

# Not Normal



## Breathlessness

Any breathlessness that occurs with minimal exertion, at rest, or comes on suddenly, or is not normal for you requires medical attention.

You should be able to climb a flight of stairs without stopping (if you could do this before pregnancy).

**It is not normal to be breathless lying flat.**

If you feel that you need to use more pillows at night to help your breathing, or are waking up breathless at night, please contact your doctor or midwife.

## Palpitations

If you feel **faint, dizzy or get chest pain** when having palpitations, then you must seek medical attention.

If the palpitations last for a long period of time but you still feel well, it is still important to see a doctor.

## Weight Gain

Excessive weight gain over a short period of time is not normal.

If you notice a **weight gain of 4-5lbs (2-3kg) over three to four days**, contact your doctor or attend your local maternity assessment unit as it could be fluid retention.

# Normal

## Breathlessness

This is more common as pregnancy progresses as your heart works harder.

It occurs due to the changes in your body to accommodate the growing fetus.

## Palpitations

Palpitations are common in pregnancy. These are heart beats, or extra beats that are more noticeable.

They are more common in pregnancy due to the hormonal changes that take place and can feel stronger due to the extra blood pumped by the heart.

Palpitations are often **described as heart flutters, pounding or irregular beats**. Sometimes these sensations can also be felt in your neck or throat.

## Weight Gain

You will continue to gain weight throughout your pregnancy, with most weight gain occurring after 20 weeks gestation.

**The average woman will gain 10-12kg during pregnancy.** It is recommended that if you are overweight that you maintain your weight rather than gain weight.

This is hard but can be done through healthy eating and exercising regularly.

## Tiredness

If you **do not have energy to complete everyday tasks this is abnormal** and you should seek medical advice.

## Dizziness

Dizziness associated with chest pain or palpitations requires urgent medical attention.

**If you have a blackout, you must attend A&E.**

## Swelling

If you notice swelling that occurs suddenly, contact your midwife or doctor immediately.

Look out for swelling of the feet or ankles that does not go away when elevating your legs, or swelling that is pitting.

Swelling of one leg can be caused by a blood clot and this requires urgent investigation. If you notice swelling in only one leg, attend your nearest Accident and Emergency Department.

## Chest Pain

**Experiencing chest pain (not heartburn) is not normal in pregnancy.**

Attend A&E if you experience chest pain of any nature. They will do an ECG (tracing of your heart) and may wish to do a chest x-ray, ultrasound of your heart or a type of CT scan.

## Tiredness

Hormonal changes in pregnancy can make you feel fatigued. At later stages, the extra weight you carry can also make you feel tired.

## Dizziness

During pregnancy, your blood pressure drops and your blood vessels dilate.

To avoid dizziness do not stand for long periods of time and take your time when getting up.

Make sure you keep well hydrated and eat regular sensible meals.

## Swelling

It is common for feet, ankles and hands to swell during pregnancy. This usually happens as the day goes on or if you have been standing for a long time.

It can also happen as a result of hot temperatures.

Try to avoid standing for long periods and elevate your legs when resting. You may find compression stockings useful.

Be aware of chest pain that you feel through to your back. It may feel like 'tearing'. If you have pain like this you must attend A&E.