



Headaches during Pregnancy

Why do I have headaches?

- It's not unusual to get tension headaches when you're pregnant, especially in the first trimester. Tension headaches – the most common kind of headache – can feel like a squeezing pain or a steady dull ache on both sides of the head or the back of the neck. If you have had tension headaches in the past, pregnancy can make the problem worse.
- Your increased blood volume and circulation of rising hormones may cause headaches especially in early pregnancy.
- Other reasons can be:
 - You have stopped or cut back on caffeine
 - Fatigue
 - Hunger
 - Dehydration
 - Depression
 - You may have allergies, sinus congestion, eyestrain or stress
- You will probably find the headaches become less or even disappear during the second trimester, when the flood of hormones stabilizes and your body grows accustomed to its altered chemistry.
- What can I do?
 - Use a warm or cool compress to your forehead or the base of your skull.
 - Take a shower
 - don't go hungry or thirsty
 - Avoid fatigue
 - Get some exercise

Try relaxation techniques

Try massage

- What medication can I try?
 1. Acetaminophen is safe to take as directed on the label, but most other headache medications – such as aspirin and ibuprofen, as well as most prescription migraine drugs – are not recommended for pregnant women.

- When should I call my Midwife?
 1. You're in your second or third trimester and have a bad headache that is not relieved by Tylenol or other comfort measures, or a headache for the first time, which may or may not be accompanied by visual changes, sharp upper abdominal pain or nausea, sudden weight gain, or swelling in your hands or face. You'll need to have your blood pressure and urine checked right away to be sure you don't have preeclampsia.
 2. You have a sudden "explosive" headache, violent pain that awakens you from sleep, a headache that doesn't go away, or one that feels unlike any you've ever experienced.
 3. You have a headache with a fever and a stiff neck.
 4. Your headache is getting worse and you experience any other problems such as blurry vision or other visual disturbances, slurred speech, drowsiness, numbness, or a change in normal sensation or alertness.
 5. You have a headache after falling and hitting your head
 6. You have nasal congestion, as well as pain and pressure underneath your eyes or other facial or even dental pain. You may have a sinus infection that will need to be treated with antibiotics.