

Head-to-Toe: Second Trimester Changes

What's normal, what can help, and when to call your provider.

WEEKS
13–27

Headaches *

Hormones, extra blood volume, congestion, skipped meals and stress can all play a part.

Try: Rest in a dark, quiet room, drink water, eat regularly and use a cool compress. Ask which pain relievers are safe.

CALL IF it's severe and won't go away, or comes with vision changes, pain under your right ribs or sudden swelling of your face or hands.

Stuffy nose & nosebleeds *

Hormones and extra blood volume can swell your nasal passages, causing congestion, snoring or nosebleeds.

Try: Saline spray, a humidifier and sleeping with your head raised. Ask which decongestants are safe.

CALL IF a nosebleed is heavy, lasts over 20 minutes with steady pressure or happens often.

Mood & emotions *

Feeling excited one day and worried or weepy the next is normal.

Try: Rest, keep moving and talk with people you trust.

CALL IF you feel sad, anxious, hopeless or numb most days for more than 2 weeks, or lose interest in things you enjoy. Free, 24/7 help: call or text 1-833-TLC-MAMA (1-833-852-6262).

Tender, bleeding gums

Hormones can make gums swollen and quick to bleed (pregnancy gingivitis).

Try: Brush twice a day, floss daily and keep your dental checkups. Dental care is safe in pregnancy.

Growing breasts

Breasts keep growing and may feel tender. Areolas darken, veins show more and some people leak colostrum.

Try: A supportive, well-fitting bra.

Dizziness *

Your blood vessels relax and blood pressure often dips, which can leave you lightheaded.

Try: Stand up slowly, eat regular snacks, drink water and lie on your side, not flat on your back. If you feel lightheaded, sit or lie down.

CALL IF you faint, or dizziness comes with a racing heart, chest pain, shortness of breath, a severe headache or vision changes.

Growing belly *

Your uterus reaches about your belly button around 20 weeks. Many people feel baby's first flutters at 18–20 weeks, but first-time parents may not until about 25 weeks, and others as early as 16.

Try: Sleep on your side with a pillow under your bump.

CALL IF you feel less movement once you regularly feel your baby move.

Heartburn & indigestion

Hormones relax the valve at the top of your stomach, and your growing uterus pushes up on it.

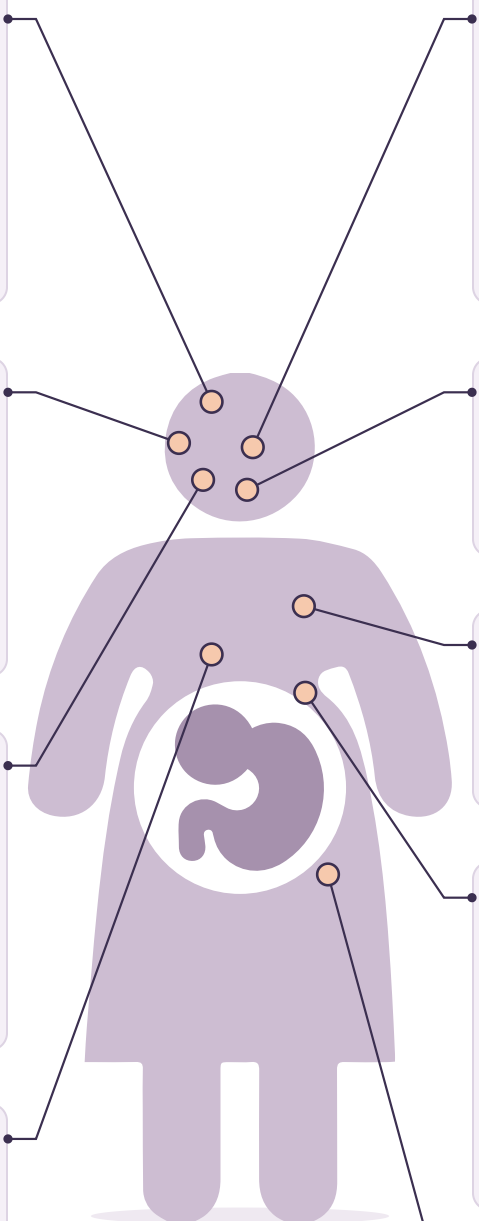
Try: Smaller meals, no lying down for 2–3 hours after eating and propping yourself up on extra pillows at night. Spicy, fatty or acidic foods may make it worse. Ask which antacids are safe.

Braxton Hicks contractions *

Your belly tightens and hardens for 30 seconds to 2 minutes, then relaxes. These practice contractions are usually irregular and mildly uncomfortable, not painful.

