

You and your partner's DNA and your healthy body will give your baby everything she needs in order to prepare for the world, but before she makes her grand debut, your body will undergo a lot of changes. Your belly will expand as she grows. Your skin will change. Your ligaments will loosen in preparation for the birth. Fluctuating hormones may cause you to experience nausea, aches and pains, and sometimes sleepless nights. A growing belly makes life more challenging. But these are just minor inconveniences in comparison to the lifetime of joy you will have with your child. None the less, they're still significant for now. The following are some "hacks" for how to overcome some of the challenges and discomforts of pregnancy and some mom-tried and -approved tips. If you're experiencing more extreme symptoms and discomforts, you should talk to your health-care provider.

Clothes

- Before running out and buying all new things, let's see if you can get a little more life out of what you already own. After all, most of us have looser-fitting clothes laying around for those days when we feel more bloated than usual. Now it's time to take inventory of what you already have.
- Stretchy Pants – yoga pants, sweat pants, and elastic waistband pants can be paired with longer, looser-fitting tops
- "Fat pants" – larger pants you've saved for extra-bloated or after-holiday days
- Blousy and tunic tops
- Use waist band extenders and belly bands to cover your belly when you can't button or zip your pants anymore.
- Bra extenders and sports bras are economical ways to avoid buying expensive maternity bras.

Physical Discomforts

Things to try to help with morning sickness:

- Keep crackers by the bedside and eat a few before getting up in the morning.
- Ginger helps with nausea.
- Lemons
- Drink protein-rich smoothies when you're too sick to eat a meal.

Talk to your doctor if you have severe morning sickness and find yourself unable to keep any food or water down.

Headaches and General Aches and Pains

- Get plenty of rest and rest throughout the day. Put your feet up and close your eyes for fifteen minutes or more.
- Wean yourself from caffeine.
- Add stretching exercising to your day.
- Drink more water.
- Massage your neck and shoulders to relieve tension.

Varicose Veins and Swelling Feet

- Keep your weight gain in the recommended range.
- Take breaks and put your feet up.
- Don't cross your legs when you sit.
- Avoid sitting or standing in the same position for long periods of time.
- Avoid high heels.
- Sleep on your left side.

- Wear support hose.
- Walk for exercise daily.
- Drink water.

Mild swelling of the ankles and feet is generally more of an inconvenience than it is harmful. However, if it moves to your hands or face, then you should call your doctor. Also call your doctor if varicose veins become painful, warm, tender, or if they bleed.

Skincare

- Stay hydrated.
- Moisturize.
- Wash your face twice a day with a mild soap.

Sleep

- Sleep on your left side with your head slightly elevated. Use a body pillow to support your belly and legs.
- Take your prenatal vitamins to prevent leg cramps.
- Eat smaller meals to prevent heartburn.
- Avoid caffeine and sugar.
- Get to bed early, avoiding electronic devices that emit blue light that interrupts sleep patterns.

Conclusion

Have some fun with your wardrobe, get lots of healthy exercise, maintain a healthy diet and weight gain, and your pregnancy will fly by! Before you know it, you'll be concentrating on your postpartum body and caring for your beautiful new baby!

Resources include:

1. Larson, E. A Beautiful Mess. Maternity DIY: Make a Tunic. Found at <http://www.abeautifulmess.com/2012/07/maternity-diy-make-a-tunic.html>.
2. Eisenberg A, Murkoff HE, Hathaway SE. What to expect when you're expecting. Workman Pub.; 1996 Nov.
3. Baby Center. Johnson & Johnson. Stretch Marks. Found at http://www.babycenter.com/0_stretch-marks_1352276.bc, accessed 3/22/2019.
4. National Sleep Foundation. Electronics in the Bedroom: Why it's Necessary to Turn Off Before You Tuck In. Found at <https://sleepfoundation.org/ask-the-expert/electronics-the-bedroom>, accessed 3/22/2019.