



Wenatchee Midwife Service & Childbirth Center

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Nausea in Pregnancy

Nausea, with or without vomiting, is known as morning sickness but frequently occurs at other times of day or evening. Since it is more apt to occur when the stomach is empty, nausea is usually worse in the morning. The cause of nausea in pregnancy is not known, although the rapidly-rising hormone levels in early pregnancy are believed to be a factor. There are numerous techniques to reduce nausea, which are listed below. Not all of them work for all people. These can be done individually or in combination until you find what works best for you.

- Don't let your stomach get completely empty. This is a vicious cycle: you are not hungry because you are nauseated, but if you go too long without eating, the nausea can get worse. Also, small meals are tolerated better than large ones. Eat a few bites every hour or two, spacing the total amount of food out over the day. If you get up at night to go to the bathroom, eat a little then.
- Keep some crackers, dry toast, popcorn, or other dry carbohydrate food at your bedside and eat a little before you get out of bed in the morning.
- Try to eat protein every 2-3 hours, including grabbing a small protein-rich snack in the middle of the night. Good options are nuts, hard-boiled eggs, hummus, nut butter, and cheese or yogurt.
- Avoid foods with strong or offensive odors.
- Suck on lemon drops, mint candy, ginger candy, or lifesavers.
- Peppermint tea or inhaling peppermint essential oil can settle the stomach.
- Don't drink liquids at the same sitting with solid foods. Space out small meals so that you wait 30-60 minutes after a solid meal before drinking anything.
- Sip carbonated drinks such as ginger ale, seltzer water, or mineral water.
- Ginger root capsules containing the powdered root can be purchased in health food stores. Use 800-1000mg in the morning and evening. Ginger tea or candy may also be helpful.
- The stomach secretes less acid during pregnancy. Sometimes drinking half a glass of grapefruit juice with a meal will increase the acid and allow you to digest the food more easily.
- Vitamin B6 (pyridoxine HCL) can help relieve nausea if taken in large doses. Most prenatal vitamins contain only about 5mg. Buy B6 by itself and take 100mg in the morning and 100mg at bedtime. It may turn your urine bright yellow.

- Unisom, an over-the-counter drug, comes in 20mg tablets. Take half a tablet in the morning with 100mg of vitamin B6, and a whole tablet in the evening, again with B6. It may cause drowsiness as it is also a sleep aid.
- Increasing magnesium in your diet can relieve nausea. Take up to 500mg/day of Magnesium glycinate or citrate, and soak in epsom salt baths at night. Some people also find relief from topical magnesium spray.

REMEMBER: If you go more than 24 hours without retaining any food or liquid, you should contact your midwife immediately.