

# MORNING SICKNESS

## WHAT IS MORNING SICKNESS?

This is a common complaint of women in the early months of their pregnancy. It refers to a feeling of nausea or actual vomiting.

It is particularly common during the first trimester (three months) of a pregnancy. In rare cases, morning sickness is still experienced after the first trimester.

Morning sickness, despite its name, may occur at any time during the day although it is most common in the morning.

## WHAT CAUSES MORNING SICKNESS?

The exact cause is unknown but it is almost definitely related to hormonal changes which take place during pregnancy. It may also be associated with an imbalance in blood sugar levels.

## CAN MORNING SICKNESS HARM MY BABY?

The morning sickness most women experience is not harmful to a baby as long as the woman is eating a well-balanced diet and is getting enough fluids.

## WHAT ARE THE COMPLICATIONS OF MORNING SICKNESS?

Most women who suffer morning sickness suffer no complications. In rare cases, the vomiting becomes severe and prolonged. This may cause dehydration, nutritional deficiencies and weight loss.

The symptoms to watch out for are:

- Thirst.
- Dizziness or fainting.
- Passing less urine than normal or passing urine that is dark.

These symptoms suggest dehydration and require medical attention. Women who become dehydrated need to be admitted to hospital for replacement of lost fluids and chemicals through a drip. If treated quickly, dehydration will not harm your baby.

## PREVENTION

- Eat small meals frequently, even if you are not hungry. Eating a small amount every two to three hours is much better than having two or three large meals. An empty stomach will increase the chances of nausea.
- Foods high in protein and carbohydrates can help fight nausea. Avoid spicy and fatty foods.
- Drink plenty of fluid. At least 5 pints a day.
- Avoid alcohol and drinks containing caffeine.
- Try to get fresh air every day even if this is just by taking a short walk.
- It may help to eat a small snack before you go to bed or as soon as you wake up.
- Avoid stressful situations
- Do not brush your teeth immediately after eating as this can cause vomiting.
- Do not get out of bed too quickly in the morning
- Ginger may help in settling the nausea.