

13 Nausea Survival Tips

If morning sickness is making you miserable, the following tips may help you feel better. For more advice, see the book *Managing Morning Sickness* by Miriam Erick MS, RD, an international expert on morning sickness. (www.morningsickness.net) Note: If you experience severe nausea and vomiting, consult your health care provider. Do not self-treat with medication, vitamins, or herbal supplements without your health care provider's approval.



1. Track Your Environment

Is your environment making you feel worse? Are you sensitive to noise? To light? To heat? Are you more likely to feel sick when you're tired or hungry? Do certain food tastes or textures make you feel better? Make a list of the places and situations that make you more (or less) nauseated and change your environment as needed.

2. Take the Sniff Test

You may have noticed you're a "super-smeller" now that you're pregnant. That heightened sense of smell can make any odor a trigger for nausea. It might be an unpleasant odor like your neighbor's cigarette smoke or the body odor of the person next to you on the train, or it might be a smell you normally love, like garlic, lavender or your partner's cologne. Try to identify and avoid odors you've determined that make you turn green. Experiment with smells that make you feel better.

3. Eat What Sounds Good

Sometimes it's just important to keep something down—no matter what it is. Ask yourself: "What would make me feel better? Something sweet, salty, crunchy, sour, soft, bland, or wet?" I once had a bout of morning sickness on the morning of a TV interview. What sounded good at the moment? Pretzels and diet cola. It definitely wasn't the healthiest breakfast—but after eating it, I was able to get on with my day (and my interview) and eat healthier foods afterward.

4. Drink Enough Fluids

Dehydration can be fatal, and it's the biggest danger of morning sickness. Women with severe morning sickness are often hospitalized to get IV fluids. Most pregnant women need to drink about 10 cups (2.5 liters) of fluids per day. Some women find sparkling water appealing, while others get their fluids from fruits with high water content, like watermelon, cantaloupe, and grapes. Popsicles, slushy drinks, ginger ale, gelatin, and lemonade may also be appealing. Drinking fluids between meals (35-40 minutes after solids) may also help.

Love Lemon

Both the smell and taste of lemon has been helpful to many women with morning sickness. It may be as easy as having a lemon half nearby to sniff occasionally or a sour lemon candy to suck on. For food that goes down easily, think lemon custard or a Luna LemonZest bar. When life gives you lemons (or in this case, morning sickness) make lemonade!

5. Ask About Medication

In randomized control trials, the combination of vitamin B6 (pyridoxine) and doxylamine, (an antihistamine found in Unisom Sleep Tabs) has been shown to decrease nausea and vomiting of pregnancy by 70%. The American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology (ACOG) recommends either vitamin B6 alone or the combination of B6 and Doxylamine as a first line of therapy.¹¹ However, it's still best to get the OK from your doctor before using any medications during pregnancy (especially during the first trimester.)

6. Think “Alternative”

Some alternative therapies can also help morning sickness. Motion sickness bands (also called Sea-Bands) have been shown to ease nausea and vomiting of pregnancy; so has acupuncture¹². Using ginger in various forms has also been shown to help.¹³ ACOG recommends you discuss any alternative therapies with your health care provider before trying, however.

7. Never Run on Empty!

Eat small, frequent meals with snacks in between to keep your stomach from emptying completely. This might mean eating a few bites of something every thirty minutes. Some women carry a box of crackers with them to keep nausea at bay.

Help From Others Who've Been There...

Try these remedies that have been helpful for other women:

- ◆ Eat every two hours—whether you’re hungry or not.
- ◆ Sip on something carbonated and snack on something dry—like club soda with lime and Cheerios or ginger ale and sesame crackers.
- ◆ Eat candied or crystallized ginger, available at Asian grocers and natural food stores.
- ◆ Try something sweet, sour and salty—pretzels and lemonade.
- ◆ Drink ginger ale or ginger beer (not real beer). Let it go a bit flat first.

8. Chill Out!

Nausea can be stressful, especially if it disrupts your usual routine. Steering clear of additional stress can't hurt! Taking a nap—or just closing your eyes a few minutes—especially after meals, helps some women. Try to reduce sensory stimuli too—talking on the phone, loud noises, tight clothing, etc.

9. Add Some Protein, Especially at Bedtime

Research shows that protein-rich foods may have an effect on the mechanics of gastric emptying and thus can decrease the nausea of pregnancy.¹⁴ While you may not feel like downing a full meal, consider adding some low-fat cheese to those crackers, eating some cottage cheese with fruit, adding some Greek yogurt to your smoothie or eating some lettuce wraps filled with leftover chicken. Eating balanced, protein-rich meals also helps control blood sugar; low blood sugar can be another factor that contributes to morning sickness.

10. Avoid Greasy and Spicy Foods

Such foods can aggravate nausea as well as heartburn. However, if this kind of food sounds really good to you, it's worth a try!

11. Eat in Bed

Leave something dry and salty beside your bed at night (crackers, pretzels, nuts) or have your partner bring you a snack in the morning before you get out of bed. (Now there's a fine habit to cultivate!)

12. Eat Cold Foods or Have Your Partner Do the Cooking

The look of raw meat or the smell of strong foods cooking may make you feel sick. Leave the cooking to someone else (or get healthy take-out) and use the time to take a walk or do some shopping. You might also want to eat outside when possible to get more fresh air.

13. Keep your pantry stocked for the “queasies”:

- ◆ Fresh lemon and lemon drop candies.
- ◆ Greek yogurt or cottage cheese—they're cold, easy to eat and high in protein.
- ◆ Pasta or quinoa salad—bland and versatile. Add leftover meat or chicken and chopped cucumber.
- ◆ Crackers or pretzels.
- ◆ Homemade trail mix: Cheerios, pretzels, chocolate chips and raisins or dried cranberries.