

Suggestions for Nausea Control

Nausea and vomiting are a normal part of early pregnancy. Nausea (the "sick" feeling that one may experience before vomiting) may start within the first 6-7 weeks of pregnancy but seldom continues beyond 12 weeks, or the end of the first trimester. It is often called morning sickness because many women notice the symptoms upon waking in the morning. However, nausea may occur at any time of the day. The severity of symptoms will vary from day to day and vomiting may or may not occur.

Nausea and vomiting become a problem if a woman is unable to maintain a good intake of fluids and food daily. Never take prescription drugs, over-the-counter medicines or home remedies unless recommended by your health care provider. Contact your health care provider if:

- Nausea is persisting all day and prevents the recommended intake of fluids and food
- Vomiting is persistent for several hours and you are unable to retain fluids
- Urine amounts decrease, mouth becomes dry or you are feeling weak or light headed, or develop a severe headache (signs of dehydration) or weight loss
- Nausea or vomiting persisting after 12 weeks.

The following suggestions may help to reduce nausea. The effectiveness of these suggestions will vary for each individual and some may help more than others.

- At night, place dry cereal or crackers at the bedside with some jam or jelly. In the morning, before rising, eat the cereal or crackers and jam slowly. Stay in bed for 20-30 minutes and then sit up on the side of the bed. Move slowly and avoid unnecessary bending while dressing. Allow extra time in your morning schedule to avoid rushing around and becoming anxious.
- Maintain a cooler than normal temperature in the bedroom.
- Eat five small meals a day instead of three large meals. You may find that eating primarily solid foods early in the day helps. Chew foods well and eat slowly.
- It is important to maintain a fluid intake of 7-8, 8 oz. glasses of water daily. Drink fluids in 3-4 oz. increments. If nauseated, try sipping on flat carbonated beverages, sweetened tea, sport drinks, Popsicles or Jell-O. Some find fluids more tolerable at room temperature. Taking liquids between meals instead of with your food may also help.
- Food odors may be bothersome. Use the oven, cover cooking pots, use the ventilation fan, and avoid frying foods. Omit foods that are particularly bothersome. Ask someone else to cook.
- Fat, oil and mayonnaise may cause nausea. Try jam, jelly or honey on toast and bread; limit butter or margarine use in cooking and use small amounts of salad dressings. Avoid fried, greasy or highly spiced foods.
- Fresh air often helps. Go outside for a walk or to sit quietly when feeling nauseated.
- Open the windows frequently to reduce household odors.
- Try taking your prenatal vitamins at a time of day when you normally do not feel nauseated and take it with a meal. If nausea is severe on a particular day it is acceptable to skip the vitamin occasionally.
- If nausea is still a problem, despite the above suggestions, try Vitamin B-6 (pyridoxine), 50 mg. twice daily.
- If vomiting has occurred, rest quietly and wait approximately 30 minutes before trying to take any fluids or food. Start with ice chips, Popsicles or sips of flat carbonated beverages every 10-15 minutes (avoid water initially). When that is tolerated, try some toast, crackers or perhaps a cereal bar. Gradually return to your normal fluid and food intake. If vomiting persists, contact your health care provider.

If you are a registered University of Illinois student and you have questions or concerns, or need to make an appointment, please call: **Dial-A-Nurse at 333-2700**

If you are concerned about any difference in your treatment plan and the information in this handout, you are advised to contact your health care provider.

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