

MORNING SICKNESS

NAUSEA AND VOMITING IN PREGNANCY



REMEDIES FOR MORNING SICKNESS

Morning sickness is probably one of the most common signs of pregnancy. In fact, a large majority of women will experience some sort of stomach sickness in one way or another. The term derives from the sick feeling that arises in the morning, but many will notice that it can be something that lasts the entire day. Usually morning sickness is considered a first trimester problem, but studies have shown that it abates around 17 weeks. However, around 15% of women have the problem for the duration of the pregnancy and will only improve once they are delivered. About 1% of women with morning sickness have such severe nausea and vomiting that intravenous hydration is required once or even several times. Then, on a rare occasion, it may be so severe that intravenous fluids and nutrition are required throughout the whole pregnancy. No one really knows the source of morning sickness. Some believe it is related to vitamin deficiencies, estrogen levels, pregnancy hormone levels, etc. It is known that the appetite and sense of smell is greatly altered, causing a wide range of changes in likes and dislikes. For many women, taking iron supplements and/or prenatal vitamins will frequently worsen the symptoms. (Do not take them if you cannot stomach them and wait until you hit those weeks when the morning sickness resolves.)



VITAMINS



HERBAL THERAPY



NUTRITION

9 WAYS TO HELP DECREASE NAUSEA

There are many possible remedies that can help relieve the symptoms of morning sickness. Some may work well for you and some may not work at all; it seems to be individualistic.

1. Keep something on the stomach at all time. This means munching, nibbling, and snacking on anything that sounds, smells, or tastes good. For example, one mother could eat nothing but oranges during one of her pregnancies. It was the only thing that settled her stomach. It may be pickles, berries, or anything. Just keep something in the stomach and it may ease the ill, sick feeling.
2. Vitamin B6 or B complex. Taking 25-50 mg tablets two to three times a day seems to help. Those who cannot stomach them because of vomiting, can try the form that you inject (a shot). Usually 100 mg once or twice a week seems to be quite helpful. Randomized double-blind placebo-controlled trials have shown significant reduction in nausea and vomiting in women using B6 versus placebo.
3. Ginger products, such as ginger ale, pickled ginger or ginger preserves. One study showed a significant reduction in nausea and vomiting when taking 250 mg of ginger capsules four times a day.
4. Sea-bands or acupressure. These are wristbands used to fight motion sickness, but some studies have shown some success in treating morning sickness as well. Some studies show a 50-75% improvement. The idea is based on acupuncture at the P6 or NeiGuan pressure point. This is located 3 fingers-breadths from the wrist crease and between two central flexor tendons on the wrist. If you make a fist and then flex your hand slightly, you should be able to feel two strong tendons. The point is between these two. You can make your own by using a round button in a Velcro strap or they can be purchased at medical supply stores.
5. Homemade Bendectin. This is a compound which was shown to be very effective for morning sickness. It was taken off the market around 1980 because the company was afraid of future lawsuits related to birth defects. Many studies though have failed to implicate Bendectin as a cause of any birth defects. The homemade remedy is taking 1/2 Unisom (an over the counter sleep aid/antihistamine) plus 50 mg of Vitamin B6 at bedtime. It can also be used during the day every eight hours if desired.
6. Emetrol. An over the counter nausea drink that is often effective.
7. Herbal therapy. Common in tea form, such as raspberry, peppermint, spearmint, fennel, anise, and of course ginger.
8. IV nutritional therapy is a great way to potentially decrease nausea and improve one's nutritional status, especially when you may not be eating much at all. Vitamins, minerals, and amino acids (protein building blocks) are key to a developing embryo and can be used intravenously to help diminish nausea, vomiting, fatigue, and nutritional deficiencies in early pregnancy.
9. Prescription medications. When all else fails, there are some fairly effective anti-nausea medication that can help, namely phenergan (in suppository or oral form), tigan, reglan, and zofran. They have been used in pregnancy and have no known related birth defects in offspring. Though, like most medication, no complete study has been done. For those who are really sick, zofran seems to be the most effective.

Hopefully one of these options will be effective for you or for someone you know suffering from morning sickness in pregnancy. Remember that the key is to eat what sounds, smells, and tastes good no matter what it is (within reason of course); and to keep yourself hydrated and get adequate nutrition. And if nothing works, then intravenous fluids and nutrition are necessary. For those suffering from morning sickness, remember that "this too shall pass." For those support persons, remember that your sympathy, care, and help can go a long way in relieving the strain and stress that comes with morning sickness.

-Dr. Jeffrey Baker, MD