



Common Problems in the First Trimester



The first trimester refers to the first 13 weeks and 6 days of pregnancy. It is common to face a few discomforts in this period due to the numerous hormonal changes and changes in the uterus.

A woman's body undergoes many changes, emotional as well as physical, during pregnancy, some of which may not be pleasant and may require medical attention. Some of the common problems that can occur during the first trimester of pregnancy are as follows:

Nausea and vomiting:

A majority of women experience nausea and vomiting during the first trimester; however, the nausea may not always be accompanied by vomiting. Although these symptoms are termed as morning sickness, you may experience nausea anytime through the day or night, sometimes even all day. Increased levels of a hormone called Human chorionic gonadotropin (hCG) are said to be responsible for this. During this phase you tend to become very sensitive to odours and may feel sick because of specific smells or foods; however, the nausea generally improves by the second trimester. Very few women continue experiencing nausea through all the three trimesters of pregnancy. If you experience such severe nausea and vomiting that you are unable to eat or drink for a full day, you may require immediate medical attention and should contact your doctor.

To overcome nausea, opt for smaller and more frequent meals, every 2-3 hours, and drink fluids regularly. You can also try ginger tea, dry ginger ale or ginger pills to feel better. Eating dry biscuits as soon as you wake up in the morning is known to be helpful too. If none of these help, you can request your doctor for medications to manage the nausea and vomiting.



Swollen or tender breasts:

Because of the hormonal changes post-conception, your breasts might feel sore or tender with bumps around the nipples. This usually happens during the first trimester as your breasts start to prepare the milk ducts for the baby. A good support bra may help ease your discomfort.



Vaginal discharge:

White or clear vaginal discharge that has no foul smell is normal during the early stages of pregnancy. The increased levels of progesterone in the body during pregnancy are responsible for the increase in vaginal discharge. However, if the discharge has blood in it, is brownish or greenish or has an unusual odour, then you should visit the doctor. Moreover, it may be alarming if there is redness or itching on the vagina as it could indicate a vaginal infection.



Vaginal bleeding:

During the early stages of pregnancy, you may experience light spotting. Don't worry, this is normal. However, vaginal bleeding during pregnancy could be serious, and you should seek immediate medical attention.



Fatigue / tiredness:

You may experience fatigue in the early stages of pregnancy because of elevated levels of the hormone progesterone. Getting adequate sleep regularly is recommended to overcome fatigue.



Frequent urination and incontinence:

This may happen throughout pregnancy, especially during the last few weeks because of the changes in the uterus, which exerts pressure on the urinary bladder. Additionally, due to the relaxation of the muscles around the bladder, you may be unable to hold your pee and experience some leaking of urine; this is known as incontinence. Nevertheless, drinking plenty of fluids during the day is still essential for good health.



Constipation:

Changes in hormonal levels is the leading cause of constipation during pregnancy. Another reason could be the iron supplements you are taking. Constipation can be managed by adding fibrous foods to your diet and drinking more fluids. Additionally, physical activity may be helpful. Consult your doctor in case of severe constipation.



Heartburn:

You may experience heartburn during pregnancy because hormonal changes lead to the relaxation of muscles responsible for keeping our food down in the stomach. Due to this, the digestive acid in the stomach is brought up into the food pipe, causing heartburn. Drink plenty of fluids and avoid oily and spicy foods to manage heartburn. Additionally, eating small and frequent meals may help in preventing heartburn. Also, elevate the head of your bed to prevent heartburn.



Feeling faint:

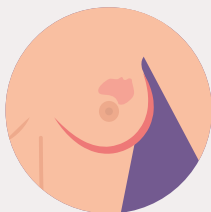
You may feel light-headed during pregnancy because your body is undergoing many hormonal changes and your brain is not receiving adequate blood. This could also be caused by decreased blood sugar levels.



Stand up slowly from a lying down or sitting position to avoid feeling faint. Also, maintaining a good diet is advised to avoid such a feeling.

Skin changes:

During pregnancy, you may notice darkening of the nipples and the area around them and your skin may also darken somewhat all over or in patches. This is because of the variations occurring in the hormonal levels and may subside after the delivery of the baby.



Apart from the above concerns, during pregnancy, you may also feel emotionally exhausted, experience changes in your behaviour and mood swings.

Pre-natal check-ups during pregnancy are crucial, and the frequency of the check-ups may depend on your health and condition. Do not ignore if any of the above-mentioned conditions become severe and report them to your doctor immediately. However, there is no need to worry if you do not experience any of the problems mentioned above.



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Please contact your doctor for more details.