

Healthier Communities,
Outstanding Care



Sherwood Forest Hospitals
NHS Foundation Trust

Nausea and vomiting in pregnancy

Information for patients



Nausea and vomiting can happen during pregnancy. It is sometimes known as “morning sickness” but this can happen any time of the day.

Hyperemesis gravidarum refers to when the nausea and vomiting are severe enough to cause dehydration and weight loss.

What causes nausea and vomiting in pregnancy?

We still do not know what exactly causes these symptoms in pregnancy but it has been suggested that it may be due to the hormone changes during pregnancy.

Is it common and how long does it take to resolve?

Nausea and vomiting in pregnancy is common and affects at least half of pregnant women. Hyperemesis gravidarum is less common, happening in about 3 in 100 of pregnancies.

You may find symptoms can start from when you are 4 weeks pregnant. They tend to settle down by the time you are 14 weeks pregnant; it is very rare that this could last longer.

What should I do while I am at home?

There are things you can do at home to try to help:

- 1. Little and often.** You may find that eating small amount of food more frequently is easier than a big meal. Try plain biscuits or crackers and avoid anything that may trigger your nausea and vomiting, e.g. spicy or fried food.
- 2. Ginger.** Food or drinks containing ginger may ease your symptoms.
- 3. Complementary therapies.** Although there is no strong evidence for this, some women do find acupressure or acupuncture helpful.

When should I see a doctor?

If you find that you feel dizzy, have lost weight or are unable to keep fluids down, please speak to a doctor who may be able to prescribe anti-sickness medication.

Will I need to be admitted to hospital?

Usually not, but your GP or midwife may refer you to the hospital for an assessment if they feel your symptoms are severe enough or the anti-sickness medications you are taking have not worked.

We manage women on a day attender basis and give them anti-sickness medications and fluids. Most women are able to go home after this and return to normal activities as they can keep the anti-sickness tablets down.

You may need to be admitted if you continue to vomit. During your admission, you will be rehydrated with fluids and receive anti-sickness medications through a drip in your arm. We will continue assess you while you are with us and once you are able to eat and drink, you will be discharged with a supply of anti-sickness medications.

Will this affect my baby?

There is no evidence that this will affect your pregnancy or your baby. Although in more severe cases, the baby may have lower than expected birth weight. If your consultant is worried this may be the case, they will consider growth scans for your baby in later pregnancy.

How will this affect my future pregnancies?

If you have nausea and vomiting in this pregnancy, you may find that your symptoms may recur in your next pregnancy.

Further sources of information

NHS Choices: www.nhs.uk/conditions

Our website: www.sfh-tr.nhs.uk

Patient Experience Team (PET)

PET is available to help with any of your compliments, concerns or complaints, and will ensure a prompt and efficient service.

King's Mill Hospital: 01623 672222

Newark Hospital: 01636 685692

Email: sfh-tr.PET@nhs.net

If you would like this information in an alternative format, for example large print or easy read, or if you need help with communicating with us, for example because you use British Sign Language, please let us know. You can call the Patient Experience Team on 01623 672222 or email sfh-tr.PET@nhs.net.

This document is intended for information purposes only and should not replace advice that your relevant health professional

would give you. External websites may be referred to in specific cases. Any external websites are provided for your information and convenience. We cannot accept responsibility for the information found on them. If you require a full list of references (if relevant) for this leaflet, please email sfh-tr.patientinformation@nhs.net or telephone 01623 622515, extension 6927.

To be completed by the Communications office
Leaflet code: PIL202102-01-NVP
Created: February 2021 / Revised: November 2022 /
Review date: November 2024