



Try home remedies for morning sickness

I'm pregnant for the first time and I'm surprised at the severity of my morning sickness. I usually have a strong stomach. I've gotten lots of advice, but what really works?

You're right — everyone has their own "cures" for morning sickness. And if you type the phrase into an Internet search engine, you can sit for hours combing through Web sites that offer guidance.

Not every pregnant woman suffers from morning sickness, but, according to Medline Plus (a service of the National Library of Medicine and the National Institutes of Health), nausea is very common and about one-third of pregnant women experience vomiting. It actually can strike at any time of the day, but it usually (but not always) ends after the 14th to 16th week.

No one knows what causes morning sickness. Some blame hormonal changes or lower blood sugar levels in the first few months of pregnancy. Emotional stress, traveling, or some foods can make the problem worse. In 2000, researchers at Cornell University published an article in the *Quarterly Review of Biology* suggesting that it's the body's way of protecting the fetus from potential toxins or pathogens.

Whatever the cause, health professionals suggest measures that might minimize your symptoms, including:

- Avoid large meals. Rather, have small snacks frequently — as often as

every one or two hours. Some even suggest nibbling on soda crackers, plain bread or dry toast when you first wake up, even before getting out of bed. Some also recommend having a small snack at bedtime and if you get up during the night.

- Choose nutrient-rich foods high in protein and complex carbohydrates, such as peanut butter on apple slices or celery, cheese, milk, cottage cheese and yogurt. Boost your intake of vitamin B6 with whole grains, nuts, seeds, and peas and beans (legumes). Avoid greasy or salty foods that don't offer much nutrition-wise.

- Drink plenty of fluids. Take frequent small sips instead of large amounts at one time. Some women can't tolerate liquids with meals; if you find that's true, be sure to sip on fluids between meals.

- Try ginger products such as ginger tea, ginger candy and ginger ale. Ginger is often effective against morning sickness. Some women find that peppermint tea helps, too.

Although morning sickness is common, see your doctor if it doesn't improve after trying home remedies, if you lose more than two pounds, or if you vomit more than three or four times a day. If you vomit blood, which might be bright red or look like black coffee grounds, contact your doctor immediately.

Chow Line is a service of Ohio State University Extension and the Ohio Agricultural Research and Development Center. Send questions to Chow Line, c/o Martha Filipic, 2021 Coffey Road, Columbus, OH, 43210-1044, or filipic.3@cfaes.osu.edu.



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