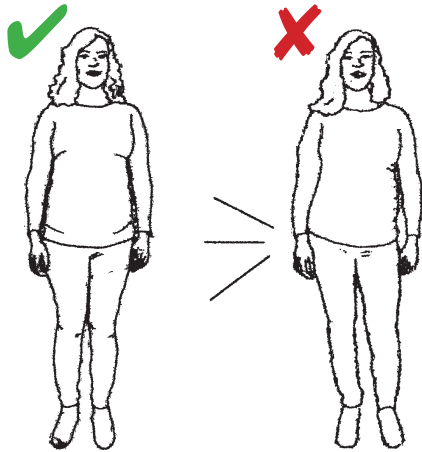


Care of yourself while pregnant

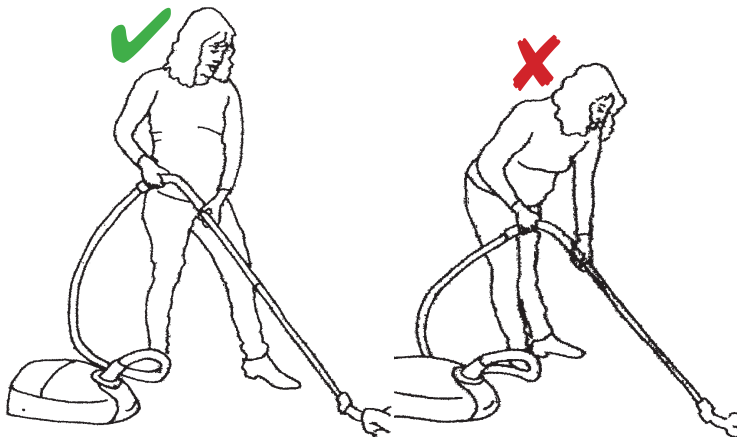
Back care

Standing:

Always weight bear evenly on both legs



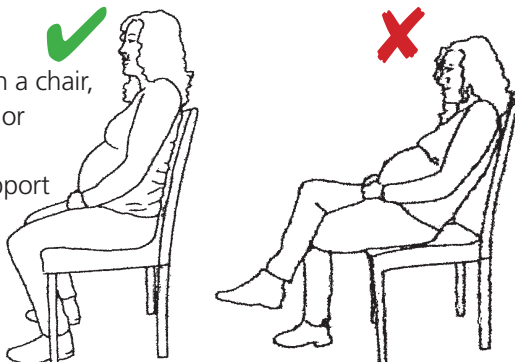
Vacuuming:



Avoid vacuuming with a barrel vacuum cleaner, as this encourages stooping. If you have to vacuum, do so with a straight back.

Sitting:

Sit correctly on a chair, use a cushion or lumbar roll if needed to support your back.



Lifting:

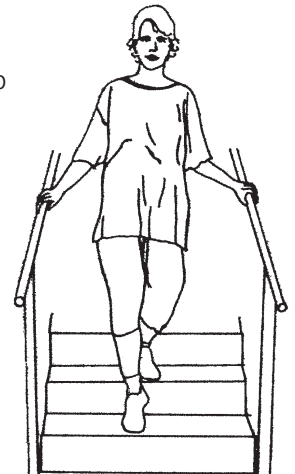
Always bend your knees, not your back. Hold the object you are lifting close to your body. **Avoid** twisting. Do not lift or carry heavy loads.



Work at the correct height: Place the laundry basket on a bench or chair in the laundry and at the clothesline, or use a laundry trolley

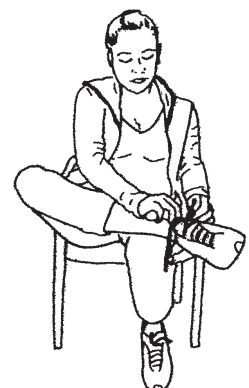
Avoid

Where possible **avoid** climbing up or down ladders, stairs and hills.



Sit down to dress and undress your lower half/legs

For low tasks/housework or playing with toddler – sit on a low stool.



Care of your legs:

1. Avoid standing still. Sit on a high stool to rest your legs eg. ironing, food preparation.
2. Wear support stockings if your legs ache.
3. Slippers and thongs are not good for your feet. Wear flat, supportive shoes. Sandals should have a heel strap.
4. Lie on your side for ½ to 1 hour during the day.
5. Moderate exercise and walking encourages good circulation and less leg cramps.
6. When sitting, do not elevate your feet on a chair, instead use a low footstool, bend and stretch your ankles 10x/hour, to encourage good circulation.

If you have **varicose veins** in your legs: rest every day, lying on your side.

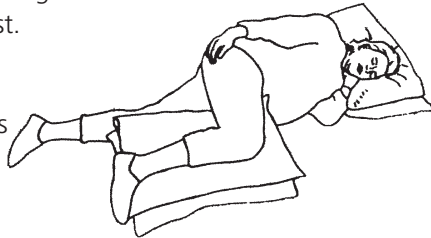
Put support stockings on before you get out of bed or immediately after your shower.

Relaxation during the day

½ to 1 hour relaxation during the day is important, especially if you are working or have a toddler. Lying on your side is best.

This helps to:

1. prevent varicose veins
2. prevent backache
3. lessen fatigue
4. relieve the strain of pregnancy on abdominal and pelvic floor muscles.



Relaxing daily will also help you prepare for labour.

Sleeping at night

1. From 28 weeks of pregnancy, always begin your sleep on your side.
2. When your tummy is bigger or you have backache, you may find 2 pillows under your upper leg more comfortable.

3. If it is uncomfortable to turn over in bed, roll with your knees bent together, move legs and shoulders together to avoid twisting your back.
4. Roll onto your side to get out of bed.
5. The relaxation skills you have learned in Antenatal Classes are life skills to help you fall asleep more easily.

Varicose veins in your pelvic floor area

1. Rest daily, lying down rather than sitting. Support with a sanitary pad may help. Cold compresses reduce pain.
2. Try pelvic floor exercises for extra relief.
3. Avoid any straining such as lifting heavy objects, or on the toilet.

Caring for your toddler

Lifting your toddler in and out of their high chair, bath, cot, pusher or car seat strains your back and pelvic floor. Try to work out ways to avoid lifting.

- eg. 1. When your toddler wants to be picked up, sit down and let them climb onto your lap.
2. Ask your toddler (if they are old enough) to climb in and out of the bath, pusher or car seat, giving assistance as required.
 3. If they need comforting, squat beside them for a cuddle, to avoid lifting



For more information

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This document has been reviewed and endorsed by consumers.