



## Morning Sickness

Morning sickness is nausea or vomiting that occurs during the first 20 weeks of pregnancy. More than half of pregnant women have morning sickness during their first trimester. It usually goes away by the second trimester, when the level of pregnancy hormones in your body falls. When morning sickness is severe it is called hyperemesis gravidarum.

How does it occur?

It is not understood why some women develop hyperemesis, but certain factors such as hormones are involved. Women with high levels of pregnancy hormones tend to develop this condition and have it in subsequent pregnancies.

What are the symptoms?

The symptoms of severe morning sickness include:

- Persistent vomiting shortly after eating or drinking anything, including water
- Weight loss
- Dehydration
- Concentrated, dark colored urine
- The excitement and anticipation of the birth that makes it hard to relax you mind as well as your body
- Imbalance of chemicals in the blood

How is it diagnosed?

The doctor will review your systems and may do lab test of your blood and urine. The blood will be tested for chemical imbalance and the urine will be examined for concentration and presence of ketones (a substance that comes from the breakdown of body fat). The doctor may examine you and use more blood test to rule out other conditions that might cause vomiting.

How is it treated?

Your treatment may include both changes in diet and medications prescribed by your doctor. If your morning sickness is severe, you may need to go to the hospital for treatment that will stop you from becoming too dehydrated.

Mild sickness can be relieved by:

- Eating foods high in carbohydrates and low in fat, with no fiber
- Having frequent small snacks instead of full meals
- Eating foods that taste good to you
- Eating before you get out of bed, as movement often makes morning sickness worse
- Drinking salty fluids, such as broth, cola, and Gatorade

Some women find that drinking peppermint tea relieves their symptoms (frequent small sips prevent dehydration). Even if the liquids stay down just an hour, a lot is absorbed.

Check with you doctor or nurse before you use any health food remedies.

Moderately bad morning sickness may require:

- Medication to reduce nausea and vomiting
- Intravenous fluid treatment to relieve dehydration

The doctor will explain the side effects and risk of any medication prescribed

Severe hyperemesis may require:

- Hospitalization
- Not eating or drinking anything, then slowly introducing food into your diet
- Lab test of blood and urine
- Intravenous treatment to balance the electrolytes in your blood
- An interview with a social worker to see whether you need help at home