

Frequently Asked Questions for OB Patients

What should I do if I get a cold during pregnancy?

The very best remedy for the common cold and flu is REST and PLENTY OF FLUIDS. You may take Tylenol (acetaminophen) for the aches and fever. Do not take aspirin or Ibuprofen unless you are directed by your provider. It is okay to take over-the-counter throat lozenges for a sore throat as well as “saline only” nasal sprays for nasal congestion. It is best to avoid all other medications until you have completed your first trimester (13+ weeks). After the 1st trimester you may use other medications as indicated on the “Safe Medication” list included in this packet. Please notify your Ob or primary care provider if you develop a fever over 100.6 degrees, a productive cough and/or severe sinus congestion with greenish discharge, or if the symptoms do not resolve after 3 – 4 days.

How should I treat diarrhea?

Replace the fluids and nutrients (electrolytes) lost by drinking extra water and a fluid replacement beverage such as Gatorade. Low residue foods such as white rice, bread, crackers, baked potatoes, bananas and tea are also good. Imodium is a safe over-the-counter remedy that may help. If the condition persists for more than 24 hours, or if you have a fever/dizziness or severe abdominal cramping, please notify your OB or primary care provider.

What can I do to relieve constipation?

This is a common problem during pregnancy which is managed by drinking adequate amounts of liquids (about 10 – 12 glasses/day), increasing light physical activity, such as walking about 30 minutes per day, and increasing fiber in your diet. If you are unable to get adequate fiber through your diet, you may try a daily fiber supplement such as Metamucil or Citrucil. A stool softener such as Colace is safe to use if necessary. Mylanta Gas works well for associated symptoms of gas and bloating.

Is there anything I can do to help with heartburn?

Try eating small, frequent snacks throughout the day rather than fewer large meals. Allow gravity to do its work by waiting a few hours after eating to recline. Try staggering eating and drinking to avoid overfilling your stomach. TUMS helps neutralize stomach acid and provide a good source of calcium. It is also safe to try Mylanta, Tagamet, Pepcid and Zantac.

My “morning sickness” seems to last all day, how can I relieve nausea and vomiting?

Again, small frequent snacks of protein/carbohydrates will help. Ginger products seem to help with some mild cases of nausea. Others find relief with “Sea Bands” – acupressure bands that can be purchased over-the-counter at the pharmacy. 25 – 50mg of Vitamin B6 with or without ½ tablet (12.5mg) of Unisom (doxylamine) may be taken twice daily to help with nausea. Unisom will most likely cause drowsiness so you may need to limit use during the day. When you are unable to tolerate foods- keep drinking; even if it is only sips of fluid every 10 minutes. Please call OB or primary care right away if you are unable to tolerate all foods and liquids, or if you are unable to urinate for more than half a day.

What if I am exposed chicken pox or other childhood illnesses?

If you have had chicken pox as a child or know you are immune, there is nothing to worry about. If you are unsure of your immunity status, we can have a sample of blood drawn to test for varicella antibodies. If you are NOT immune, avoid exposure to chicken pox throughout your pregnancy whenever possible. As an adult, you can become very ill with this infection. Your baby may also be at risk depending on when the exposure occurs. Please call us if you are directly exposed to chicken pox and are NOT immune. We may be able to offer you treatment to minimize the risk of illness.

How will I know if I am immune to German Measles (Rubella)?

When you have your initial prenatal labs drawn after your first visit, one of the panels will include your Rubella immunity status. Most adults have already had this illness or have been immunized as a child. If your test shows that you are not immune, or have questionable immunity, you will be offered a vaccination after delivery.

Can I get my hair colored or permed during pregnancy?

You may color or perm your hair after your 1st trimester (13+ weeks) in a well ventilated area.

Is it safe to visit the dentist?

You may have routine dental work done during your pregnancy. It is best to avoid x-rays and/or Tetracycline-based antibiotics. Local anesthetics WITHOUT epinephrine may be used if you are not allergic. You will want to advise your dentist of your pregnancy before initiating treatment.

Can I travel during pregnancy?

As long as you are NOT experiencing pregnancy-related complications, you may generally travel short distances until your 36th week. Airlines prefer that you stop flying about 34 - 35 weeks. If you are travelling by car, stop every 1 – 2 hours for a stretch / bathroom break. If you are flying, drink EXTRA water to avoid dehydration, walk around every 30 minutes to ensure good circulation and prevent swelling of the legs and feet. Take your own snacks and use the restroom frequently. Know the location of the nearest hospital/emergency room at your destination in case a pregnancy complication should arise. Avoid exertion in elevations over 5,000 feet and do not scuba dive. Although it is probably best to avoid altitudes of over 10,000 feet altogether, airplane cabins are pressurized and should pose no problem. Airport metal detectors are also safe.

Can I get a TB test? Flu shot? Hepatitis B vaccination?

It is safe to do a TB test at anytime during your pregnancy. Although it is not part of your OB screening, we can add the test in the lab draw if you are concerned about possible exposure. The flu shot is generally safe during pregnancy. It is also safe to have the Hepatitis B immunizations while pregnant.

What if my house is being painted?

Wait until after 13+ weeks and use water-based paints whenever possible. Use these and other chemicals (such as cleaning products) in a well-ventilated area. AVOID handling or breathing oil-based paints, stains, solvents, etc. During fumigation or spraying leave the area for the full amount of time recommended by the manufacturer or professional providing the service. There is always an 800 number on a product that you can call for safety information.

Should I take prenatal classes?

Prenatal fitness, childbirth education, breastfeeding, parenting and baby care classes may all be helpful depending on your needs – especially if this is your first pregnancy. PAMF offers many of these classes through our education division – 650-853-2960. Most classes fill early so plan ahead and sign up for childbirth preparation classes by your 6th month (24 weeks). We will be happy to discuss the classes with you during your visits.

Is sex safe during pregnancy?

Unless you are experiencing complications such as vaginal bleeding or have been advised to avoid intercourse by your provider, sex is generally safe throughout your pregnancy.