

# Coping with nausea and vomiting *in pregnancy*

## What about medication?

The Society of Obstetricians and Gynecologists of Canada and The Motherisk program recognize Diclectin as a safe and effective treatment for nausea and vomiting in pregnancy. It is a combination of vitamin B6 and an antihistamine called doxylamine.

Diclectin was designed to treat nausea and vomiting in pregnancy. It has been used for over 25 years. Studies have shown that it does not affect the developing baby and is considered safe and effective. Ask your health care provider and pharmacist about medications if nausea and vomiting are severe. Do not take any medication until you have consulted your health care provider.

## Can nausea and vomiting affect my relationships?

Nausea and vomiting in pregnancy can be hard on relationships. It can change the amount of work you are able to do. This may put financial strain on your relationship and increase the workload for your partner. Things you use to enjoy may be difficult for you. Your partner may blame you for the added pressures.

- Discuss what is happening, why it is happening, and decide how you can get through this together.
- It may help if you both talk with your health care provider about how to cope.
- Counselling may be needed if problems persist.



Region of Waterloo  
PUBLIC HEALTH

## For more information call:

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[www.regionofwaterloo.ca/ph](http://www.regionofwaterloo.ca/ph)

Motherisk Program at  
Hospital for Sick Children in Toronto

[www.motherisk.org](http://www.motherisk.org)

Society of Obstetricians and  
Gynecologists of Canada

[www.sogc.org](http://www.sogc.org)

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## Are nausea and vomiting common in pregnancy?

### *Yes!*

Nausea and vomiting are very common, especially in the first four months of pregnancy. Fifty to fifty-five per cent of pregnant women experience vomiting, 50–80 per cent of pregnant women experience nausea and vomiting. Nausea and vomiting are common in the morning, however they can happen at any time of the day or night. For 80 per cent of women, nausea and vomiting stop around week 12 of pregnancy. However, some women may experience these symptoms well into their second trimester, or throughout their pregnancy.

## What if I don't have nausea and vomiting?

### *Don't Worry!*

Women who do not have nausea and vomiting in pregnancy are not at higher risk of problems in pregnancy. Enjoy your pregnancy!

## What should I do?

Talk to your health care provider. Usually, nausea and vomiting are not severe and aren't harmful to the mother or baby. For most women, the symptoms lessen during the day to the point where she is hungry and can keep some food down.

## What causes nausea and vomiting?

The cause of nausea and vomiting is still not known. Nausea seems partly due to quickly rising levels of estrogen, which cause the stomach to empty more slowly. Pregnant women also have a heightened sense of smell, so various odours such as foods cooking, perfume or cigarette smoke may cause waves of nausea.

## What about severe nausea and vomiting?

In Canada, one per cent of pregnant women experience severe nausea and vomiting in pregnancy. The lack of nutrients and fluids may be harmful to mom and baby. In these cases, it is very important to speak with a health care provider. The health care provider can suggest steps to make sure that the health of mom and baby are not affected.



## Coping with nausea and vomiting in pregnancy

- Get more rest. Fatigue and stress makes nausea worse. Try napping during the day.
- Try to follow Canada's Food Guide when choosing meals and snacks. If nausea and vomiting are severe, eat whatever appeals to you.
- Eat small meals often (e.g. every two hours)
- Do not skip meals. An empty stomach may make nausea worse.
- It is especially important to take prenatal vitamins as directed by your health care provider to make up for the nutrients you may be missing.
- Avoid cooking or eating spicy, fried, and fatty foods.
- Sniffing lemons or ginger may relieve nausea.
- Drink small amounts throughout the day to prevent dehydration. Avoid drinking fluids during meals, and right before or after a meal.
- If odours upset you, try eating cold food rather than hot. Cold foods smell less than hot foods. Cook with the windows open.
- Ask someone else to cook for you.
- Stock up on whatever foods appeal to you.
- Do not lie down right after eating.
- Avoid warm places. (Heat makes nausea worse).
- Acupressure treatments may be helpful.
- You may need to take time off work and get help and support from family and friends.