

## Some more helpful hints

- Eat small amounts often. Try five or six small meals a day.
- Do not skip meals - an empty stomach can make you nauseous.
- Take time over your meals.
- Practice relaxation techniques.
- Wear loose clothing.
- Get some fresh air, sit outside in the garden and eat.
- Sit upright during your meal.
- Rest after meals but avoid lying flat. Use pillows to raise your head and shoulders.
- Chew your foods well.
- Snack on something like dry toast or salty crackers, before rising if mornings are a problem.
- Cook and freeze on a good day ready for your 'off' days.
- If possible avoid the kitchen when food is being prepared.
- Vitamin B6 supplements (10 to 25 mg three times per day) can reduce symptoms of mild to moderate nausea. Ask your doctor or midwife.
- Acupuncture, Acupressure and Hypnosis have been found useful by some women. Ask your doctor or midwife for more information if you are looking at trying these options.
- Give up cigarettes and/or avoid cigarette smoke.
- Do not take iron tablets unless prescribed by your doctor.

KEMH has Nutrition and Dietetics Departments that can offer you further help and information if you have ongoing problems. Your GP can make a referral for you or ring the hospital on (08) 9340 2222.

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Delivering a Healthy WA

# Morning Sickness

## A Simple Guide to Ease Your Discomfort

NUTRITION AND DIETETICS



## Nausea and vomiting is common during pregnancy

Nausea and vomiting affects 70 - 85 per cent of all pregnancies and often develops by week five or six. The symptoms can be worst at around nine weeks and typically improve by 16 - 18 weeks of pregnancy. However, symptoms can continue until the third trimester in 15 - 20 per cent of women and until delivery in 5 percent of women.

### Is this Morning Sickness?

Although mild pregnancy-related nausea and vomiting is often called 'morning sickness' you may feel sick at any time of day and many women (80 per cent) feel sick throughout the day. This is associated with changes in the level of hormones during pregnancy. Some women are lucky enough to not be affected by morning sickness and in others it can be severe enough to need hospitalisation.

### Will it harm my baby?

Nausea and vomiting does not impact on your chances of having a healthy pregnancy. Interestingly, women with mild nausea and vomiting during pregnancy experience fewer miscarriages and stillbirths than women without these symptoms.

A small number of women may experience more severe nausea and prolonged vomiting that requires medical attention. Please contact your midwife or doctor if you experience signs of dehydration (dark coloured urine or dizziness with standing), repeated vomiting throughout the day (especially if you see blood in the vomit), pain or cramping or weight loss over 2-3kg.

### Eating and drinking - nothing will stay down!

Although we are uncertain about the cause of nausea and vomiting in pregnancy, we do know that changing your diet may relieve your discomfort.

If you are vomiting continuously, it is very important to drink fluids, so that you do not dehydrate. Drinks that contain some sugar are better tolerated. Sip a little bit every 15 minutes.

- Try sipping lemonade, cordial, electrolyte or glucose drinks, ginger beer, mineral or soda waters.
- Suck on icy poles, frozen fruit juice, iceblocks, frozen yoghurt or frozen flavoured milks.
- Jelly may be easier to keep down.
- Avoid high acid drinks like orange juice as they can irritate your stomach.

### Using ginger to help ease nausea

There is some evidence that ginger settles the nausea associated with pregnancy. Ginger has been used in many cultures to relieve indigestion. Ginger can be taken as:

- A drink made from half a teaspoon of powdered ginger dissolved in tea.
- A warm drink made from grated ginger root in a cup of hot water.
- Ginger beer (non alcoholic).
- Crystallised or glace ginger.
- Ginger flavoured biscuit.
- Cordial: simmer a large crushed ginger root and two cups of water for 20 minutes, strain, add one tablespoon of honey, refrigerate and use this as a cordial with mineral water.

### What can I eat that will stay down?

As your vomiting lessens, try introducing drinks that are more nourishing, such as:

- Full cream or fat reduced milk (can be) mixed with soda water
- Fruit juices, vegetable juices, nectars (dilute with water if needed)
- Nutritional supplement drinks, e.g. Sustagen
- Milkshakes or fruit smoothies
- Soups - these may be better tolerated at room temperature, rather than very hot or very cold.

### Tips to help with nausea

- Eat a very small amount of carbohydrate every 30 minutes e.g.
  - small cracker biscuit
  - one tablespoon of rice, pasta or breakfast cereal
  - one teaspoon of banana or other fruit.
- Eat a small amount of carbohydrate 10 minutes before meals.
- Keep your meals small but eat more often.
- Avoid drinking during meals.

### Now I can eat small amounts

Foods low in fat may be better tolerated, as they will not remain in your stomach long enough to cause discomfort from overfilling. Try adding the following to your diet:

- Dry toast with honey/jam/vegemite
- Plain salty crackers and cheese
- Jelly and custard
- Popcorn, dry breakfast cereal
- Stewed/canned/fresh/dried fruits
- Rice/pasta/noodles
- Steamed/boiled/fresh vegetables
- Soups

### Take care!

#### These foods may upset your stomach:

- Fatty or fried foods
- Thick, creamy gravies or soups
- Overly sweet foods like chocolate, rich desserts, cakes and pastries
- Nuts, crisps
- Strong smelling vegetables
- Coffee, tea, cocoa, cola drinks
- Spicy or rich foods
- Wholemeal/ high fibre bread