

## Nausea and Vomiting during Pregnancy

### What Is "Morning Sickness"?

Nausea (feeling like vomiting) and vomiting are common, especially during the early months of pregnancy. It generally occurs in the morning, so it is often called "morning sickness". It occurs between the 6<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> weeks of pregnancy but can persist for a longer period.

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### Are Nausea And Vomiting Common During Early Pregnancy?

Most women have at least mild nausea and vomiting during the early months of pregnancy. Most cases of nausea and vomiting are not harmful but if it is severe and persists, can affect the health of the mother-to-be and baby.

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### What Are The Causes Of Nausea And Vomiting In Early Pregnancy?

The exact reason is not known but combination of the many physical changes taking place in the body such as the higher levels of or changes in hormones during early pregnancy, link between pregnancy and relaxation of the stomach muscle fibres or changes in chemicals like serotonin can cause nausea or vomiting. Some women are more sensitive to these changes than others.

For some women, stress may make the nausea and vomiting worse. Patients with multiple pregnancies (twins or triplets) have higher levels of certain hormones and are more likely to have vomiting during pregnancy.

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### Are There Things I Can Do To Make Myself Feel Better?

There are many comfort measures to help pregnant women who suffer from nausea and vomiting during early pregnancy. Changes in diet, sleep pattern and lifestyle can help.

Few suggestions are given below:-

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#### ► Changes in Diet

- Eat bland foods that are high in carbohydrates and low in fat such as toast, bread, rice, cereal, crackers and potatoes.
- Eat foods that are high in protein such as lean meats, eggs, and dishes made with dried beans and pulses.

- Eat food high in Vitamin B6 like whole grains and cereals, wheat germ, nuts, seeds, legumes, corn.
- Avoid greasy, fatty, fried and spicy foods.
- Drink 8-10 glasses of liquids such as water, coconut water, buttermilk, milk and diluted fruit juice. Drink small amounts at a time.
- Avoid excess of tea, coffee and aerated drinks.
- Do not drink alcohol.
- Try to eat every 2 to 3 hours, even if you are not hungry. Toast and dry biscuits can also help. Have small frequent meals than large meals.
- Have a snack such as yogurt, milk, or a small sandwich before going to bed.
- Suck on candies and sweets or ice after consulting your doctor.
- Sniffing lemon or ginger can sometimes relieve nausea.
- In case you have nausea and/or vomiting in the evening, have a good meal in the morning and a light meal at night and vice versa.

### ► Changes in Lifestyle

- Get up slowly from lying down position and do not lie down immediately after eating.
- Keep your head higher than your feet when lying down.
- Go outside for fresh air as much as possible.
- Do not smoke cigarettes. Ask other people not to smoke around you.
- If you are taking any medications after which you feel like vomiting, consult your doctor.
- Rest or nap often.
- Identify conditions which make vomiting worse, such as certain foods, odours, activities or stress and avoid them.
- Wait about an hour after dinner to brush your teeth.

## When Should I Call My Doctor?

Call your doctor right away if you:

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- Have been vomiting for almost 24 hours.
  - Have stomach pain, fever, dizziness, severe weakness or feel faint.
  - Have weight loss of more than 2 - 5 kgs.
  - Have very dark yellow urine or do not urinate for long periods.
  - Feel your mouth is dry and your hands and feet are cold.
  - Feel very thirsty.
  - Have a fast heartbeat.
  - Vomit blood.

## Can I Take Any Medication For Nausea And Vomiting?

- Do Not Take Any Medication Without Consulting Your Doctor!
- If your nausea and vomiting are severe, you may need medical treatment. Your doctor may suggest vitamin B6, doxylamine, or anti-nausea medications to reduce your vomiting. If you have severe nausea and vomiting, it can lead to loss of weight and body fluids (hyperemesis gravidarum) and you may need to be hospitalized and receive fluids through an intravenous (IV) line.
- No one method works for every mother-to-be. Be patient; chances are that your nausea will end by 12 to 14 weeks and looking

back it will only be a dim memory by the time your baby arrives.

Rating:



Your rating: None

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