

NAUSEA AND 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 woman may also have different experiences in succeeding pregnancies. Some experience “morning sickness”, but it is not uncommon to experience nausea only in the evening or all day long.

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

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 be the answer 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. Try not to 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. Drink fruit juices, water, and milk between meals.
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 a while.
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 and fruit juices are good examples.
10. Avoid coffee and products containing caffeine, it increases stomach acid.
11. Avoid smoking, it also increases stomach acid.

REST

Your body requires more sleep in early pregnancy. Try and get plenty 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, but getting out and walking briskly for 30 minutes each day will increase metabolism, relieve stress and psychologically improve your outlook.

VITAMINS

Vitamins 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 50 mg vitamin B6/day.
- *If experiencing nausea, take 50 mg vitamin B6/meal. (Not to take more than 3 a day or take 25 mg (or ½ tablet) every 3 hours).
- *Take 500 mg vitamin C daily.
- *Yogurt is a good source of the B vitamin.
- *If taking your prenatal vitamin increases or causes nausea, stop for 7-10 days then try again.

MEDICATION

Unisom taken as directed, may be used with vitamin B6.
Do not take any other medication without consulting your doctor.

INFORM YOUR DOCTOR IF:

1. You cannot keep any solid food down for 24 hours.
2. You cannot keep liquids down.
3. You are losing weight.
4. You are running a temperature greater than 100°.

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.