

## Oregon Medical Group Center for Women's Health

### Help in Treating Nausea and Vomiting in Pregnancy

The hormones that increase in the first three months of pregnancy contribute to the feeling of nausea, which can lead to vomiting. But there are some things you can do that might help you feel better.

Finding out which foods may make nausea better or worse is sometimes just trial and error. Below are a few tips to get you going. Remember that an empty stomach over 1 or 2 hours may increase your nausea and chance of vomiting.

- Keep saltine crackers, oyster crackers, pretzels, dry cereal, dry bread or toast near the bedside. Wake early, eat a few crackers or alternative, and stay in bed another 20 to 40 minutes.
- If you are very nauseated in the morning, you may want to consider getting up once or twice in the night to eat food.
- Eat small frequent meals instead of 2 or 3 large meals.
- Take liquids 30 to 60 minutes after meals. Try not to mix solid and liquid foods.
- Start with a basic diet (foods that are easy to digest). Then slowly increase the type of food. Here are the best tolerated foods:
  - BRATT diet: Bananas, rice, applesauce, toast, herbal tea
  - Good to nibble on: saltines, oyster crackers, toast, toasted English muffins, pretzels, plain dry cereals, dinner rolls, popcorn without butter, vanilla wafers. Avoid sweet chewy breads.
  - Starchy foods: baked, steamed or mashed potatoes
  - Protein: turkey, chicken, ham
  - High protein snack foods: yogurt, nuts
  - Fruit: apples, applesauce, peaches, pears, plums
  - Fats: butter, margarine, sour cream in small amounts may be tolerable.
  - Avoid spicy, fried, greasy, high-fat foods.
  - Avoid things which irritate the stomach: smoking, alcohol, coffee
  - Avoid sulfur containing foods: broccoli, cauliflower, cabbage, Brussels sprouts.
- Drink small amounts of liquids frequently between meals.
  - Water alone or milk are often not tolerated well. Try water mixed with lemon, herbal tea, or juice.
  - Room temperature drinks are usually tolerated better.
  - Drink flat ginger ale, 7-Up, or cola.
  - Try a sport drink like Gatorade.
  - Try frozen liquids such as diluted juice, popsicles, slushy ice drinks or sherbet.
  - Sipping weak hot tea may help decrease nausea, especially ginger tea, peppermint, spearmint
  - Some liquid foods may increase nausea such as soup, Jell-O, fruit juice, milk
  - Chew food well, eat slowly, eat small portions, do not over drink or eat.

- Avoid sudden movements when getting out of bed. Start activities slowly, such as getting up from a chair.
- Avoid tight fitting clothes and bending when dressing.
- Avoid strong odors such as cooking odors or fragrances.
- Get plenty of fresh air. Keep bedroom cool.
- Emotional or physical stress can make nausea worse.
- Avoid taking prenatal vitamins if it makes nausea worse. Instead, a children's chewable vitamin with folic acid taken at the end of the day may help temporarily.

**If you are vomiting:**

- When able to tolerate (no set time), restart with solids or liquids. (avoid plain water)
- Solids are usually tolerated better after vomiting: try saltines, dry toast or pretzels (in small amounts).
- Start with 1 sip of liquids (see above for suggestions), wait 10 to 15 minutes, take another sip, wait again. If no vomiting, gradually increase. Avoid taking too much fluid too fast (a common error that causes continued vomiting).
- Add other solid foods as tolerated if no continued vomiting.
- Gradually resume regular diet as tolerated in 8 to 24 hours.
- If vomiting starts in the afternoon or evening, consider increasing or starting regular diet the next morning.

**Over the counter medication/devices that may help nausea in pregnancy:**

- Powdered ginger extract: 1 gram per day or capsules of 250 mg, 3 or 4 times per day. Available at health food stores. Or sip Ginger Brew, available in grocery stores.
- Vitamin B6: 25 mg, 3-4 times per day.
- "Sea Band" acupressure wristband.

Choose only one of the following at a time. All of these drugs may cause drowsiness.

- Unisom (with Doxylamine) or Dramamine, ½ or 1 tablet
- Bonine, Antivert, or Meclizine: 1 or 2 tablets once per day

**When to call the doctor:**

- If you have a small amount of urine and it is dark in color over a 24 hour period.
- If you can't keep down any liquids for 24 hours.
- If you have a persistent racing or pounding heart
- If you vomit blood