

OBSTETRICAL OVER THE COUNTER MEDICATION SHEET

Avoidance of all medications that are not essential for health is a good principle to adhere to during pregnancy, especially the first 3-4 months. Nevertheless, certain common complaints or illnesses are unavoidable and justify the use of over the counter medications. Below are listed the medications which we feel are least likely to be harmful. Use them only when needed and for as short a time as possible. Follow label instructions for the correct dose. If your complaint or illness is not on this list, please view our list of Obstetrical Emergencies or call our phone room during office hours. If it is an emergency, you may call the on-call physician after hours or weekends. The number for both of these contacts is **865-769-4441**.

NAUSEA - Nausea is very common in the first part of pregnancy. Helpful hints include: 1-eat small meals every 2-3 hours; 2-keep a good balance of carbohydrates and proteins, avoid fatty or greasy foods and foods high in sugars; 3-bland foods; 4-keep well hydrated with 8-10 glasses of fluids a day. Common sports drinks and Pedialyte are good choices if you are not diabetic. If these measures are ineffective, you may take:

- Emetrol per the package instructions.
- Dramamine 50 mg tablet, 1 every 4 hours as needed.
- Vitamin B6 25 mg tablet, 1 twice daily.

If you are unable to hold anything down for 24 hours or feel persistently lightheaded, weak or dizzy, please call the medical call number listed above.

CONSTIPATION - Constipation is a common problem throughout pregnancy. Preventive measures include: 1-keep well hydrated with 8-10 glasses of water daily; 2-increase fiber in diet with whole grains, fruits and vegetables; 3-daily exercise. If these steps are not effective, you may take:

- Metamucil or Fibercon products per the package instructions.
- Laxatives such as Sennakot, Milk of Magnesia, Dulcolax as per package instructions.

Avoid continuous use of laxatives, mineral oils and enemas. If still unable to have a bowel movement, please call the medical call number listed above.

INDIGESTION, HEARTBURN, GAS - Burning pain in the chest and upper abdomen comes and goes throughout pregnancy. Some non-medicinal measures include: 1-eat small meals throughout the day; 2-eat slowly; 3-avoid spicy or fatty foods; 4-sit upright for 1-2 hours after each meal. If these are ineffective, you may try:

- Tums or Roloids as per the package instructions.
- Maalox, Mylanta, Gaviscon as per package instructions.
- Zantac, Pepcid, Tagamet as per package instructions.

If these problems ever lead to vomiting that contains blood, please call the medical call number listed above.

HEMORRHOIDS - Hemorrhoids may lead to pain, swelling or bleeding throughout pregnancy. Use the same advice for constipation to avoid these problems and avoid straining. If further treatment is required you may use:

- Preparation H or Anusol as per package instructions.
- Tucks or witch hazel pads as per package instructions.
- Stool softeners, such as Colace, twice daily.
- Ice packs applied directly to the hemorrhoids.

Avoid chronic use of laxatives. If you have severe pain unrelieved by these measures, you may have developed a blood clot in the hemorrhoid which may need to be treated by your primary care provider or gastrointestinal physician.

DIARRHEA - Not a common problem in pregnancy, but can occur. If you experience diarrhea, make sure to stay well hydrated and keep a bland, soft diet until it resolves. Sports drinks and Pedialyte are also good choices to stay hydrated. Medications for relief of symptoms include:

- Immodium or Kaopectate as per package instructions.

If the diarrhea is accompanied by fever, severe abdominal pain, or lasts greater than 24 hours without improvement, please call the medical call number.

FEVER, HEADACHE, BODY ACHE - If you feel that you have the flu, please rest at home and stay well hydrated. Sometimes the flu can lead to dehydration. If this occurs, call our medical call line for further instructions. If you feel that you have a fever due to an infection unrelated to pregnancy (sinus, ear, chest), please call your primary care provider. Headaches are common throughout pregnancy, but especially so in the first trimester. Good preventive measures include: 1-get plenty of sleep; 2-reduce stress, take time to relax; 3-eat well balanced meals; 4-regular exercise. Tylenol (acetaminophen) is safe to take for any of the above problems during pregnancy with a maximum total amount of 2000 mg per day. Avoid any product that contains aspirin or other related medications (BC powders, Advil, Aleve, Ibuprofen). If your headache does not improve with these measures or if you have visual changes, please call the medical call number.

SINUS CONGESTION, RUNNY NOSE, COLD SYMPTOMS - Sinus congestion is a common occurrence in pregnancy and may not respond to treatment. However, allergy and cold symptoms do respond well to over the counter medications.

- Chlor-Trimeton, Tylenol Sinus, Sudafed, Dimetapp as per package instructions. If you have high blood pressure, please call before taking one of these.
- Saline nasal sprays. Avoid continuous use of Afrin spray.
- Claritin and other prescription antihistamines are safe to use.

You may also try a humidifier in your bedroom at night. If your symptoms are accompanied by a persistent fever, green or brown nasal drainage, please call your primary care provider for further instructions.

COUGH, SORE THROAT - Helpful hints include: 1-a soft diet; 2-warm liquids; 3-use of a humidifier; 4-warm salt water gargles (dissolve 2 tsp of table salt in an 8 oz. glass of warm water). Medications to use include:

- Throat lozenges, Chloraseptic spray as per package instructions.
- Vicks vapor rub as per package instructions.
- Robitussin or Robitussin DM as per package instructions.

If your cough is unrelenting or accompanied by fever, green or brown sputum, shortness of breath or wheezing, please call your primary care provider for further instructions. If you have been exposed to strep throat and are you feel your symptoms may be from strep, please call your primary care provider for further instructions.