



Vivante Midwifery

2928 SE Hawthorne, Suite 107  
Portland, OR 97214  
Office (503) 652-8076  
Fax (503) 922-0080

## Nausea and Vomiting of Early Pregnancy

By far, one of the most common and annoying complaints of early pregnancy is nausea, with or without vomiting. Nausea and vomiting occur most frequently between the 6<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> weeks of pregnancy, and may be due to a variety of factors that work together. Some women will automatically curtail their dietary intake upon becoming nauseous in the hope of staving off further nausea. As distasteful as eating may be at this point, you must eat. Even if you throw up, you must eat again in an attempt to stabilize your blood sugar. Various strategies have been recommended by experienced practitioners to curtail and reverse the nausea cycle; what works varies from woman to woman. Here are some general suggestions:

- Eat small amounts throughout the day, before you feel hungry (this keeps the blood sugar from dropping too low before eating)
- Do not take supplements on an empty stomach
- Eating before rising from bed each morning may help
- Eat something every 2-3 hours
- Eat foods you know will settle the stomach: yogurt, cottage cheese, cereal, toast and crackers are a few suggestions. Sharp cheddar cheese may be well tolerated by some women as the sharp smell and taste increases salivation and digestion, placing less burden on the stomach
- Be sure to include many high-protein foods
- Beverages such as carbonated drinks may help initially to settle the stomach but should not be taken regularly or "lived on." Nutritious foods are really needed to turn the pattern around.
- Eat a high-protein snack before going to bed and whenever you wake in the night (waking often signifies that your blood sugar is low, even if you don't feel hungry)
- Drink to a healthy thirst, avoid dehydration. Women may find plain water more tolerable if they add lemon or if they drink it very cold.
- Moderate exercise will assist the body in mobilizing toxins and high levels of hormones through the liver and out of the body
- Avoid constipation with plenty of fluids and high-fiber foods such as fruits, vegetables and whole grains
- Multiple gestation can cause more nausea because of the larger amount of hormones from two placentas as well as the increased metabolic and nutritional demands; if suspected, investigate thoroughly so the diet can be adjusted accordingly
- Avoid spicy or greasy foods
- Eat a high complex-carbohydrate food such as crackers followed by a high-protein food 20 minutes later
- Eat an unrefined sweet food (such as fruit) followed by a high-protein food shortly afterward (the sweet will begin to bring the blood sugar up and the protein will help to stabilize it)
- Inadequate dairy intake quickly leads to burning stored fat for energy needs. This causes ketones to appear in the urine (ketonuria). This process can lead to more nausea.
- Dizziness may accompany morning sickness. Lie down with a very cold cloth across your eyes and breathe evenly and deeply until the dizziness passes. Darkening the room may also help.

In some cases, more specific measures are needed to turn nausea around. Some suggestions which have worked for various women are:

- If the vomitus looks like bile, drink a cup of water with 2 tsp salt added upon arising in the morning. Usually this will cause vomiting once, then stabilize the stomach.
- Drink Third Wind, Recharge or another natural foods brand electrolyte balance liquid before eating or when nauseous (Gatorade should be avoided since it and similar brands are full of chemicals)
- Eat a boiled egg. While this may sound awful, eggs are a perfectly balanced protein and can calm the nausea quickly in some cases.
- Take powdered ginger in 00 size capsules throughout the day, up to 60 daily if necessary
- Take ginger root tea in tablespoon doses at the onset of nausea
- Use Wild Yam root tincture by the dropperful in mint tea or water
- Drink Peach leaf tea
- Drink peppermint or spearmint leaf tea first thing in the morning
- Drink anise or fennel seed tea on rising or chew on either of these seeds during the day
- Take 1 tsp apple cider vinegar in 8 oz warm water first thing in the morning
- Rub lobelia tincture on the feet, under the arms and on the abdomen to soothe tension and spasms which trigger vomiting
- Take B complex and try extra B1 and B6 for 2 weeks (long term use of isolated B vitamins can cause deficiencies of the others)
- Bee pollen in teaspoon doses has helped some women
- Raspberry leaf tea or infusion – drink 1-2 cups daily before rising or suck on ice cubes made from the infusion
- Figure out a homeopathic remedy for the specific case. Often this works when nothing else will!
- Acupressure wrist bands can be purchased which put pressure on the anti-nausea point at the inner wrist. These work wonderfully for some women. (They may be sold as “seabands” and are often available at health food stores or at your local American Automobile Association office)
- Take 50 mg of vitamin B6 twice daily, once 20 minutes before arising and once at night
- Take small sips of the following tea throughout the day, but no more than 1 cup in a 24-hour period: 1 part cinnamon, 5 parts blackberry leaves, 5 parts yarrow, 10 parts red raspberry leaves; mix and steep 1 tsp in ½ cup boiling water for ½ hour
- Consult a naturopath or doctor of Oriental medicine

*Frye, A. “Holistic Midwifery Vol I” Labrys Press. 1998.*

Call your midwife if you are experiencing significant weight loss, if your urine is dark (indicating dehydration), if you have a fever or if you are unable to keep anything down for 24 hours. Rehydration and/or calorie replacement via IV fluids may become necessary.