

## **Morning Sickness in Pregnancy**

Morning sickness is a common complaint during pregnancy. The term is somewhat misleading, since nausea and vomiting can actually occur at any time of day – not just in the morning. The condition can also strike at any point during pregnancy, although the majority of women experience the uncomfortable symptoms during the first trimester, or first three months of pregnancy.

While morning sickness can be very unpleasant to the expectant mother, it is rarely dangerous to the baby unless symptoms become severe. While the cause of morning sickness is not known, healthcare professionals suspect it is linked to hormonal changes or changes to blood sugar levels that typically occur during the early stages of the pregnancy process. The good news is there are a number of steps you can take to minimize the symptoms of morning sickness at home.

### **Treating Morning Sickness**

There are many things you can try to manage your morning sickness symptoms more effectively, including:

- Eat a small amount of food before getting out of bed in the morning – choose foods that won't contribute to stomach upset, such as dry toast or crackers
- Avoid nausea triggers, whether they are the odors or the taste of certain foods, the temperature of a room, or even a ride in the car
- Shift from three large meals a day to a number of smaller ones, to avoid a completely empty stomach that can lead to nausea
- When your stomach is upset, stick to bland foods like soda crackers, broth and gelatin
- Avoid foods that can upset your digestive system, such as spicy, fried and high-fat foods
- Add ginger products to your diet when the nausea hits, such as ginger tea, ginger soda or sugared ginger snacks – you can also try ginger capsules, found at health food stores and pharmacies
- Try acupressure wrist bands, like the ones used to prevent seasickness, which you can purchase at health food stores or pharmacies

Keep in mind that for most women, morning sickness in pregnancy typically only lasts for the first three to four months. After that time, most women begin to feel much better and are able to enjoy the next few expectant months. It is also important to remember that while morning sickness can make you fairly miserable, your baby rarely feels the effects of the nausea and vomiting.

### **When to Call Your Doctor**

Although morning sickness in pregnancy is a relatively common and harmless occurrence, there are times when it is a good idea to contact your doctor about your symptoms. This includes:

- Nausea and vomiting that does not improve with home remedies or continues past the fourth month of pregnancy
- Morning sickness that results in weight loss of two pounds or more
- Vomiting that is so severe, you are unable to keep down food or liquids

- Vomiting that contains blood or dark crystals that look like coffee grounds (call immediately)

Of course, any time you are concerned about nausea or vomiting during your pregnancy, a call to your physician is a good idea. For more information about morning sickness in pregnancy, contact the Complete Women's Healthcare Center.