

## *Wellesley Women's Care, P.C.*

*Obstetrics / Gynecology / Infertility*

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*2000 Washington Street, Suite 764*

*Newton, MA 02462*

*617-965-7800*

### **Recommendations for Diet Management of Nausea and Vomiting in Pregnancy**

Nausea and/or vomiting may occur in the early months of pregnancy. The severity can vary. Nausea and vomiting usually peaks from 6-12 weeks gestation and resolves by the fourth month. Hormone production in pregnancy causes changes that are believed to be responsible for causing these symptoms.

#### **The following dietary recommendations may help to reduce symptoms during these periods:**

Small frequent feedings each day with increased volume as tolerance improves. With improvements, the diet can be progressed through the following stages:

1. Begin with very bland carbohydrates; dry toast, mashed potatoes, dry cereal, crackers, English muffin, bagel, etc.
2. Next add simple low-fat proteins; plain turkey or chicken, low fat cheese, hard boiled egg; avoid the yolk if still nauseous, skim milk, or 1% milk.
3. Gradually add bland, low fat foods of more variety; sliced peaches, applesauce, carrots, winter squash, etc.
4. As tolerance for food increases, the last steps are to increase fats and fluids gradually; soups, juices, etc. and to gradually increase the time between meals until a normal pattern is established.
5. Ideally in pregnancy, you should have three meals a day and three mid meal snacks. These snacks should be protein only so as to help maintain your blood sugar levels and thus prevent hypoglycemia. Good protein sources may be cheese and crackers, peanut butter and crackers, yogurt, cottage cheese, hummus and pita bread, nuts, etc. Notice that fruit is not listed as a snack. You may have fruits and juices at your regular meals. Do not have ice cream, cookies, cake, frozen yogurt, etc. before going to bed. You may have dessert with dinner and a protein snack before bedtime.

#### **General Guidelines:**

- Eat promptly when hunger is first felt and avoid having your stomach empty for long periods of time.
- Eat small frequent meals and snacks, alternating dry and fluid feedings.

- Take a liquid 1-2 hour after meals. You may try non-cola carbonated drinks and low acidic juices. If extremely nauseous, you may try de-carbonated soda by adding a ½ tsp of sugar to a small glass of soda.
- Take fluid feedings only if previous dry feeding has been tolerated.
- Get up slowly and avoid sudden movements and position changes.
- Avoid fats and fatty foods until vomiting ceases.
- Avoid highly seasoned foods; pepper, chili, garlic, etc.
- Prior to rising in the morning, eat dry crackers or cereal, hard candies, or other dry carbohydrate foods.
- Do not take iron/vitamins on an empty stomach. In fact, you may need to stop iron/vitamins until nausea and vomiting has ceased.
- Avoid any specific food causing nausea and vomiting
- Open windows for fresh air and avoid noxious odors.