

Are You Pregnant and Feeling Stressed?

You’re not alone. During pregnancy, many women feel overwhelmed at times. Between body changes and friends who are full of advice, pregnancy can be stressful. But don't let people or your pregnancy drive you crazy! You can change things around. After all, “stressed” spelled backwards is **desserts**! And what are desserts? Something special! Something to enjoy! Something worth waiting for! These same things can also describe pregnancy. So, enjoy your pregnancy and this special time in your life.

Recognize Stress

Stress shows itself in different ways. Little things can set you off. You may cry easily. You may have more aches, have trouble sleeping or problems eating. Maybe you just don’t feel like yourself. How do you know when you are feeling stressed? List how you feel.

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____

Lower Your Stress

What's causing your stress? Do you still have morning sickness? Is it hard to carry things? Are you always tired? Once you know what makes you tense, you can start to lower your stress. Ask yourself “what would make things better?” How could someone treat you special?

List three things that give you stress. Then think of ways to make you feel better. For example:

Stress

I am on my feet a lot at work
I’m worried about the baby bills
I don’t have time for myself

Less Stress

I could ask for rest times or to do another task
I could ask other moms where to get things at the best price
I will only do things that matter and say “no” when I’m tired

This gives me stress

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____

This would make it better

- _____
- _____
- _____

Stress may cause your baby to be born too soon (before 37 weeks) or too small (less than 5½ pounds). Premature and low birthweight babies often have serious medical problems and may need expensive and long-term care. This is one reason why it is important to reduce stress during your pregnancy.

Ask for Help

Thinking about life after your baby comes can be both exciting and a worry. Any change can be stressful, even happy changes like the birth of a new baby. Instead of getting all worked up before the baby comes, ask for help. Remember the average pregnancy is 40 weeks. You need to take care of yourself every day so you can try to have a full term pregnancy. If you are feeling stressed, talk to someone about your concerns. Let your doctor know how you feel.

When people ask “How can I help?” tell them “Thanks for Asking” and accept their offers. Your partner, friends and family really want to do things for you. But don’t make them guess what you’d like. Give them ideas about how they can be part of your pregnancy and be helpful. If you don’t, you might not get what you want. Try it out. Complete this sentence:

“Thank you for asking, I’d really like you to _____.”

And just like dessert, don't be afraid to ask for seconds!

Even dads can get stressed over a pregnancy. They don’t know all the answers when it comes to babies and how you feel. It’s common for men to have questions and concerns about becoming a father. Finding ways for the baby’s father to be part of your pregnancy can help both of you.

Thanks For Asking!

Ideas for Reducing Stress During Pregnancy

What Pregnant Women Like

What would make you happy? Here are 40 ideas from other moms – one for every week of a full-term pregnancy. Plus two more ideas because due dates are not always exact. Circle the ideas that you would like your family and friends to do for you.

1 Massage my feet and paint my toenails	2 Cook a meal – better yet, take me out	3 Tell me I look beautiful – not fat		
4 Keep the other kids so I can take a nap	5 Share happy stories about pregnancy and labor	6 Don't touch my belly without my permission	7 Pamper me – give me extra love	
8 Walk and talk with me	9 I would love my hair done	10 Don't wear too much perfume around me	11 Give me a baby shower	12 Be understanding – comfort me when I feel sick
13 Don't smoke, drink or do drugs around me	14 Buy me a special outfit	15 Ask me how I am doing and listen to my answer	16 Clean the house	17 Say something positive – don't put me down
18 Be interested in pregnancy, birth and breastfeeding	19 Respect my feelings and my emotional ups and downs	20 Wait on me – offer me a pillow	21 Call just to say hi	22 Bring me a glass of water
23 Don't expect me to do everything I did before	24 Don't pick a fight or hurt me	25 Give me a hug	26 Feed my food cravings	27 Give me time alone
28 Don't offer unwanted advice	29 Let me know you are here for me, no matter what	30 Don't give me baby stuff for Christmas or my birthday	31 Help me find good things for my baby	32 Do the laundry
33 Bring me fresh fruit and vegetables	34 Share the joy of my pregnancy	35 Don't tell me about a baby that died	36 Don't compare me to other pregnant women	37 Ask but don't nag about my baby's name
38 Don't ask why I got pregnant	39 Let me decide how to raise my child	40 Go with me to my prenatal checkups	41 Include me in your prayers	42 Keep up the favors after my baby is born

It's Your Turn to Share Your Ideas.

List three things someone could do for you to make your pregnancy a little easier. I really would like someone to:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Now share these ideas. Put your list on the refrigerator where people can see it or – better yet – hand out copies. Remember to tell your family and friends how important they are to you and how much of a difference it makes when they help you while you are pregnant AND after the baby is born. Look for more “Thanks For Asking” ideas on www.NCHealthyStart.org Click on "Pregnancy" then click on “Thanks For Asking!”

