



MORNING SICKNESS

GENERAL INFORMATION:

What is morning sickness? Morning sickness is nausea (upset stomach) and vomiting (throwing up) that may happen during pregnancy. It happens most often in the morning, but it can happen any time of day. Morning sickness is most common during the first 12 to 14 weeks of pregnancy. Although morning sickness is unpleasant, it is usually harmless. The nausea and vomiting of morning sickness usually goes away by the second half of pregnancy.

What causes morning sickness? It is not known for sure why pregnant women have morning sickness. Being pregnant causes changes in your hormones and blood sugar, leading to morning sickness. Morning sickness may be more likely to happen when you have an empty stomach. Stress and anxiety may make morning sickness worse. Strong odors (smells) may cause your morning sickness to start, or make it worse.

When should I seek treatment for my morning sickness? Most of the time, morning sickness does not need treatment from a caregiver. If you are vomiting too much, you may have nutrition problems or become dehydrated. Dehydration is when you lose too many body fluids. Signs of dehydration may include dizziness, urinating less, dry mouth, and cracked lips. Call your caregiver if you cannot keep foods or fluids down. Also call if you have signs of dehydration, or if you lose weight.

How can morning sickness be decreased or prevented? Do **not** use any medicines, over-the-counter drugs, vitamins, herbs, or food supplements without talking to your caregiver first. Many medicines may cause lasting harm to your baby if you take them when you are pregnant. Every pregnant woman is different. You may need to try several things before learning what decreases your symptoms. The following are safe ways for you to treat your morning sickness at home:

- **Activities:**
 - Getting fresh air may help you feel better. Take a short walk, turn on a fan, or try to sleep with the window open. When you are cooking, open windows to get rid of smells that may cause nausea.
 - Do not smoke cigarettes. Ask other people not to smoke around you.
 - Do not brush your teeth right after eating if it makes you nauseated.

- **Sleeping:**
 - Eat a small snack, such as yogurt, milk, bread, dry cereal, or a small sandwich before going to bed.
 - Keep soda crackers by your bed. Eat a few of them or a slice of bread or toast before getting out of bed in the morning. You may also need to eat during the night to keep you from being nauseated in the morning.
 - Get out of bed slowly. Sudden movements could cause you to get dizzy and nauseated.

- **Food:**
 - Try to eat smaller, more frequent meals. Eat small amounts of food every two to three hours, even if you are not hungry. Keeping food in your stomach may decrease your nausea. Eat low-fat protein foods such as lean meat and poultry (chicken or turkey) with the skin removed.
 - Eat carbohydrates that are easy to digest, such as white rice, dry toast, plain baked potato, and plain pasta.
 - Avoid fried foods, spicy foods, and other foods that cause you to feel nauseated.
 - The smell of some foods may make you feel nauseated. Avoid these foods, especially when they are being cooked.

- **Liquids:** Drink at least eight (8-ounce) cups of healthy liquids each day. Healthy liquids include milk, water, or juice. Drink them slowly and between meals. This will keep you from eating large amounts during meals, which can cause nausea and vomiting. Crushed ice or frozen ice pops may also decrease nausea. Avoid liquids that have caffeine in them such as coffee, tea, and soda pop. **Do not drink liquids that contain alcohol, such as wine, beer, and mixed drinks.**

- **Other treatments:** Other treatments your caregiver may suggest include acupressure wristbands, medicines, or nutritional supplements (such as ginger or vitamin B6). **Do not** try these treatments or other home remedies without talking to your caregiver first.