

MORNING SICKNESS

Nausea and vomiting are common during pregnancy, especially during the first part of pregnancy. This is often called "morning sickness," although it can occur at any time of the day.

Most cases of nausea and vomiting are not harmful. However, when nausea and vomiting are severe and persist, they can affect your health. This pamphlet will help you learn more about

- nausea and vomiting that is normal during pregnancy
- how nausea and vomiting can be relieved
- when treatment is needed

What Causes Nausea?

While you are pregnant, nausea and vomiting can occur as your body goes through many changes. Although no one is certain what causes the nausea and vomiting, increasing levels of **hormones** during pregnancy may play a role. In most women, symptoms of nausea and vomiting are mild and go away after the middle of pregnancy. But, some cases of nausea and vomiting are severe. This condition is called **hyperemesis gravidarum**. It can lead to loss of weight and body fluids.

Effects on Pregnancy

Most mild cases of nausea and vomiting do not harm you or your baby's health. Morning sickness does not mean your baby is sick. It can become more of a problem if you cannot keep any foods or fluids down and begin to lose weight. If your nausea and vomiting are severe, call your doctor.

What You Can Do

There is no sure way to prevent morning sickness. However, studies have shown that women who are taking a multivitamin regularly at the time of conception are less likely to have severe cases of morning sickness.

If you experience morning sickness, there are some things you can do that might help you feel better:

- Get plenty of rest.
- Avoid smells that bother you.
- Eat five or six small meals each day instead of three large meals.
- Avoid spicy foods and fatty foods.
- Eat crackers before you get out of bed in the morning.

Ginger, acupuncture, motion sickness bands, or hypnosis also may help relieve symptoms. Talk with your doctor before taking any medication or trying any treatment.

When to Call Your Doctor

You should call your doctor if you have any of the following problems:

- You have a small amount of urine and it is dark in color.
- You cannot keep down liquids.
- You are dizzy or faint when standing up.
- You have a racing or pounding heart.
- You vomit blood.

Medical Treatment

If your nausea and vomiting are severe, you may need medical treatment. Your doctor may suggest vitamin B₆, doxylamine, or anti-nausea medications. In severe cases, this treatment has been shown to help reduce the number of times a woman vomits. If your doctor suspects that you have hyperemesis gravidarum, you may need to receive fluids through an intravenous (IV) line and stay in the hospital for a while.

Finally...

During pregnancy your body goes through many changes. Nausea and vomiting are common during the first part of pregnancy. While your body adjusts to these changes, you may find some relief if you follow the tips given here. Call your doctor right away if your nausea and vomiting become severe.

Glossary

Hormones: Substances produced by the body to control the functions of various organs.

Hyperemesis Gravidarum: Severe nausea and vomiting during pregnancy that can lead to loss of weight and body fluids.