

NAUSEA & VOMITING DURING PREGNANCY (NVP)

(Morning Sickness in Pregnancy)



BASIC INFORMATION

DESCRIPTION

50% to 80% of pregnant women suffer from nausea and vomiting in pregnancy. The symptoms often occur in the morning (from 6-9 am), but may occur at any time during the day. The impact of the nausea and vomiting is different for each woman.

FREQUENT SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

- Mild to severe nausea with or without vomiting usually during the first 12 to 14 weeks of pregnancy. It may continue longer, and for a few women, last throughout pregnancy. By the end of the third month, most women stop feeling outright nauseated.
- Continued queasiness or mild nausea can come and go throughout pregnancy.

CAUSES

Exact causes of nausea and vomiting during pregnancy are unknown. Nausea may result from rising levels of human chorionic gonadotrophin in the blood or other hormonal changes that take place to permit normal growth of the fetus.

RISK INCREASES WITH

Multiple gestation.

PREVENTIVE MEASURES

Do not let your stomach get empty; eat something every 2 hours if necessary.

EXPECTED OUTCOME

Morning sickness usually stops after the first 3 to 4 months of pregnancy. Your baby's well-being is not affected as long as you're able to keep food down, eat a well-balanced diet, and drink plenty of fluids.

POSSIBLE COMPLICATIONS

Hyperemesis gravidarum, a condition of pregnancy characterized by severe nausea, vomiting, weight loss and electrolyte disturbance (rare).



TREATMENT

GENERAL MEASURES

- Try to identify the particular odors or foods that are most upsetting and avoid them. Many pregnant women figure out what they can and cannot stomach, and how many times they need to eat throughout the day.
- Keep rooms well-ventilated to prevent accumulation of cooking odors or cigarette smoke.
- Don't smoke, and ask your family and friends not to smoke while you are experiencing morning sickness.
- Keep a positive attitude. If you have conflicts that you cannot resolve, ask for help from family, friends or professional counselors.

- Keep a daily record of your weight.
- Try acupressure bands. You can find these soft cotton wristbands at drugstores.
- Consider getting a device that regularly stimulates the underside of your wrist with a mild electric current. The devices are safe and seem to work well for some women. One or more of these devices allow you to adjust the amount of stimulation (e.g., ReliefBand Device).
- Acupuncture may be an effective treatment option for some women.

MEDICATION

- The symptoms of morning sickness, while rarely dangerous, can cause discomfort and temporary disability. Medicine is usually not prescribed for this disorder, but if the symptoms are severe, your obstetric provider may prescribe certain drugs for the nausea.
- Over-the-counter remedies (oral or rectal suppositories) may ease the problem, but don't take any medications during pregnancy without medical advice.
- A trial of vitamin B-6 may be recommended, which appears safe at the present.
- If taking your pregnancy vitamin pill causes nausea, ask your obstetric provider about discontinuing it for a period of time.

ACTIVITY

No restrictions. Resting in a dark and quiet room provides some relief for most patients.

DIET

The following may help minimize nausea:

- Place a small, quick-energy snack, such as soda crackers, at your bedside. Eat it before getting up in the morning.
- Eat a small snack at bedtime and when you get up to go to the bathroom during the night.
- Eat a snack as often as every hour or two during the day. Avoid large meals. Snacks should consist of high-protein foods, such as: peanut butter on apple slices or celery; nuts; a quarter-sandwich; cheese and crackers; milk; cottage cheese; yogurt sprinkled with granola; and turkey or chicken slices. Avoid foods that are high in fat and salt and low in nutrition.
- Drink ginger ale or ginger tea. Ginger is known to settle the stomach and help queasiness. Be sure the beverage you choose is made with real ginger.



NOTIFY OUR OFFICE IF

- You have morning sickness that does not improve, despite the self-help measures.
- You vomit blood or material that resembles coffee grounds.
- Abdominal pain, cramping, or fever occurs.
- You lose more than 1 or 2 pounds.