

How to Prevent Falls During Pregnancy

Accidents Do Happen

The many physical changes in pregnancy change your coordination and put you at risk for accidents and injuries.

The nausea (upset stomach) from morning sickness can make you feel weak and tired. As a result, when you get up, you may become dizzy and lose your balance and fall.

Lying Down

Low blood pressure can happen when you lie on your back, especially during the third trimester. This can cause you to feel lightheaded.

- Avoid lying flat on your back.
- Tell any health care provider how you feel during an exam or ultrasound. He or she can help you change position so you feel better.

Changing Sense of Balance

Your growing baby has affected your center of gravity and your balance. This can make you dizzy and may cause you to fall.

- Avoid wearing high-heeled shoes.
- Wear shoes that have no-slip soles.
- Move slowly every time you change from lying down to sitting and from sitting to standing.
- Use handrails when you use stairs.
- Be extra careful during the winter when outside.

Feeling Faint

Hormone changes and your growing baby cause blood to “pool” in your legs and feet. This can cause you to feel faint.

Being in a warm room, standing or sitting quickly, or staying in one position too long can cause you to feel faint. To help avoid this:

- change your positions slowly when you sit or stand
- avoid lying flat on your back
- drink 8 to 10 glasses of water each day.

If you feel faint, sit down and put your head between your knees. If this does not help, have someone help you to a place where you can lie down.

Having Nausea (Upset Stomach) or Vomiting (Throwing Up)

You may have “morning sickness” at any time of the day or night. You may not feel like eating and drinking a lot.

That can make you dehydrated and weak. Any medicine you take to slow or stop your nausea can also make you feel dizzy or tired.

- Eat small amounts of food often during the day. Eat slowly. Try carbohydrates (crackers, potatoes) or proteins (cheese, chicken).
- Drink 8 to 10 glasses of liquids (about 1 to 1 ½ quarts) a day in small amounts between your meals.
- Change positions slowly when you sit up or stand.

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Exercising Can Help

Regular exercise during pregnancy — if your health care provider approves — will help you feel your best. It can help you improve your balance and decrease chances of a fall.

- **First trimester:** Talk with your health care provider before you start a new exercise routine.
 - Choose exercises you can do slowly and controlled, such as walking or swimming.
 - Do not do bouncy or jerky movements that over-stretch and strain your muscles. Do not do sit-ups.
 - Do pelvic tilt exercises on your back. If you feel dizzy, roll onto your side right away.
- **Second trimester:** You will likely have less nausea and feel better in your second trimester. The extra energy you feel will make exercising easier. Here are some suggestions:
 - Do pelvic tilt exercises while standing or on your hands and knees.
 - Do not exercise on your back.

- **Third trimester:** Your center of gravity has changed and affected your balance.
 - Go at a slower pace.
 - Walking and swimming are good choices. They help reduce swelling in your feet and ankles.

Read “Beginnings: Pregnancy, Birth and Beyond” for more information about exercise during each trimester. Talk with your health care provider about what is right for you.

Whom to Call With Questions

If you have any questions or concerns, please talk with your health care provider.