

## **Sleeping on Your Back While Pregnant**

Women have been taught that sleeping on their backs when pregnant is dangerous for their babies. Not to worry moms! When you wake up on your back, have you ever thought about why you woke up?

When a pregnant woman lies on her back, the weight of the uterus compresses the major vessels (aorta or vena cava) against the spine and cuts off some of the blood flow to the uterus. It may decrease some of the blood flow of oxygen and nutrients to the baby. It causes symptoms in the mom too. She may feel nauseated or dizzy.

Amazingly, even while asleep, the brain notices when it isn't getting enough blood and wakes you up to tell you to roll over. Your brain does this so quickly that no damage is done to mother or baby.

While you are awake, you can ignore this and stay on your back. This is why you are taught to put a pillow/ blanket/ rolled towel under your hip. The pillow will keep you tilted just enough to avoid the vessel compression. It doesn't take much tilt to fix the problem. At night, the pillow or roll can give extra back support for comfort too. So don't lose sleep over it!

**Deb Flansburg**

NP/Midwife

Budge OB/GYN clinic