

Coping with Nausea and Vomiting in Pregnancy

Nausea and vomiting are two common complaints of early pregnancy. The exact cause is unknown, but many factors add to this problem. Increased hormones affect areas in the brain that deal with nausea and vomiting. Other factors may be low blood sugar and the effect of pregnancy hormones on stomach emptying. While it is a hard part of early pregnancy, it is a sign that your body is going through some normal changes.

Helpful Tips

- Eat small amounts of food every 2-3 hours.
- Eat low fat, high protein foods (lean meat, skinless poultry, eggs, broiled or boiled fish, mozzarella or string cheese) and carbohydrates that are easy to digest (fruit, fruit juices, rice, pasta, potatoes, dry cereals, toast or crackers). This will help avoid low blood sugar.
- Drink liquids between meals rather than with meals.
- Avoid milk or use it in small amounts.
- Eat lightly seasoned foods; salt to taste.
- Sit upright after meals to lessen gastric reflux.
- Have a snack before going to bed.
- Before getting out of bed in the morning eat a piece of bread, a few crackers, some cheese, or nuts.
- Get out of bed slowly and avoid sudden movements.
- Avoid brushing teeth right after eating.
- Slowly sip a carbonated drink or water when feeling nauseous.
- When cooking, open windows or use the exhaust fan to get rid of odors.
- Drink ginger root and peppermint teas. Avoid chamomile and green teas.
- Take ginger capsules 4 times a day.
- Take vitamin B6 25-50 mg up to three times daily and Unisom 12.5 mg at bedtime. Unisom makes two sleep aids and we want you to take doxylamine not diphenhydramine. You may add vitamin B6 25 mg and Unisom 12.5 mg during the morning or evening. Be careful about driving as the Unisom may make you sleepy.
- Take prenatal vitamins at dinner or not at all for a short time if they make your nausea worse. Check with your doctor or midwife before stopping them.
- Take papaya enzyme, a natural aid, to help digest food.
- Sea Bands can be helpful. You wear these on the wrist and apply pressure on a point on the underside of the wrist.
- Try a BRAT diet (bananas, rice, applesauce, toast).

When to Call

If your nausea persists and you vomit often, please call your midwife or doctor. You may be at risk for dehydration, weight loss, and poor nutrition. We can give you prescription medicines to help you feel better.

Your health care team may have given you this information as part of your care. If so, please use it and call if you have any questions. If this information was not given to you as part of your care, please check with your doctor. This is not medical advice. This is not to be used for diagnosis or treatment of any medical condition. Because each person's health needs are different, you should talk with your doctor or others on your health care team when using this information. If you have an emergency, please call 911. Copyright © 11/2019 University of Wisconsin Hospitals & Clinics Authority, All Rights Reserved. Produced by the Department of Nursing. HF#5457.