

MORNING SICKNESS DURING PREGNANCY



BASIC INFORMATION

DESCRIPTION

Nausea during pregnancy. This usually occurs in the morning, but may occur at any time. Most pregnant women experience at least mild morning sickness.

FREQUENT SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

Mild to severe nausea with or without vomiting usually during the first 12 to 14 weeks of pregnancy, but may continue throughout pregnancy.

CAUSES

- Major hormonal changes that take place to permit normal growth of the fetus. Progesterone and other hormones cause involuntary muscles to relax, probably slowing movement of food through the stomach and intestines. They may also affect the vomiting center in the brain.
- In addition, blood sugar is lower during early pregnancy in many women, contributing to gastrointestinal upsets.

RISK

Unknown.

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.

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.
- Keep rooms well-ventilated to prevent accumulation of cooking odors or cigarette smoke.
- Don't smoke cigarettes, 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.

MEDICATION

Medicine is usually not necessary for this disorder. 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.

ACTIVITY

No restrictions.

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.



NOTIFY OUR OFFICE IF

- You have morning sickness that does not improve, despite the above measures.
- You vomit blood or material that resembles coffee grounds.
- You lose more than 1 or 2 pounds.