

NAUSEA & VOMITING IN PREGNANCY

Nausea and vomiting in pregnancy is a real physical problem. In most cases it is not “just in your head”. Women experience this problem in varying degrees. The same women may also have different experiences in succeeding pregnancies with nausea..

What causes morning sickness? At this time we are still not sure. Nausea does seem to follow the rise and fall of hormone called hCG; this is the hormone we test for in a pregnancy test. It helps to maintain the early pregnancy. As it decreases at the end of the first trimester nausea improves.

Nausea has also been attributed to low levels of vitamin B6. Early pregnancy can be a stressful time and increasing B6 may be helpful.

What can be done to relieve nausea and prevent vomiting? We have compiled a list of suggestions we have found helpful in the past. Remember, each woman is an individual - what works for one may not work for another. Listen to your body and eat the kinds of foods that make you feel best.

Suggestions for diet:

1. The most important rule is to eat small amounts often – even if you are not hungry. Never go more than three hours without eating during the day or 10 hours at night. An empty stomach triggers nausea.
2. Eat slowly and avoid foods that are spicy or high in fat. These are difficult to digest. Do not overfill your stomach.
3. Avoid beverages or soups with meals. Drink fruit juices, water and milk between meals. Use carbonated beverages sparingly.
4. Eat a few crackers, dry toast or vanilla wafers before rising in the morning. Stay in bed 15-20 minutes after eating and then get up slowly. Give yourself extra time in the morning.
5. Do not brush your teeth until you have been up for awhile.
6. Do not skip breakfast.
7. Have a snack at bedtime that includes both carbohydrates and protein – i.e. peanut butter toast.
8. A specific food or drink may trigger nausea in one woman and alleviate it in another. Milk is a good example of this. Find out what works best for you and eliminate those foods that cause nausea.
9. Most women tolerate ice cold drinks and foods best. Sherbet, fruit juices and colas are good examples. **Do not drink diet pop.**
10. Avoid coffee and products containing caffeine; it increases stomach acid.
11. Avoid smoking, it also increases stomach acid.
12. Ginger – i.e. ginger-ale, ginger snaps, fresh peeled ginger to suck on, grated ginger steeped in hot water for tea, or ginger candy.

13. Sea Bands – works like acupuncture, also used for motion sickness (available at some pharmacies).

REST

Your body requires more sleep in early pregnancy. Try and get ten hours of sleep at night and a short nap during the day. Being tired does often trigger nausea. If you find nausea is worse in the evening, try taking a nap before dinner.

EXERCISE

Energy levels are normally low in early pregnancy and exercise may be the last thing you'd think of to relieve nausea. Getting out and walking briskly for 30 minutes each day will increase metabolism, relieve stress and psychologically improve your outlook. Your heart rate should stay under 140 beats per minute.

VITAMINS

Vitamin B6 and vitamin C may improve nausea. There have been no definite studies to prove this effective, but some women do note improvement.

To prevent nausea take 50mg vitamin B6/day.

If experiencing nausea take: 50mg vitamin B6/meal.

Take 500mg vitamin C daily.

Yogurt is a good source of the B vitamins.

MEDICATION

Emetrol – This is a medication you can buy over the counter at your drug store. It is safe to use because it acts directly to relax the stomach and is not absorbed into the blood stream. For morning sickness, take one or two tablespoons on arising. Repeat this every three hours or whenever nausea or vomiting occurs.

Unisom – Sleep aide, try ½ tablet at bedtime, then take ½ tablet in the a.m. and ½ tablet in the p.m.

Do not take any other medication without consulting your doctor.

Inform your doctor if:

1. You are vomiting more than three times a day.
2. You cannot keep liquids down.
3. You are losing weight.
4. You are running a temperature.

Remember, nausea will improve as the pregnancy progresses. By 12-14 weeks you will begin noticing more good days than bad. Generally, in the middle months, the majority of women report more energy and no nausea.

