



*Center for Women's Health*

## **For Your Information - Part I**

### **Did You Know?**

During pregnancy many changes occur throughout your body to support the growth and development of your baby and help prepare for labor. Hormones cause most of these changes-chemical substances secreted into the bloodstream by your endocrine glands and the placenta. You may not notice many of these pregnancy changes, some may cause interest, others concern, and still others discomfort.

Breast tenderness and enlargement is usually one of the earliest discomforts of pregnancy and can be bothersome throughout the whole pregnancy. This symptom occurs because your milk glands enlarge and there is an increase in fatty tissue. By the end of the fourth month you may even be able to express a thin, watery fluid from your nipples which varies in color from clear to orange. This fluid is known as **colostrum** and is a forerunner of milk. A well fitting, supportive cotton bra with wide, non-stretch straps is usually effective in relieving breast discomfort. Ice packs and Tylenol may give some relief also.

Abdominal discomfort occurs often throughout pregnancy and can be caused by several different factors. Some are a normal part of pregnancy while other pain may signal a problem. Among the normal discomforts of pregnancy is mild, aching pain or tenderness low in the abdomen which is caused by a cyst in your ovary where the egg was formed. This discomfort will disappear as the pregnancy progresses. You also may notice some cramping discomfort as the uterus enlarges to accommodate your growing baby. However, if vaginal spotting or bleeding accompanies this cramping, please call the office. **If pain is severe, associated with nausea, vomiting, jaundice, pain or burning urination, fever or chills, you should call the office.**

Mood swings are especially common during the first 3 months of pregnancy in response to the hormone changes mentioned above. These mood swings can take the form of crying more easily and being more irritable, especially toward your partner or children. These emotional symptoms seem to be less severe if you are getting enough rest and talking with your partner regularly.

Fatigue is very common in early pregnancy. Most people find they need extra rest and even a nap during the first few months of pregnancy. Energy usually gets better about 20 weeks.

**Please report the following symptoms: vaginal spotting/bleeding, persistent vomiting for more than 24 hours, fever of 101 or greater that is unrelieved by Tylenol, pain or burning with urination, or a feeling of incomplete emptying of your bladder.**