pregnant women without complications should engage in regular exercise as part of a healthy lifestyle.

Sleep Well.[2]

- Sleeping on your side is better from 28 weeks until your baby is born.
- Sleeping on your side is ideal for taking a quick nap on the couch or going to bed at night.
- By bending your knees and placing a pillow between them, you can make it more comfortable and easier to stay on your side. You can also use a pillow to support your stomach.
- If you wake up and realize you've been sleeping on your back, roll over onto your side. If

this occurs frequently, place a pillow behind your back to make rolling over onto your back more difficult.
- Some women prefer to sleep with their heads elevated, either with pillows for support or by raising the head of the bed slightly. This can help to ease heartburn and snoring.
- You may notice third trimester symptoms such as back hurts especially at night.
    - Try to avoid heavy lifting, housework, and long periods of standing if at all possible. And if possible, rest with your legs up during the day.
- The frequency with which you need to pass urine at night may increase even more.
    - The baby may be pressing on your bladder, and the hormones associated with the later stages of pregnancy can cause your pelvic floor to relax.
    - Pelvic floor exercises will help you manage any 'leaks' and avoid continence issues in the future.

Maintain good sitting posture.[3]

- Proper posture is especially important if you work at a desk. Here are some pointers to help you improve your posture:
- Maintain proper body alignment while sitting, and avoid slouching or slumping. To avoid the swayback position, sit in a sturdy chair with low-back support and tilt your pelvis forward. Your knees should be slightly lower than your hips, and your feet should be flat on the ground.
- Choose a chair with soft arm rests that allow you to relax your shoulders and keep your elbows close to your body.
- Chairs on wheels should be used with caution because they may move as you sit or stand.
- It's also a good idea to get up and walk around every hour or so.
- Crossing your legs while seated should be avoided because it can impair circulation.

The DON’TS

Avoid lying on your back.[3]

- When you lie on your back, you put pressure on your major blood vessels. This can reduce blood flow to your womb and limit your baby's oxygen supply.[2]
- It has shown in the studies sleeping on your side can cut the risk of stillbirth in half.[2]

Avoid standing for long periods.[3]

Here are some tips to help you maintain proper standing posture:

- It's preferable not to stand for long periods of time. Attempt to change your stance on a regular basis.

- When you must stand, keep your feet slightly apart and your knees from locking. Keep your pelvis tucked in at all times.
- Spot one foot on a small step stool if you must stand in one place for an extended period of time. This helps to relieve some of the strain on your lower back.

Things to be aware of

While every woman's pregnancy is unique, you should consult your doctor if you have any of the following symptoms:[4]

- Heavily bled.
- Headaches that are accompanied by spots, or flashing lights that do not go away.
- Swelling that occurs suddenly or unexpectedly.
- The fetal movement has been reduced (your baby should be moving every day)
- Your water has broken, but you are not experiencing contractions.
- Between contractions, there is constant pain.

Things to consider

Don't forget to do the following as you enter the third trimester:[1]

- Prepare a hospital bag
- book a tour of a hospital or birthing center
- set up a properly fitted car seat (to bring your baby home)
- Think about what you'll need when you bring your baby home – What will you buy, and will you be able to borrow from family or friends?
- Plan for the care of your other children (or pets) while you are in the hospital.
- Consider doing your shopping ahead of time, especially for non-perishable staples (tinned foods, bathroom products, etc.)
- Cook in double batches throughout your third trimester, and stock your freezer for when things get hectic once the baby is born.

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