Vomiting During Pregnancy

Treatment

If your symptoms are not severe and you have not already done so, your health care provider may suggest you try the home care treatments. If you have tried these and are still vomiting, your health care provider may suggest fluids be given to you with an IV. Often these fluids contain sugar as well as electrolytes. Many times fluid intake alone (IV or oral) can break the cycle of nausea and vomiting and temporarily make you feel much better.

Self-Care at Home

As miserable as it may seem, nausea and vomiting are usually part of a healthy pregnancy. The misery typically goes away by the middle of the second trimester. You can try home remedies to reduce your symptoms, and if these do not work, your doctor can help.

No single treatment works best for every woman with nausea and vomiting during pregnancy. Different techniques work for different women. You will have to discover what seems to make your symptoms better. Many women have found the following suggestions helpful:

- Diet
  - Eat small amounts of food frequently so that you are never too hungry or too full.
  - Avoid spicy and fatty foods and foods with odors that bother you.
  - Try eating simple carbohydrates, such as saltine crackers, unbuttered toast, plain baked potatoes, white rice, gelatin desserts, broth, pretzels, popsicles, herbal or decaffeinated tea with sugar, or nondiet ginger ale.
  - Combine these simple carbohydrates with a serving of protein, especially right before bed, to minimize swings in blood sugar that may contribute to nausea.

- Vitamin supplements
If you find that your prenatal vitamin seems to worsen your nausea, take it with food instead of on an empty stomach. If this does not help, talk to your doctor about the possibility of switching to a different vitamin. Chewable vitamins are easier to tolerate.

Some evidence suggests that pyridoxine (vitamin B-6) supplements help reduce nausea and vomiting. The suggested dose is 25-50 mg every 8 hours, and it can be given as an injection up to 200 mg. There are no known harmful effects of vitamin B-6 taken at these doses. Some prenatal vitamins are formulated with extra vitamin B-6.

- Acupressure
  - Stimulation of the P6 (Nei Guan) acupressure point on the wrist (on the inside of the wrist about where a watchband is worn) has been suggested as a method to reduce nausea and vomiting.
  - You can press on this area with your finger or thumb or buy an acupressure band. These bands are often sold as motion sickness treatments, so check with a local drug store or auto club.

- Hypnosis
  - Medical hypnosis has been used to reduce nausea and vomiting.
  - Some women have also used self-hypnosis to control their symptoms.
  - If you want to try hypnosis, make sure you work with an experienced professional.

- Over-the-counter medications
  - Solutions containing glucose, fructose, and phosphoric acid are available over-the-counter. These solutions may reduce muscle contractions in the wall of the stomach and intestines. The normal dose is 1-2 tablespoons every 15 minutes for no more than 5 doses. These solutions cause no known harmful effects on the fetus.
  - Two over-the-counter antihistamines, diphenhydramine (Benadryl) and dimenhydrinate (Dramamine), have been shown to improve nausea and vomiting. Although both are generally believed to be safe in pregnancy, you should discuss the risks and benefits of these medications with your doctor.

- Herbal remedies
  - Powdered ginger is used fairly commonly in Europe as a nausea remedy during pregnancy.
  - The usual dose is 250 mg, 3 times daily.
  - The effect of ginger on the fetus has not been extensively studied.

Medical Treatment

- Your health care provider will try to stop the vomiting either by hydration (giving fluids by IV or by mouth) or with medications.
You will be given plenty of fluids to replace important electrolytes such as potassium. You also may receive thiamine (vitamin B-1) either as an injection or IV, depending how long you have been vomiting. Once these goals are met, you may be given antinausea medications and instructions for care at home. If you continue to be severely dehydrated, still nauseous, or still vomiting, you may be admitted to the hospital. Rarely, you may need to be hospitalized for fluid and nutritional supplements in very severe cases of hyperemesis gravidarum.

more information from eMedicineHealth

- When to Seek Medical Care
- Exams and Tests
- Next Steps
- Prevention
- Outlook


WebMD Medical Reference from eMedicineHealth
Reviewed by Charlotte Grayson, MD on May 24, 2006
Last updated: May 24, 2006
This information is not intended to replace the advice of a doctor.
© 2006 WebMD Inc. All rights reserved.