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Natural Remedies for Pregnancy

Nausea	Don't get hungry: eat regularly and leave an oatcake by your bed to eat before you get up if nauseous on arising. Chew food well, eat slowly and sit down for 15 mins after eating. Suck crystallised ginger, drink fresh ginger tea or just sip warm water slowly and continuously.
Indigestion	Eat in a relaxed way with smaller meals, more frequently. Try mint tea for mild indigestion, or meadowsweet tea 3-4 x daily as a preventative. Slippery elm powder will soak up any excess acid, and soothe and protect the lining of your throat. Mix 1-2 tsp in a little water to form a gruel, and add honey to taste. Don't eat or drink anything for 30 mins after you've taken the slippery elm.
Constipation	Try flaxseeds (aka linseeds). 1 tablespoon soaked in a small tumbler of water overnight. Stir and drink in the morning. Increase your fibre (fruit, vegetables and brown rice) intake or try syrup of figs.
Anaemia	Floradix is a natural, effective iron supplement, without the constipating effects of prescribed iron. Dried apricots are high in iron, as are all berries, molasses, dark green vegetables, parsley, red cabbage, broccoli, nettle tea and beetroot.
Fatigue	Protein foods improve energy: nuts/ seeds, combined with fresh fruit make a great snack. Increasing water intake is one of the cheapest and quickest ways to increase energy. Rest: acknowledge that your body is using up a lot of energy growing and nourishing your baby. Oatstraw tea will help.
Swollen ankles	Cornsilk tea 3 x daily will help, as will putting your feet up - above the level of your heart as often as you can.
Piles	Nelson's Haemorrhoid cream or aloe vera gel will really take away the sting, and help them to reduce in size. Or soak some tissue in witch hazel and apply directly on the area 2-3 x daily. Make sure you deal with any constipation, which will worsen piles.
Worry or insomnia	Lime flower, Passionflower or Valerian teas during the day or an hour before bed. Don't forget Rescue Remedy in your handbag or in water by your bed at night.
Cramp	Massage legs with sesame oil, increase calcium-rich foods: dark green vegetables, nuts and seeds, watercress, canned salmon and sardines, and dairy products.
Carpal Tunnel Syndrome	Arnica ointment 3x daily to reduce pain. High doses of B vitamins and topical applications help, but you need professional guidance with this.
Thrush	Bathe the area in diluted apple cider vinegar, or plain yoghurt to soothe and stop itching. Do not use internally.
Feeling fed up	Especially at the end of your pregnancy, rose essential oil in a burner, or as a massage will elevate your mood, relax you and reduce anxiety. You could also put 1 tsp rose water into a glass of water and drink.

Raspberry leaf tea is a *parturient*, or a herb which has been shown to be of benefit in pregnancy and delivery because it encourages an easy labour. It is a tonic herb that strengthens the muscles of the womb, resulting in more efficient contractions and reduced birthing time. It should be drunk, as an herbal tea for the last two months of pregnancy and can also be drunk freely throughout labour. It is also a *galactagogue*, which stimulates production of breastmilk in preparation for when the baby arrives.

All herbal teas should be steeped, **covered** for 15 minutes before drinking. Put a saucer on your mug – it will stop the therapeutic properties evaporating. The dose for loose teas is 1 teaspoon: 1 mug boiling water, taken 3 x daily. All herbs mentioned are available at Neal's Yard Remedies, 106 Regent Street, Leamington Spa CV32 4NR. All of the remedies mentioned here are safe in pregnancy; however, if you have any medical conditions it is important to consult a qualified practitioner before taking anything.

Sara Southgate has two young children and 10 years' experience in working with natural remedies. She is a member of the Warwickshire Pregnancy and Birth Network and practices from the Neal's Yard Remedies Therapy Rooms.

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