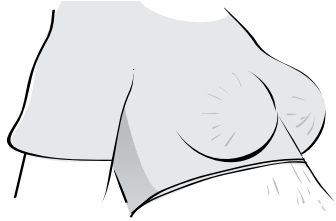


## Third Trimester (7 to 9 months): Changes You May Feel

### Changes you may feel

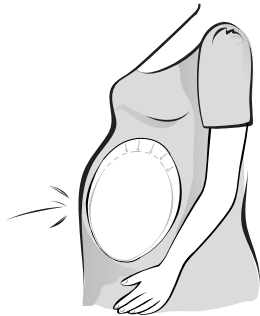
### Tips to help

Stretch marks may develop on your body including on the breasts or chest area. They may feel itchy.



- Putting lotion or oil on the itchy area can help.
- Use a small amount first, in case your body has a reaction to the lotion or oil.

Braxton-Hicks contractions may start around this time. This is the muscles of the womb (uterus) practising by tightening and relaxing. Braxton-Hicks contractions do not open the cervix (opening of the uterus)



- Talk to your health care provider.
- Walk around.
- Take a bath.
- Drink about 6-8 glasses of water every day.
- If they do not go away or get stronger and longer in strength and length, call your health care provider. This could be labor.

Leg pains or cramps are fairly common at this stage.



- Put your feet up.
- Drink about 6-8 glasses of water per day. Some find that adding electrolytes to their water in the afternoon or evening helps - avoid electrolytes high in sugar or that contain aspartame.
- Stretch your legs by bending your ankles and pointing your toes towards your nose.
- If your leg is swollen or the pain does not go away, see a health care provider right way.
- Limited research suggest that a Magnesium supplement may be helpful to prevent leg cramps. Ask your care provider if this would be right for you. Magnesium rich foods include: whole grains, beans, dried fruits, nuts and legumes.

## Changes you may feel

## Tips to help

Heartburn is a common experience in pregnancy. This is a burning feeling in your chest. It is caused by pregnancy hormones and your baby pressing on your stomach.



- Avoid the foods that cause your heartburn. Spicy and/or fried food often cause heartburn.
- Drink fluids between meals. Not during meals.
- Eat smaller amounts of foods, more often.
- Lying down after eating can bring on heartburn.
- Rest or sleep with pillows under your head so that your head is higher than your chest.
- If the heartburn becomes painful and does not go away, call your health care provider.
- Talk to your health care provider or pharmacist before taking any medication.

Constipation (difficulty having a poo) can be common in pregnancy. Straining to have a poo (bowel movement) can cause hemorrhoids (painful area around your anus). These can be very tender and even painful.



- Talk to your health care provider.
- Drink about 6-8 glasses of water every day.
- Do not sit or stand for long periods of time.
- Eat high fibre foods like whole grain breads, prunes, pears, berries, and bran (more choices/berries are a traditional food that is commonly eaten).
- Activities like walking and swimming or prenatal yoga can help.

In pregnancy it is common to be short of breath. This can be caused by the size and position of their baby. When their baby moves lower, breathing is often easier. Hormonal changes and other physiological changes also cause this such as the diaphragm moving up into the chest to get ready for growing baby, and more blood volume.

- Talk to your health care provider.
- Wear loose clothing.
- Stand up straight.
- Make sure you do not have anemia which can aggravate breathlessness - ask your care provider.
- Anxiety can make breathlessness worse--try not to get too anxious about your breathing but take time to sit and take calm, slow breaths and know what is happening is normal.



## Changes you may feel

## Tips to help

Sometimes you just feel tired of being pregnant and want to go into labour and have the baby.

- Talk to your health care provider, partner, family, and friends about your feelings.
- Know that if everything is well, your baby will come at the right time. There are more complications with preterm births.

You might feel excited, anxious, or even scared.



- Every woman's experience is different.
- Some women take comfort in getting ready for the new baby.

It is normal to have to pee (pass urine) more often near the end of pregnancy. This is caused by the baby taking up more and more room and pressing on the bladder.



- If you feel pain or notice a bad smell and/or blood in your pee (urine), contact your health care provider. You may have an infection.
- Kegel exercises help to strengthen the muscles and can decrease the chances of pee (urine) leaking:
- Tighten the muscles around your birth canal (vagina) and anus and hold for several seconds. These are the same muscles you use when you are peeing).
- Repeat this several times during the day. Try to do this exercise 25 times each day.

Your interest in sex may change.

- Talk to your partner about your feelings.

