



The American College of  
Obstetricians and Gynecologists



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS  
FAQ126  
PREGNANCY

## Morning Sickness

- **What is morning sickness?**
- **What causes morning sickness?**
- **How long should I expect morning sickness to last?**
- **What are the effects of morning sickness on pregnancy?**
- **When is morning sickness considered severe?**
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### **What is morning sickness?**

Nausea and vomiting that happen during pregnancy, especially during the first part of pregnancy, often are called “morning sickness.” Despite its name, morning sickness can occur at any time of the day.

### **What causes morning sickness?**

Although no one is certain what causes morning sickness, increasing levels of **hormones** during pregnancy may play a role.

### **How long should I expect morning sickness to last?**

In most women, symptoms of nausea and vomiting are mild and go away after the middle of pregnancy.

### **What are the effects of morning sickness on pregnancy?**

Most mild cases of nausea and vomiting do not harm your health or your baby's health. Morning sickness does not mean your baby is sick.

### **When is morning sickness considered severe?**

Morning sickness is considered severe if you cannot keep any food or fluids down and begin to lose weight. This condition is called **hyperemesis gravidarum**.

### **Is there a cure for morning sickness?**

There is no cure for morning sickness. Some research suggests that women who are taking a multivitamin supplement regularly at the time they become pregnant are less likely to have severe cases of morning sickness.

### **What can I do to ease my symptoms of morning sickness?**

If you experience morning sickness, there are several things you can do that might help you feel better. You may need to try more than one of these remedies:

- Get plenty of rest.
- Avoid smells that bother you.
- Eat five or six small meals each day instead of three large meals.

- Eat a few crackers before you get out of bed in the morning to help settle your stomach.
- Eat small snacks high in protein (such as a glass of milk or a cup of yogurt) throughout the day.
- Avoid spicy foods and fatty foods.

### **Are there any herbal supplements that can help?**

Ginger may be helpful for some women. Taking three 250-milligram capsules of ginger a day plus another capsule right before bed may help relieve nausea. Remember to talk with your health care provider before taking any herbal medication or supplement or trying any treatment. You also can try ginger ale or ginger tea made with real ginger.

### **How are severe symptoms of morning sickness treated?**

Your health care provider will first find out whether your nausea and vomiting are due to morning sickness or if there is another medical cause. If other causes are ruled out, certain medications can be given. Vitamin B<sub>6</sub> may be suggested first. Doxylamine, a medication found in over-the-counter sleep aids, may be added if vitamin B<sub>6</sub> alone does not relieve symptoms. Drugs that combat nausea and vomiting may be prescribed. If you are dehydrated from loss of fluids, you may need to receive fluids through an intravenous (IV) line.

### **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 the institution or type of practice, may be appropriate.

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