

Common Complaints During Pregnancy

Restless Leg Syndrome/Leg Cramps

Restless leg syndrome (RLS), also called Willis-Ekbom Disease, is a very common issue during pregnancy. It occurs in 1 out of every 5 pregnant women. Because it affects the nervous system, women experience unpleasant sensations in their legs (such as tingling, burning, itching) and an overwhelming urge to move them. These sensations typically show up during the third trimester, and can be painful. While some cases of restless leg syndrome are idiopathic (meaning that there is no apparent cause), many are caused by iron-deficient anemia and deficiencies in other nutrients such as magnesium, folate, and vitamin D. Additionally, obesity and weight gain, as well as genetics may contribute to it.

Herbal Remedies

Nettles

Nettle is a nutritive herb used as a tonic and blood builder. It is rich in vitamin K, iron, Vitamin A, Choline, Vitamin B6, Betaine, Vitamin K, Thiamin, Riboflavin, Folate, Niacin, Calcium, and Magnesium. It is useful in correcting iron-deficiency anemia and is a powerful yet gentle strengthener and detoxifier.

Contraindications: Hypersensitivity (Allergy). Consult with your doctor and use with caution if diabetic, or are taking blood thinners, diuretics, blood pressure drugs, and anti-inflammatory drugs.

Nettle Infusion

- Place ½ a cup of dried nettle in the bottom of a quart jar.
- Fill the jar with boiling water, cover, and let sit overnight or at least 4 hours.
- Strain the herb out and drink 2 cups (500 ml) to 1 quart/liter per day of the infusion.
- Refrigerate what you are not drinking. Lasts 2 days in the fridge.

Oatstraw

Oatstraw infusion (not tea, not tincture, not capsules) is an abundant source of protein, all macro- and trace-mineral, and B vitamins (except vitamin B12). In fact, it is the world's richest source of magnesium. These minerals help to regulate muscle contraction and soothe the nervous system, making it a very useful herb for restless leg syndrome.

Contraindications: No contraindications have been noted. Some people with celiac disease may be sensitive, most likely due to cross contamination.

Oatstraw Infusion

- Pour 8 oz. (250 ml) of boiling water over 1-3 teaspoons of dried herb
- Steep 10-20 minutes.
- Strain contents out and drink 1 to 4 cups daily.
- Keeps in the refrigerator for 2-3 days.

OR

- Place one ounce (about a cup) of dried herb into a quart mason jar.
- Fill it with boiling water, cover, and let it steep for 4-8 hours.
- If you like, you can add a pinch of mint or licorice root for flavor.
- Strain out the plant material and enjoy one or more cups of the liquid daily.
- This infusion is delicious warm or cold and can be sweetened with honey or any other natural sweetener. Keeps for 2-3 days in the refrigerator

Oatstraw Bath

- Boil 100 grams dried, shredded oat straw in 1-2 quarts water for 30 minutes
- Strain and add to the bath.
- Rolled oats can be placed in a muslin bag under a hot water faucet as the bath fills.

Alfalfa

Alfalfa is high in Vitamins K, D, E, and B complex, as well as biotin, calcium, folic acid, iron, magnesium, potassium. It is high in protein and functions as a nutritive and cell builder. This herb helps to restore nutrition to the body and provide minerals that help muscles and nerves to function correctly. It can be taken as an infusion by itself or with the other herbs listed here.

Contraindications: Hypersensitivity, autoimmune diseases, anticoagulant medications, and gout.

Yellow dock

Yellow dock provides a non-constipating and easily-absorbable source of iron, which is important during pregnancy. It is also a good source of calcium, zinc, chromium, and

magnesium. This herb can help prevent and treat iron-deficiency anemia (a common cause for RLS) and provide the essential minerals needed to help nerves and muscles function properly (specifically calcium and magnesium). Take as a tincture (follow directions on bottle), as an infusion (follow the steps for oatstraw or nettles infusion), or as a syrup (see below).

Contraindications: Care should be taken if one is prone to developing kidney stones. Do not consume if you take warfarin or water pills.

Yellow Dock Syrup*

Ingredients

- ½ ounce dried dandelion root
- ½ ounce dried yellow dock root
- ½ cup blackstrap molasses

Directions

- Put the roots in a quart jar and cover with boiling water.
- Let sit for 4-8 hours or so
- Strain and simmer off until 1 cup of liquid infusion remains.
- Add this to the blackstrap molasses while still heating, then remove from heat.
- Store in the refrigerator.
- Dose is 1-2 TBSP daily
- Take it with 250 mg. Of Vitamin C for best absorption.
- Keeps in the refrigerator for at least several weeks.

*From Aviva Romm: [Anemia: A Commonly Overlooked Cause of Fatigue - Aviva Romm MD](#)

Other Helpful Suggestions

1. Take calcium (800 mg), magnesium (400 mg), vitamin D, folate, and iron supplements (check with midwife first)
2. Gentle exercise, such as walking or swimming
3. Take a warm, soothing bath (with Epsom Salts and/or lavender essential oil) or apply warm compresses to the area
4. Apply magnesium lotion to legs
5. Drink raw green juice made with celery, cucumber, lemon, green apple, and kale/collard greens (provides essential vitamins and minerals, brings balance and calm to the body)