Try: Change positions, walk or rest and drink water.

CALL IF they're regular, painful, getting closer together or 4+ in an hour, or come with low back pain, pelvic pressure, bleeding or leaking fluid.



Back pain *

A shifting center of gravity and looser joints can strain your lower back.

Try: Good posture, supportive low-heeled shoes, bending your knees to lift and a pillow between your knees. A warm (not hot) compress, stretching, prenatal yoga, swimming or a belly band may help. Ask about physical therapy.

CALL IF pain is severe, comes and goes in a rhythm, or comes with fever, burning when you pee or bleeding.

Round ligament pain *

As your uterus grows, its supporting ligaments stretch. This can cause brief, sharp pain or pulling in your lower belly or groin.

Try: Move slowly, bend at your hips before you cough or sneeze, and rest. Gentle stretching or prenatal yoga may also help.

CALL IF pain is severe or constant, or comes with bleeding or fever.

Constipation & hemorrhoids *

Hormones slow digestion, and iron in prenatal vitamins can make it worse. Straining can cause hemorrhoids that itch, hurt or bleed a little.

Try: Water, fiber-rich foods, daily movement and not straining. A sitz bath or cool compress can soothe hemorrhoids. Ask which laxatives, stool softeners or creams are safe.

CALL IF you have more than a little rectal bleeding, or severe pain.

Leg cramps *

Painful calf cramps are common, especially at night.

Try: Flex your foot toward you, stretch your calves before bed and stay hydrated.

CALL IF one leg is swollen, red, warm or painful. It could be a blood clot.

Skin changes *

You may notice a dark line down your belly (linea nigra), darker patches on your face (melasma), stretch marks or itchy skin.

Try: Sunscreen, moisturizer and loose, breathable clothes.

CALL IF itching is intense, especially on your palms or the soles of your feet.

Peeing more & UTIs *

Pressure on your bladder means more bathroom trips, and pregnancy makes urinary tract infections (UTIs) more likely.

Try: Drink water, don't hold it and pee after sex.

CALL WITHIN A DAY if it burns when you pee or urine is cloudy or bloody. Call right away if you also have a fever or back pain.

Vaginal discharge *

More discharge is normal. Healthy discharge is thin, white or clear and mild-smelling.

Try: Breathable cotton underwear and panty liners. Skip tampons and douching.

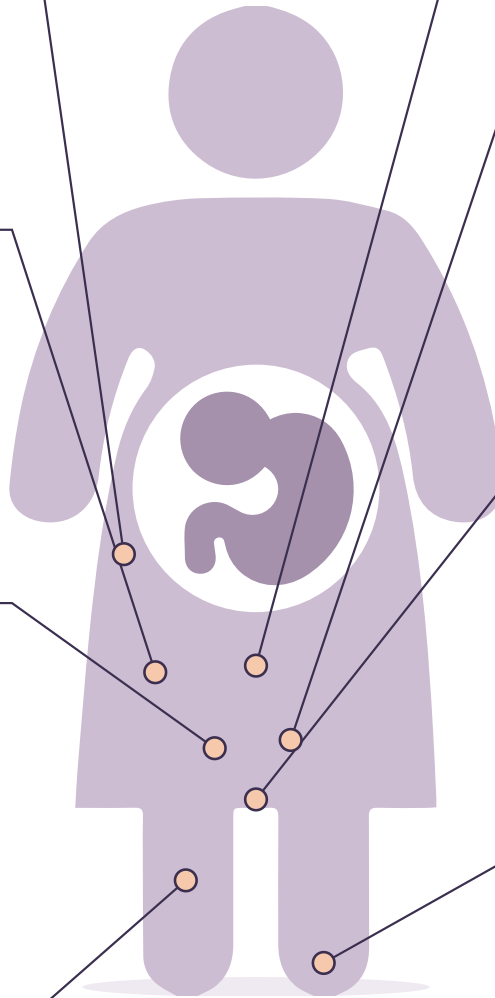
CALL IF it smells strong or fishy, looks green, yellow or gray, turns clumpy or comes with itching or burning. Call right away for bleeding or leaking fluid.

Swelling *

Some swelling in your feet and ankles is common, especially late in the day or in the heat.

Try: Put your feet up, avoid standing for long, keep moving, stay hydrated and try compression socks.

CALL IF your face, hands or eyes suddenly swell, or swelling comes with a headache or vision changes.



* Has a **CALL IF** sign. Also call for a fever of 100.4°F (38°C) or higher, or if something just doesn't feel right.

In an emergency, call 911.