



The American College of  
Obstetricians and Gynecologists



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS  
FAQ126  
PREGNANCY

## Morning Sickness

- **What is morning sickness?**
- **What causes morning sickness?**
- **Can morning sickness harm my baby?**
- **Can morning sickness be prevented?**
- **Is there a treatment for severe morning sickness?**
- **Glossary**

### What is morning sickness?

While you are pregnant, nausea and vomiting can occur. This often is called morning sickness, although it can occur at any time of the day.

### What causes morning sickness?

Although no one is certain what causes the nausea and vomiting, increasing levels of **hormones** during pregnancy may play a role. In most women, symptoms of nausea and vomiting are mild and go away after the middle of pregnancy. But some cases of nausea and vomiting are severe. This condition is called **hyperemesis gravidarum**. It can lead to loss of weight and body fluids.

### Can morning sickness harm my baby?

Most mild cases of nausea and vomiting will not harm you or your baby. Morning sickness does not mean your baby is sick. It can become more of a problem if you cannot keep any foods or fluids down and begin to lose weight.

### Can morning sickness be prevented?

There is no sure way to prevent morning sickness. However, studies have shown that women who are taking a multivitamin regularly when they become pregnant are less likely to have severe cases of morning sickness.

If you experience morning sickness, there are some things you can do that might help you feel better:

- Get plenty of rest.
- Avoid smells that bother you.
- Eat five or six small meals each day instead of three large meals.
- Avoid spicy foods and fatty foods.
- Eat crackers before you get out of bed in the morning.

Ginger, acupuncture, motion sickness bands, or hypnosis also may help relieve symptoms. Talk with your health care provider before taking any medication or trying any treatment.

### Is there a treatment for severe morning sickness?

If your nausea and vomiting are severe, you may need medical treatment. Your health care provider may suggest vitamin B<sub>6</sub>, doxylamine, or anti-nausea medications. In severe cases, this treatment has been shown to help reduce vomiting. If your health care provider suspects that you have hyperemesis gravidarum, you may need to receive fluids through an intravenous (IV) line and stay in the hospital for a while.

## Glossary

**Hormones:** Substances produced by the body to control the functions of various organs.

**Hyperemesis Gravidarum:** Severe nausea and vomiting during pregnancy that can lead to loss of weight and body fluids.

### If you have further questions, contact your obstetrician–gynecologist.

**FAQ126:** Designed as an aid to patients, this document sets forth current information and opinions related to women's health. The information does not dictate an exclusive course of treatment or procedure to be followed and should not be construed as excluding other acceptable methods of practice. Variations, taking into account the needs of the individual patient, resources, and limitations unique to institution or type of practice, may be appropriate.

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