

NAUSEA AND VOMITING OF PREGNANCY

“Morning sickness” is a common complaint during pregnancy. The symptoms of nausea and vomiting generally begin by the 5th or 6th week of pregnancy. In 60% of women, symptoms will resolve by the 12th week and in 90% by the 16th week. In less than 1% of cases women may develop hyperemesis gravidarum, a severe case of nausea and vomiting associated with dehydration, weight loss and lab abnormalities. This condition may require hospitalization.

The following are some general guidelines for managing nausea and vomiting of pregnancy:

1) ACTIVITY:

- Rest.
- After awakening from sleep, remain in bed for 15 minutes before getting up.

2) DIET:

- Eat frequent small meals rather than 3 large meals.
- A diet high in carbohydrates (starches) is often easiest to tolerate. Try toast, crackers, rice, potatoes, etc.
- High protein meals may reduce nausea and vomiting.
- Avoid spicy or greasy foods.
- Drink a lot of fluids. Water is best, but sometimes carbonated drinks, like gingerale or 7-up, will help settle your stomach. You may need to drink fluids between meals rather than with them.
- Keep saltine crackers or similar bland food at the bedside and with you during the day. If you are nauseated upon awakening, eat some crackers, etc. before getting out of bed.
- Avoid sensory stimuli (such as smells) which make you feel worse. .

3) SUPPLEMENTS/MEDICATIONS & OTHER MEASURES:

- Vitamin B6 (Pyridoxine) 10-30 mg three times daily.
- Ginger. Try gingerale, ginger tea or a ginger supplement (250 mg three times daily).
- Unisom (over the counter sleep aid) with Doxylamine 10 mg can be effective and is safe, but will make you sleepy.
- Relief bands, seabands (wrist bands with pressure points).
- There are medications which can be prescribed by your doctor if the above measures are ineffective and nausea and vomiting are severe.

4) CONTACT YOUR DOCTOR if the following occur:

- You are unable to tolerate any food or drink due to nausea and vomiting.
- You experience worsening weakness or dizziness or if fainting/near fainting occurs.
- You are losing weight due to nausea and vomiting.
- You experience severe abdominal pain, especially right lower abdomen.
- You have fever, chills or persistent diarrhea.