

# What You Need to Know About Morning Sickness



# What is morning sickness?

Morning sickness is nausea and/or vomiting that many pregnant women experience. The term “morning sickness” is common, but it’s not correct, because many women have nausea and vomiting all day.

The most important thing to know about nausea you may experience during your pregnancy is it’s normal. According to the American Pregnancy Association, more than [50%](#) of pregnant women have nausea and/or vomiting. Although it’s most common during the first trimester, it’s possible to feel sick throughout the entire nine months of your pregnancy.

For some women, feeling nauseous and/or throwing up are among the first symptoms of pregnancy. Most women start having nausea and/or vomiting around the sixth week of their first trimester. And some women notice their symptoms disappear around the 12th week of pregnancy or their second trimester.

In general, nausea when pregnant isn’t harmful to you or the baby. However, if you can’t keep water or food down for long periods, then it can be dangerous, and you should talk to your provider about it.

## Common symptoms

- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Feeling sick
- Not being able to handle specific odors or foods

## Extreme morning sickness: Hyperemesis gravidarum

Estimates are that [3%](#) of pregnant women have hyperemesis gravidarum. This extreme nausea, vomiting and weight loss during pregnancy can be harmful to you and the baby, so you should talk to your doctor right away.

If you’re not able to keep food or water down, then you could become malnourished and dehydrated. You could also have an electrolyte imbalance from the lack of nutrients and minerals.

For mild cases, treatment includes rest, fluids, nutritional support, and medicine. Severe cases may require a hospital stay so you can be monitored and receive IV fluids and nutrition.

The change in hormone levels during pregnancy may be responsible for hyperemesis gravidarum, but doctors aren’t sure exactly what causes it. Some women notice their symptoms go away by the 20th week of their pregnancy, but others continue to deal with severe nausea and vomiting for all nine months.

# Differences between nausea when pregnant and hyperemesis gravidarum

## Nausea when pregnant

Nausea that may be followed by vomiting some of the time

Nausea that stops around the second trimester

Vomiting that doesn't cause dehydration

Vomiting that lets you keep food down some of the time

## Hyperemesis gravidarum

Severe nausea that's followed by severe vomiting most of the time

Nausea that doesn't stop

Vomiting that causes dehydration

Vomiting that doesn't let you keep any food down at all

## Hyperemesis gravidarum symptoms

Common symptoms include:

- Severe nausea and vomiting
- Weight loss
- Dehydration
- Confusion
- Fainting
- Weakness
- Fatigue
- Not being able to keep fluids or food down

## Hyperemesis gravidarum risk factors

There's nothing you can do to prevent hyperemesis gravidarum, and doctors don't know why some women get it. But certain risk factors increase your chances of having it, such as:

- Previous pregnancy with hyperemesis gravidarum
- Family history of hyperemesis gravidarum
- Current pregnancy with multiples (twins, triplets, etc.)
- Being overweight
- Having a history of migraines and motion sickness
- Having trophoblastic disease (abnormal cells growing in the uterus)
- Being pregnant with a girl
- Being pregnant for the first time

You should go to the hospital if you have:

- Severe nausea and vomiting -- trouble keeping any fluids or food down
- Dehydration
- Fast heartbeat
- Very dark urine, less urine than normal or no urine at all
- Blood in your vomit

- Weight loss of more than 5 pounds
- Confusion
- Vomiting combined with pain and fever
- Dizziness and fainting

## Hyperemesis gravidarum risk factors

If you're experiencing hyperemesis gravidarum, you're not alone. Even celebrities — actress Amy Schumer — and royalty — Catherine, Duchess of Cambridge, have dealt publicly with the same medical condition.

## How to prevent nausea when pregnant

There are things you can do to avoid nausea some of the time. Pay attention to your body, and notice what triggers your symptoms. You may want to keep a list of things that make you feel sick and avoid them.

### Common triggers

Some common triggers include:

- Strong odors
- Spicy foods
- Sugary foods
- Greasy foods
- Being very tired without resting

## Your Treatment Options

Your provider may recommend that you try natural treatment options before any medications to control your nausea and vomiting. For some women, natural options are enough to help, but they don't work for everyone.

Natural options include:

**Slow mornings:** Start your morning slowly and eat a bland snack, like crackers, while you're still in bed.

**Eating strategies:** Eat smaller meals more frequently. Avoid lying down right after eating. And keep meal times flexible.

**Exercise:** Try gentle exercises like prenatal yoga or stretching.

**Fresh air:** Go for a walk, open the windows or use a fan to get fresh air.

**Rest:** Fatigue can make symptoms worse. Rest and nap more often.

**Distraction:** Play games, watch TV, read or do other things to distract yourself.

**Stay cool:** Some women have worse nausea if they're too warm. Use a fan or air conditioning and wear layers that you can remove easily.

**Ginger:** Try adding fresh or dry ginger to your drinks or food.

**Aromatherapy:** Use scented oils and other products to reduce nausea. Some women feel better after smelling lemon or other citrus fruits.

**Acupressure wristbands:** These products put pressure on your wrists that may relieve nausea.

**Acupuncture:** Ask your doctor if it's safe for you to try acupuncture, which inserts small needles in your skin, to relieve nausea.

**Acustimulation:** Ask your doctor if it's safe for you to try acustimulation, which applies electrical currents to your acupuncture points.

Your provider may recommend other natural options.

## Medical and drug options

- Antihistamines
- Anti-reflux medications
- Prescription medications
- Other options

## Recommended foods and drinks

Try these drinks:

- Ice water
- Sparkling water
- Seltzer
- Lemonade
- Peppermint, ginger or mint tea
- Ginger ale soda

Consider eating these foods:

- Bland crackers
- Toast
- Dry cereal without sugar
- Cold foods
- Simple sandwiches
- Raw vegetables
- Soup or broth
- Rice
- Bananas, oranges or lemons
- Apple sauce
- Plain baked potatoes
- Ginger jam
- Pretzels
- Salty chips (in moderation)
- Popsicles
- Gelatin desserts



# When to go to the hospital

Sometimes nausea and vomiting during pregnancy require medical care. You should go to the hospital if you have:

- Severe nausea and vomiting
- Dehydration
- Trouble keeping any fluids or food down
- Fast heartbeat
- Very dark urine, less urine than normal or no urine at all
- Blood in your vomit
- Weight loss of more than 5 pounds
- Confusion
- Vomiting combined with pain and fever
- Dizziness and fainting

## Our Pregnancy Services

We can help you at every stage of your pregnancy.

Enable our “40 weeks” Alexa skill at [40weeksQs.com](https://www.40weeksqs.com) to get answers to common pregnancy questions or visit [nopregnancyisperfect.com](https://www.nopregnancyisperfect.com) to hear real couples talk about their pregnancy experiences.

