The ultimate pregnancy and new mom prep course

MORNING SICKNESS SOLUTIONS THAT REALLY WORK

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Morning sickness
sucks

Morning sickness is an unfortunate part of almost every pregnancy, but there are ways to cut back on the time you spend hugging porcelain. JENNIFER CAVALIER gets you out of the bathroom.

OK, we’re not gonna lie—morning sickness stinks, and unfortunately, it’s something that you’re going to have to deal with during your pregnancy. There are lots of theories as to what causes morning sickness, but most doctors agree that the pregnancy hormones hCG (human chorionic gonadotropin) and estrogen are major players. But morning sickness is really a misnomer because most women feel crummy all day. Luckily, it usually subsides after the first trimester, although for some women it can last longer than that.

Doctors aren’t really sure why morning sickness sticks around in some women and not others, but there are certain factors that can predict how bad yours will be. If you have a history of migraines, tend to get motion sickness or if your birth control pills nauseate you, it’s likely that you’ll experience morning sickness. There’s also seems to be a genetic susceptibility to severe nausea and vomiting, and if you had bad morning sickness during a previous pregnancy, a repeat performance is likely.

But no matter how long your morning sickness lasts or how awful it is, there are things you can do to lessen the symptoms. Read on to find a nausea-fighting technique to relieve your queasiness.

Friendly Foods
What you eat and drink when you’re dealing with morning sickness plays a really big role in how nauseated you feel. Luckily, your diet is something you can control, and changing your food selection is an easy way to get consistent relief from nausea and vomiting. One suggested reason for morning sickness is that your body is protecting your baby from anything harmful that you might ingest. That’s why your body is likely to freak when you eat things like meat and other animal products that could carry dangerous elements, such as bacteria, in them. Avoiding these foods alleviates pregnancy-related nausea, and steering clear of fatty, fried and spicy foods tends to have the same effect. But while it’s important to avoid certain foods eating the right ones also impacts how you feel. Ginger, in particular, tends to ease nausea, so try...
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Candied ginger, ginger ale or grated ginger in tea or hot water to fight it. Too much ginger can be harmful, though, so ask your ob about how much is safe. Dry, bland foods like salt crackers and toast are also good for lessening nausea, and their high fiber content helps prevent constipation—a contributor to queasiness. But if stomaching solids is pretty much impossible right now, there are herbal and fruit teas that can relieve morning sickness instead. Red raspberry, mint and peach leaf teas work especially well, but be careful about which tea you choose because some herbs can actually harm your baby.

Snack Attack

When you've been battling to keep your food down, the sheer thought of having to stomach something probably makes you pretty queasy. But as difficult as eating is right now, having a little something in your stomach is a surprisingly effective way to beat your morning sickness. High levels of stomach acid can cause or worsen nausea, so frequent snacking cuts down on your queasiness by reducing those levels. However, "It is also important to eat small, frequent meals and carry snacks with you to prevent hunger, because being hungry can actually bring on a bout of morning sickness," explains Toby Amidor, RD, senior nutrition instructor at The Art Institute of New York City. "Dehydration can also bring about morning sickness, so carrying water or 100% fruit juice with you at all times is important as well." But while you should definitely sip on water or juice throughout the day to stay hydrated, don't drink a lot of liquid with your meals—the food-liquid combination has a tendency to make expecting moms feel even sicker.

Easy to Swallow

If you've changed your diet but still aren't getting any relief from morning sickness, talk to your doctor about taking vitamin supplements, over-the-counter medications or prescription drugs instead. Your first resort should be the least risky, so vitamin B6 supplements are a good starting point in most cases of mild morning sickness. "Vitamin B6 is necessary for the nausea center in your brain to produce the hormone serotonin. Up to 25 mg every 8 hours has been shown to relieve nausea for many women," says Robert Greene, MD, author of Perfect Hormone Balance for Pregnancy. But surprisingly, getting relief could be as easy as taking your prenatal vitamin at night instead of in the morning. It's like with other pills—taking it on an empty stomach can nauseate you, but taking it with food in your system doesn't make you as queasy. If you're dealing with mild-to-severe morning sickness that's unaffected by vitamin B6 or timing your prenatal vitamins, however, ask your doctor's permission to take Unisom, a sleep aid, or ginger tablets. And if your nausea or vomiting is especially severe, ask your ob about prescription anti-nausea medications.

Sweet Scentsations

You may have noticed the way that many of the odors you were never bothered by before make you want to hurl at the tiniest whiff lately or the way you can detect the smell of cigarette smoke and spoiled milk from really far away. It's because your sense of smell is heightened during pregnancy, and you can use this new super power to help ease your morning sickness. Avoiding scents that trigger your nausea is the first step to relief; and while you can't always avoid offensive smells you can cover them with a more pleasant fragrance. Citrus scents in particular have proven effective at relieving queasiness, so keep a cloth sprayed with lemon juice or a lemon in your purse for times when nausea hits. The smell of ginger also works well to relieve nausea, and some women swear by aromatherapy fragrances like rose, lavender and chamomile.

New and Improved

An important factor affecting morning sickness that's begin-
good health & your body

Morning to get more recognition is a woman's mental health. "There appears to be a psychological component to morning sickness. Individuals who tend to have stress in their life or are ambivalent about the pregnancy seem to have higher rates of it," says Seema Venkatachalam, MD, instructor of gynecology and obstetrics at Emory University School of Medicine. In other words, by alleviating the emotional stressors in your life you may alleviate your morning sickness. Another approach to relieving nausea that's growing in popularity is acupressure. Rather than using needles to trigger certain nausea-relieving nerves like in acupuncture, wearing seasickness wristbands (available at drugstores) triggers those same nerves by way of pressure points. According to Dr. Venkatachalam, wearing the bands is so effective that it gives partial or complete relief from nausea to nearly 60% of pregnant women.

When to Worry
Morning sickness is a common symptom of pregnancy, and while it's a pain in the butt, it isn't anything to be medically concerned about. Daylong nausea and vomiting are normal parts of morning sickness, but if you're experiencing severe, persistent vomiting to the point where you're losing weight because of it, you should see your ob immediately. It's possible, in cases of severe nausea, that the nausea isn't morning sickness at all but rather a symptom of a complication like high blood pressure or gestational diabetes. You should also treat nausea and vomiting that doesn't begin until after your tenth or eleventh gestational week with caution, because that can indicate a complication also. P&N