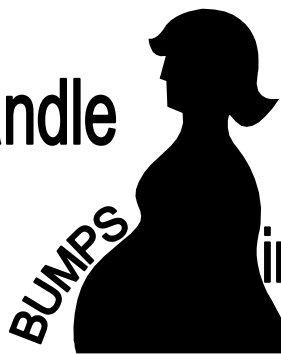


# How to handle



## THIRD TRIMESTER (28-40 WEEKS)

Mark A. Gapinski, MD  
630-462-4963

### in the road...

#### What medications are safe for me to take?

*Please note that although these medications are safe, we advise avoiding medication if possible.*

- Allergies – Benadryl, Claritin, Zyrtec
- Fever/Headache – Tylenol (Acetaminophen)
- Congestion - Sudafed
- Cough - Robitussin DM, Halls Cough Drops
- Constipation – Metamucil, Citrucil, Fibercon, Colace, Milk of Magnesia, Senekot
- Heartburn – Maalox, Mylanta, Pepcid AC, Tagamet, Tums, Zantac
- Hemorrhoids – Preparation H, Anusol, Tucks, Witch Hazel
- Rashes – Hydrocortisone cream, Caladryl, Benadryl, Aveeno

**My back is still aching!** Yes, unfortunately, this is still normal. Your baby is still growing and gaining weight...and your pelvic joints are still relaxing...and your center of gravity is shifting even further forward. This combination is leading to your back pain. Some ideas to help relieve back pain include icing or heating the affected area and using a belly band. If the pain increases in severity or is accompanied by other symptoms, contact your health care provider.

**My hands and feet are swollen, is this normal?** Some swelling in your hands, ankles, and feet is normal. Retained fluid helps prepare the pelvic joints and tissues to relax to allow the baby to be born. And believe it or not... the extra fluid accounts for approximately 25% of the weight you gain throughout pregnancy! To reduce any uncomfortable swelling in your hands or feet, use cold compresses on the affected areas, avoid standing for long periods, prop your feet when sitting, wear comfortable shoes, avoid clothes that are tight around your wrists or ankles, and drink plenty of water. ***If you have a sudden onset of severe and/or painful swelling, call us!***

**I'm having heartburn again!** Your still enlarging uterus is pushing your stomach out of its normal position, and still leading to heartburn. To avoid heartburn, eat small meals and drink plenty of fluids. Over-the-counter antacids may prove helpful in relieving you of heartburn problems. If the heartburn doesn't resolve or worsens, contact your health care provider.

**I think I'm getting varicose veins, is this normal?** Increased blood circulation can cause varicose veins, which appear as blue or reddish lines beneath the surface of the skin, particularly in the legs. If you have painful varicose veins, elevate your legs and wear support stockings.

**Hemorrhoids?** Hemorrhoids, which essentially are varicose veins in your rectum, are another possibility. To prevent hemorrhoids, avoiding constipation is key - by taking in plenty of fiber and fluids. Any one or more of the following may help relieve symptoms of hemorrhoids: take a warm bath with baking soda in the water, apply witch hazel or Preparation H to the affected area, and avoid sitting for long periods.

**I feel like I'm constantly peeing!** As your baby grows and moves deeper into your pelvis, the pressure on your bladder will increase. The extra pressure will cause you to urinate more frequently.

**I'm occasionally having some contractions, am I ok?** Braxton-Hicks are most common during the third trimester. These contractions are typically irregular in intensity, infrequent, unpredictable, more uncomfortable than painful, and do not increase in intensity or frequency. They then often taper off and disappear. The following can be triggers of Braxton-Hicks: when you or the baby is very active, when your bladder is full, after sex, and dehydration. (So be sure to drink plenty of water!) True labor contractions get longer, stronger and closer together. If you're having contractions that concern you, call us!

**Stretch Marks** - Although stretch marks can't be prevented, eventually they fade in intensity. Almost 90% of pregnant women will experience stretch marks. Although nothing has been proven to prevent or remove stretch marks, exercising, Palmers Coca Butter and applying lotions that contain vitamin E have been said to help.

## WHAT TO CALL FOR

### Regular Contractions

When you begin to experience regular contractions, this is the strongest indication that you are in labor. These contractions may feel like menstrual cramps or a lower backache that comes and goes, and during early labor they may be as far apart as 20 to 30 minutes. As labor continues, the contractions start happening every 10-15 minutes or less. When your contractions are consistently 5 minutes apart, for one straight hour, it is time to call!

**To reach Dr. Gapinski,  
call 630-462-4963.**

### Decreased Fetal Movement

In the last trimester of your pregnancy, we may advise you to keep track of the baby's movement every day. A common method of checking your baby's movement is counting how many times the baby moves in one hour. Ten movements (such as kicks, flutters, or rolls) in 1 hour or less are considered normal, but don't panic if you don't feel 10 movements every hour. If you are unable to feel 10 movements over an hour, have a snack or some juice and continue counting for a second hour. If you count fewer than 10 movements over a 2-hour period, call immediately!

### Water Breaks

When your water breaks, you may feel a sudden release of fluid from the vagina or simply a constant trickle. This fluid will typically be odorless. If you notice fluid leaking, and it doesn't seem to be urine, or you're unsure, please call us.

### Vaginal Bleeding

You may spot or bleed after an exam, and this is completely normal, and may continue for 1-2 days. If the bleeding/spotting continues in excess of two days or becomes as heavy as a menstrual flow, call.