

## Third Trimester Discomforts

The third trimester often feels like the longest trimester due to the rapid increase in growth of the baby and the discomforts that accompany the changes. Here are some suggestions for easing the common aches and pains that can occur. Please discuss any concerns with your physician.

Complaint	Cause	Action
Constipation	Pressure from the uterus causes the stomach to empty more slowly	Drink at least eight glasses of water every day; eat several servings of whole grains and fresh fruits and vegetables each day; use a stool softener
Hemorrhoids	Varicose veins in the rectum	Avoid constipation, apply ice packs as needed; avoid straining during bowel movements
Varicose veins	Increased blood volume; increased pressure in the lower extremities	Wear support hose for support; sit with your legs elevated; avoid standing or sitting in the same position for extended periods of time
Frequent urination	Pressure from the uterus	Limit fluid intake before bedtime
Heartburn	Decreased motility of the stomach and gastrointestinal tract causes stomach acid to reflux	Eat frequent, small meals; avoid spicy foods; try antacids. Prop yourself up at night.
Leg cramps	Fatigue; pressure on the sciatic nerve	Stretch and flex feet and legs.
Backache	Hormones are causing the ligaments to relax; balance and posture changes related to additional weight of the baby.	Avoid wearing high-heeled shoes; increase core muscle strength with yoga or pilates; maintain good posture; stretch. Wear low, rubber-soled shoes. Avoid lifting.
Swelling in the hands and feet	Increased blood volume; increased pressure in the lower extremities	Remove rings from fingers; elevate feet; sleep with carpal tunnel hand braces; exercise regularly; stay well hydrated. Don't cross your legs when sitting; avoid knee high nylons; move frequently.
Shortness of breath	The uterus is putting pressure on the internal organs and diaphragm. The lungs cannot expand as usual.	Avoid sleeping flat on your back. Use pillows around you and between your legs. Sleep in a recliner. Elevate the head of the bed.
Nasal congestion	Nasal congestion makes breathing difficult. Snoring is common. Nosebleeds occur.	A humidifier in the bedroom may increase the moisture in the home. Saline nasal drops or vaseline inside the nostril may help.