



Nausea, Constipation, and Heartburn During Pregnancy

Nausea

Nausea and vomiting affect 50-80% of women during pregnancy. It may occur 5-6 weeks into the pregnancy and persist into the 2nd trimester. If not treated, this could develop into hyperemesis gravidarum, a serious condition occurring in about 1% of pregnant women. Hyperemesis is severe vomiting which causes weight loss/dehydration and can lead to hospitalization. The body produces about 1.2 liters of saliva a day and excessive saliva production (ptyalism) may cause nausea.

Some other causes of excessive nausea and vomiting may include: a prolonged gastric emptying time and heightened olfaction or sense of smell (due to pregnancy), low blood sugar, vitamin B deficiencies, endocrine (thyroid/hormone) imbalance, multiple gestation, genetics, and psychological factors. Other causes may include viruses, hepatitis, urinary tract infection, gallbladder disease, and migraine headaches.

Effects on the fetus can be serious and may include damage to organs, the immune system and low birth weight. Since prenatal vitamins/iron may contribute to nausea, a children's chewable supplement with folate taken at the END of the day may be helpful. Other research shows ginger, acupuncture, sea bands (for motion sickness) or hypnosis may be of help. Consult with your obstetrician before taking any medication/treatment.

Prevention

- Eat a piece of bread or a few crackers before getting out of bed in the morning or when nauseated.
- Get out of bed slowly. Avoid sudden movements.
- Sit upright after meals, to reduce the frequency of gastric reflux.
- Avoid brushing teeth immediately after eating.
- Avoid excessive NOISE and SMELLS (tobacco, perfume, breath, cooking food). Try takeout food.
- Eat small amounts of food every 2-3 hours.
- Eat low-fat, easily digested foods (lean meat, poultry without skin, not fried) and carbohydrates (fruit, fruit juices, breads, cereals, rice, pasta, potatoes) which may help prevent low blood sugar, which can cause nausea.
- Drink soups and other liquids between meals, rather than with meals, so as not to overly distend the stomach and trigger vomiting. Keep hydrated.
- Eat lightly seasoned foods and salt to taste.
- Have a snack (e.g., yogurt, milk (if tolerated), juice, bread, a small sandwich) before going to bed or during the night.

Remedies

- Slowly sip a cold carbonated or sweetened beverage. **AVOID CAFFEINE.**
- Fresh air may help. Take a short walk or try sleeping with a window open. When cooking, open windows or use the exhaust fan to get rid of odors.
- Drink herbal teas (spearmint, raspberry leaf, peppermint, chamomile, ginger root).
- Try lozenges.

When to Call Your Physician (Nausea and Vomiting)

- Scant amount of dark urine
- Inability to ingest the normal 8-10 cups of fluid daily
- Dizziness upon standing up or fainting
- “Racing heart”
- Feeling cold when others are not
- Inability to think clearly

Untreated Nausea and Vomiting in Pregnancy Can Result In

- Liver, gallbladder, heart and kidney problems
- Vomiting blood from tears in the lining of the stomach
- Severe constipation and impaction
- Ruptured blood vessels in the eyes and esophagus

To Relieve Heartburn

- Eat small, low-fat meals, and eat slowly.
- Take low-fat snacks such as melba toast or fruit as needed for extra energy and nutrients.
- Drink fluids mainly between meals.
- Go easy on spices. Avoid chocolate.
- Avoid lying down for 1 to 2 hours after eating or drinking, especially before going to bed.
- Wear loose-fitting clothing.

To Relieve Constipation

- Drink 2 to 3 quarts of fluids daily. This includes water, milk, juice and soup. Warm or hot fluids are especially helpful upon arising.
- Eat high-fiber cereals and generous amounts of other whole grains, legumes, fruits, and vegetables.
- Take part in physical activities such as walking and swimming.
- Avoid taking laxatives unless recommended by your health care provider

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1800-Calorie Diet to Help Control Nausea

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	EXCHANGES	FOOD SOURCE
Before Rising	1 starch/bread	6 crackers or 1 slice bread
Breakfast	1 meat 2 starch/bread 1 fat	1 oz low-fat cheese 2 slices bread or 1 1/2 cup cereal 1 tsp margarine
A.M. Snack	1 starch/bread 1 milk	3/4 cup cereal 8 oz low-fat milk or 3/4 cup plain yogurt
Lunch	2 meats 1 vegetable 2 starch/bread 1 fat 1 fruit	1/2 cup tuna or 2 oz turkey or low-fat cheese 1 cup salad or medium tomato 2 slices bread or 1 cup pasta or 2/3 cup rice 1 tsp mayonnaise or 1 tbsp salad dressing 1/4 cantaloupe or 1 1/4 cup strawberries or small nectarine
P.M. Snack	1/2 milk 1 meat 1 starch/bread	4 oz. low-fat milk 1/2 sandwich with 1 oz. low fat meat or cheese or 2 bread sticks with 1 oz. low fat cheese
Dinner	3 meat 2 vegetables 2 starch/bread 1 fat fruit	3 oz. chicken or lean red meat, baked/broiled 1 cup cooked vegetables (not potatoes, lima beans, peas or other starch) 2 slices bread or 1 cup pasta or 2/3 cup rice 1 tsp margarine small peach
Bedtime Snack	1/2 cup milk 2 starch/bread 1 meat	4 oz. low fat milk 2 slices bread 2 tbsp peanut butter

This Information is For Educational Purposes Only
Always Consult Your Health care Provider