

# **Nausea and Vomiting in Pregnancy**

Nausea and vomiting are common problems during pregnancy, especially in the first trimester.

## **What causes nausea and vomiting?**

Nausea and vomiting are thought to be caused by the many changes happening in the body during pregnancy, such as an increase in hormone levels.

## **How can I prevent or treat nausea or vomiting?**

### **1. Eat Small Meals**

- Eat 6-8 small meals or snacks every day. This may mean you are eating every 2 to 3 hours. Avoid eating large amounts at a time.
- Avoid waiting more than 3-4 hours without eating. Women usually feel worse on an empty stomach.
- Eat slowly and chew well.

### **2. Eat when you feel well**

- Eat a variety of nutritious foods whenever you can.

### **3. Do not have solid food and fluids together**

- Eat solid food first, and then wait 15-20 minutes before drinking fluids.

### **4. Eat foods that are at room temperature**

- Avoid foods that are very hot or very cold in temperature.

### **5. Raise the Head of Your Bed**

- Use 2 to 3 pillows to keep your head and esophagus higher than your stomach when you are sleeping to avoid heartburn.

### **6. Take your prenatal multivitamin with your largest meal**

- The iron in the supplement may upset your stomach if you have not eaten enough.

### **7. Cook in a well-ventilated area**

- Open windows or use a fan while cooking.
- If possible, have someone else prepare meals for you.

### **8. Eat foods high in potassium**

- Your body loses potassium when you vomit. Replace the potassium by having at least one of the following foods daily:
  - Bananas, apricot/peach nectar, honeydew melon, oranges, tomatoes, potatoes.

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## **What foods can trigger nausea or vomiting?**

The following foods may trigger nausea and vomiting for some women.

### **1. Spicy food**

- Avoid foods made with garlic, onion, chilli, curry.

### **2. Greasy or fried foods**

### **3. Drinks with caffeine**

- Colas, tea, coffee, chocolate milk and Mountain Dew™.

### **4. Peppermint or spearmint**

- Such as mints, toothpaste, gum and mouthwash.

## **What are foods that may help relieve nausea or vomiting?**

### **1. Dry crackers, toast or bread**

- Try these while still in bed in the morning. Wait 15-20 minutes before getting out of bed.
- If these "sit well", try eating a bit more food.

### **2. Eat foods from the grain group**

- Try foods such as bread, pasta, cereal or rice at each meal.

### **3. Choose foods which are odourless and bland.**

### **4. Try Ginger Ale™ or ginger tea.**

### **5. If you are losing weight try nutrition supplements such as:**

- Carnation Instant Breakfast
- Homemade milkshakes (skim milk powder, yogurt, fruit, milk)
- Ensure/Boost/Resource
- Toddler cereals/Cream of Wheat

### **6. Talk to Your Doctor**

- If your nausea or vomiting continues, talk to your doctor.
- Don't take anti-nausea medications without talking to your doctor first.