

## BLADDER CONTROL

Urinating often is one of the first signs of being pregnant. The problem lessens after the third month, but it may return during the last months because the baby is pressing against the bladder.

### ★ TIPS

- Drink plenty of water, milk or fruit juice.
- If you have a burning or itching feeling when you urinate, contact your health care provider.
- If you leak urine when you cough, sneeze or laugh, try Kegel Exercises (see box).



### DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

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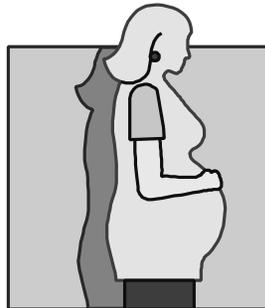
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## KEGEL EXERCISES

The muscles you use when you urinate also support the bladder, uterus, and rectum. During pregnancy, these muscles have to support extra weight. If you exercise these muscles, it may keep urine from leaking and may help when you are having your baby.

### ★ TIPS

- Tighten the muscles around the vagina as if you are trying to stop the flow of urine. Hold, count to ten, and then relax.
- Tighten 10 times in a row and do this 5-10 times a day.
- Keep this habit for the rest of your life.



# RELIEF FROM COMMON DISCOMFORTS OF PREGNANCY

– PART THREE –

- Leg Cramps
- Belly Pains
- Feeling Tired or Short of Breath
- Sex During Pregnancy
- Bladder Control

**This pamphlet tells you about changes that may occur during your pregnancy.  
Tips are given for helping with the discomforts that may come with these changes.**

**REMEMBER:** Contact your health care provider if you think you have a health problem or before taking any prescription drugs, over-the-counter medicines, or a home remedy.

## LEG CRAMPS

Cramps in the calves of your legs or “charlie horses” are more common near the end of your pregnancy. You may notice them during the night or early morning.

### TIPS

- Rub the calf muscles or stretch them by pointing your toes to the ceiling.
- Apply a warm washcloth or soak in warm water.
- Take short walks daily.
- Put your feet up every time you sit down.
- Eat calcium rich foods like milk, cheese, yogurt, broccoli, tofu.
- Eat potassium rich foods such as bananas, grapefruits and oranges.

## BELLY PAINS

You may notice aches and pains in your belly as it gets bigger. A sharp shooting pain on either side of the belly may occur when the ligament (a band of tough tis-

sue that supports the uterus) is stretched.

In later months of pregnancy, you may feel dull pains in the lower belly. As your baby presses against you, your hip joints loosen to prepare your body for having the baby. Other causes of minor pain may be constipation or bladder infection.

### TIPS

- Changing position will often relieve the pain.
- Contact your health care provider if the pain does not go away.

## FEELING TIRED OR SHORT OF BREATH

You may feel tired and out of breath as your baby grows larger and takes up more room. Feeling tired can also happen if the iron in your blood is low.

### TIPS

- Rest often and take it easy.
- Take your prenatal vitamins.
- Eat foods high in iron like cereal at the same meal or snack with foods high in Vitamin C. Vitamin C helps

the body to absorb iron.

- Foods high in iron include: cereal, eggs, and meat (avoid liver).
- Foods high in Vitamin C include baked potatoes, oranges and broccoli.

## SEX DURING PREGNANCY

Sex during pregnancy may become uncomfortable. Positions that put less pressure on your belly may feel better. The baby is protected by fluid in your uterus, and your health care provider will probably say it is okay to have sex. However, your health care provider may ask you to stop having sex when you are close to having your baby.

### TIPS

- Try different positions that may be more comfortable.
- If after sex, you bleed from your vagina, leak water, or feel pain in the vagina or belly, be sure to contact your health care provider.
- If your bag of waters breaks, do not have sex. Contact your health care provider immediately.