

by mouth. You will also be prescribed a Vitamin tablet to take 3 times a day if you are able to tolerate things by mouth, but if you are not, a vitamin injection can be given through your drip once a week. You can also take something for the heartburn if you need it.

Our advice to help relieve your nausea in hospital and at home

- Drinking is the most important thing. Drink whatever you can. Sugary and flat fizzy drinks can sometimes help; avoid milky drinks.
- Keep eating even in bite-sizes. An empty stomach makes vomiting worse by increasing heart burn.
- Plain biscuits may be helpful to nibble on at regular intervals between meals to relieve the nausea.
- Eat snacks such as toast and jam (no butter), sandwiches, (low fat fillings), soups and crackers, breakfast cereals with low fat milk, - these can be just as nutritious as conventional meals.
- Some people find it better to eat and drink at different times, not together.
- Avoid fatty foods and dairy products.
- Avoid spicy foods.
- Have plenty of rest and keep your room well ventilated.

- Avoid long car journeys.
- If you wish to consider any Complimentary Therapies please contact your GP to discuss it. There is some evidence to suggest that ginger reduces the feeling of sickness.

Looking after and sharing information about you

We have updated our Privacy Notices in line with the data protection legislation (General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)/Data Protection Act 2018. For more information about how we use your personal data please visit our website at:

<https://bwc.nhs.uk/privacy-policy>

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Information for patients

Sickness & Vomiting in Pregnancy

(Hyperemesis Gravidarum)



Why is there sickness in pregnancy?

Most pregnant women feel sick or vomit (be sick) in early pregnancy. It affects 3 out of 4 pregnant women and in most cases it is mild and needs no treatment. It is thought to be due to the sudden increase in hormone levels (bhcg) that is maintaining the pregnancy. This rise is very rapid in the first three months and then stabilises. The sickness usually improves between 12 and 16 weeks but about 1 in 5 women have some sickness all the way through the pregnancy. Pregnancy sickness is often called morning sickness but can occur at any time of the day. Feelings of sickness come and go. They usually last between 1 and 4 hours at a time. Some women have more severe symptoms and have more frequent or longer bouts of sickness.

What are the risks to the baby?

The physical effort of retching and being sick does not harm your baby. If the sickness goes on for a long time, and is severe, the baby may not gain as much weight as normal.

What are the risks to you?

This is a very emotional time and feeling sick can make you feel depressed, but the sickness usually only lasts for a few weeks. Feeling unwell can be disruptive to family

life, especially if you need to come into hospital. If you become dehydrated from the sickness, you will feel tired and have no energy. You will be uncomfortable from having a dry mouth and can get heartburn from being sick. You will drop your stores of essential vitamins, particularly Vitamin B and this can, very occasionally, cause a problem of the brain called Wernicke's Encephalopathy if the vitamins are not replaced.

What happens when I come to hospital?

After an initial assessment at the Early Pregnancy Assessment Unit (EPAU) if we find that you are dehydrated we will insert a fine drip into your hand and take bloods. We will then move you to the 'Hyperemesis Day Centre' where you will receive a drip (intravenous fluids) and medicines that will reduce your vomiting. We will also start you on essential vitamins. This will continue for at least 4 hours.

The Nurses will monitor you and when you are feeling better and able to tolerate some fluids and food the cannula will be removed and you will be able to go home. You will be given oral medication to reduce your sickness to take home with you.

If you are very dehydrated and continue to feel very sick, you may be admitted to the Gynaecology Ward to continue the fluids and the medicines overnight. If you are able to go home after day care but continue to

have nausea and vomiting the following day we will see you again at the EPAU and the treatment may need to be repeated. During the weekend when the day centre is closed you will be seen and the same treatment will be offered to you in the Gynaecology Ward at BWH.

What tests will be carried out?

You will have some blood tests when we assess that you are dehydrated. Some of the blood tests may have to be repeated if your sickness is not responding to treatment. We will also test your urine to see if you have an infection and also to see how dehydrated you are. Your weight will be checked if you continue vomiting. An ultrasound scan will be performed if you have not had a scan already to see if you have a twin pregnancy or an abnormal pregnancy both of which may lead to increased vomiting. This may be at a future appointment.

What can I have to help the sickness?

Medication that is as safe as possible in pregnancy will be prescribed for the sickness. No medicine can be said to be completely safe in pregnancy, particularly within the first 3 months when the baby is still developing. These medications can either be given into the vein through the drip, by an injection into the leg, by a suppository into your bottom or taken