

# Thriving Through Pregnancy and Beyond

**First Trimester:** \*Nausea & Fatigue

**\* Keep your blood sugar stable**... dramatic or rapid fluctuations in your blood sugar levels will make you feel bad:

- Eat something every 2 hours
- Pre-plan for transitions and have snacks at the ready (i.e. before getting out of bed in the morning / as you leave work and commute home / before picking kids up from school or getting them up from a nap / mid-morning and mid-afternoon lulls / before going to bed)
- Eat protein with each meal/snack to slow the release of sugars into your bloodstream
- Google “glycemic index chart” to learn what foods are more prone to spike your blood sugar quickly

**\*Digestive Support & Managing Reflux**... if your tummy is ready to receive food you may have a better chance of being able to keep foods and fluids down:

- 1 Tbsp of apple cider vinegar in warm water and honey to taste before eating
- Papaya enzymes before or after eating. Tums are fine for heartburn
- Get a foam wedge to keep you propped at an upright angle for sleeping/naping
- Try Calm-a-Tum tincture by Wish Garden

**\*General Fluid Intake**... dehydration can easily happen when you don't feel good, and then begins the vicious cycle of not feeling good because you're dehydrated:

- Try using a straw to take small sips
- Add lemon or a little electrolyte-replacement drink to your water to make it more palatable
- Is carbonated water easier? Consider getting a Soda Stream if fizzy/bubbly water works better for you
- Drink fluids 30 minutes before or after solid food to minimize the effect of a full stomach

**\*Consider Temperature**... with a little trial and error you may find that your stomach either prefers to be “warmed” or “cooled” to help reduce symptoms:

- Warming – strong fresh ginger tea + brown sugar to taste / ginger or cinnamon gum and hard candies / chew on fennel or anise seeds
- Cooling – strong brewed peppermint tea / salads and raw veggie snacks / cucumbers

**\*Smells & Activities**... identify your triggers as well as what makes you feel better:

- Common aggravators: stuffy rooms, odors (e.g. perfume, chemicals, food, smoke), heat, humidity, noise, and visual or physical motion (e.g. flickering lights, driving)
- Some smells can be good... sniff essential oils - directly, on a cloth or infused the room with a few drops on a light bulb – common helpful scents: lavender, peppermint, lemon
- Consider brushing your teeth after a meal (unless brushing is a trigger), spitting out saliva, and frequently washing out the mouth
- Get out for some fresh air and exercise. Mild to moderate exercise assists the body in mobilizing toxins and hormones through the liver and out the body

**\*Medication Support**... talk your midwife or OB about this option:

- The combination of Unisom (a common sleep aid) + Vitamin B6 can be very helpful for severe or long lasting nausea
- Ask your acupuncturist if you are interested in a Chinese herbal formula that would be specific to your presentation of symptoms

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**Second & Third Trimester** \*These are some of the most common symptoms and health concerns that arise during a normal pregnancy. Acupuncture can help with all of these. Additional suggestions and self-care tips below.

\***Headaches**... since you can't take ibuprophen or Tylenol you may try: oral magnesium + VitB6 as a safe alternative / for sinus pain: netti pot daily and let the hot water hit your face in the shower / if throbbing or migraine-like: try an ice pack at your neck and your feet in hot water + a little caffeine

\***Constipation**... pregnancy hormones may slow you down: stay well hydration / take oral magnesium / 1 tsp flax oil at night / eat a beet every day

\***Anemia**... your blood volume with change dramatically during pregnancy, if lab results show that you are anemic: Floradex is a plant based iron supplement that is much less likely to cause constipation than standard oral iron / regular moxibustion, both during an acu appt and used at home, will help boost your Qi and blood

\***RLS**... restless leg or limb syndrome can prevent you from sleeping and thus make everything feel a little worse: topical magnesium creme before bed is great / be sure to stretch and walk every day if you have these symptoms

\***Prenatal Vitamins**... are not all are made the same! Check the label to confirm that the folic acid is provided in a "methylated" form to ensure your body has the best chance of absorbing this key nutrient

\***Changing body aches and pains**... pelvic pain (round ligament, sciatica, pubic symphysis), rib pain, low back and hip pain, upper back pain, CTS, foot pain, hemorrhoids: regular acupuncture / be active daily / ask your acupuncturist about self care stretches or strengthening exercises specific to your pain

\***Preeclampsia**... can really just seem to come out of nowhere - sudden headaches, swelling and decreased urination can be early indicators to have your blood pressure checked: eat a high protein diet (esp eggs and chicken) / look into the Brewer Diet / ask your acupuncturist about Chinese herbal options to help prevent or manage this condition

\***Breech baby**... babies are smart! If they are able to correct their position and just need a little encouragement: acupuncture and daily moxabustion / gentle inversions / it's never too late, don't lose hope!

\***Placenta previa**... this can be helped with: acupuncture, moxabustion, time and belief things will improve

\***Low amniotic fluid**... this can be helped with: acupuncture and regular moxabustion, diligent hydration, a good diet

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**Postpartum** \*Remember, this is the Fourth Trimester and you can get support through this time too!

\***Miscarriage recovery and preparing to try again**... it is important to move and nourish mom's blood after a miscarriage: ask your acupuncturist about Chinese herbal options / a few sessions of acupuncture

\***Mood support**... time for yourself, bodywork, support for changing hormones is important!: schedule some regular acupuncture / reconnect with your therapist / Chinese herbs or supplements can help stabilize/boost neurochemicals



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**\*Lactation support**... if you're experiencing low milk supply and want to breastfeed: acupuncture, moxibustion, Chinese herbs / connect with a lactation doula / don't suffer and worry alone

**\*C-Section recovery**... if you are experiencing redness, swelling, numbness, pain: specific scar therapy  
acupuncture needling is amazing for scar pain and healing / CBD topical salve, coconut oil, Vit E oil, castor oil

