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NAUSEA AND VOMITING IN PREGNANCY

Nausea and vomiting of pregnancy (NVP) is one of the most common concerns of pregnancy. As many as 50-90% of pregnant women experience signs and symptoms of this complaint. Contrary to the popular term “morning sickness”, NVP can occur at any time during the day. NVP is categorized as mild (nausea alone), moderate (nausea and vomiting), and severe (extensive vomiting with fluid and electrolyte disturbances).

Mild to moderate NVP usually begins by the 4th to 6th week of pregnancy. It peaks in severity by the third month and usually resolves by the 14th to 16th week of pregnancy. Despite much scientific research, the cause of NVP is not clearly known, but is felt to involve a variety of factors such as:

- ** Elevated hormone levels
- ** Decreased stomach acidity resulting in decreased gastric function
- ** Vitamin B-6 deficiency
- ** Alterations in gastrointestinal motility
- ** Genetic/cultural/prenatal health issues

If you are experiencing mild to moderate NVP, here are some things to try:

- 1) Increase your rest and relaxation time.
- 2) Eat smaller, more frequent meals.
- 3) Eat a small amount of dry complex carbohydrates in the morning prior to rising. These may include crackers, toast, cereal etc.
- 4) Drink fluids (i.e., milk, soup) between meals instead of with meals.
- 5) Sip non-carbonated or “flat” caffeine-free beverages or clear juices.
- 6) Avoid brushing teeth within 1-2 hours after meals or upon arising in the morning.
- 7) Try high protein snacks such as yogurt or nuts.
- 8) Avoid spicy, hot, or greasy foods.
- 9) Avoid food preparation. If you must cook, be sure the kitchen is well-ventilated (open windows etc.)
- 10) Avoid wearing tight clothing around the abdomen.
- 11) Do not lie down for at least 1-2 hours after eating.
- 12) Take iron and vitamin supplements after meals rather than on an empty stomach. If the drugs still cause distress, you can stop taking them until NVP resolves.
- 13) Acupressure at the P6 acupuncture point near the wrist crease. Products like Seaband can be purchased at most pharmacies.
- 14) Take vitamin B-6 (pyridoxine) 25-50 mg. by mouth 3-4 times a day - not to exceed 200 mg per day.
- 15) Relief Band - a watch-like device worn on the underside of the wrist which emits low-level
- 16) electrical pulses across two small electrodes.

The additional remedies listed below have been found by some women to be helpful. They have not, however, been as well-studied.

- * Drinking Ginger tea
- * Ginger capsules 250 mg. 4 x day
- * Cold compresses to forehead or throat
- * Regular exercise
- * Hard candies

Sometimes, you can try a few or all of the suggestions listed above and still feel very ill. It is time to call your provider if:

- a) You are unable to retain liquids for 12 hours or more.
- b) You have lost 4 or more lbs. in a week.
- c) You experience decreased urination.
- d) You have extreme dryness in your mouth.
- e) You experience severe dizziness on standing.