

Nutrition for Morning Sickness



Nausea during pregnancy, also known as morning sickness, is a really common problem particularly during the early stages of pregnancy, although it's certainly not limited to this. Also, despite the name morning sickness, some women feel nausea throughout the day. The exact causes are still not completely clear and there are many factors that are thought to play a role. Two key considerations are changes in hormone levels, as well as blood sugar imbalance and spikes of insulin. The good news is that research shows morning sickness is associated with positive outcomes in terms of the health of both mother and baby. Clearly, it's not much fun to deal with

though, so the following pointers are aimed at relieving the severity of symptoms.

Become a Grazer - The way to support blood sugar stability is to eat little and often (at least every 2 hours). This really is the key to steady blood glucose and insulin levels. This might mean smaller main meals with at least one snack in between meals. Include fresh fruit throughout the day as this provides your body with the glucose it requires. Starchy vegetables will also do this. Ensure your snacks as well as your main meals contain some form of protein. This can be done simply by adding a few almonds, Brazil nuts, cashews, pine nuts or macadamias, all of which are high in protein. Or have a spoonful or two of hummus. By adding protein to the meal or snack you further support stable blood glucose levels.

Avoid Triggers – This may seem obvious, but do make sure you avoid foods and smells that trigger your nausea. Due to a heightened sense of smell, you may find that certain foods you enjoyed before you fell pregnant may make you feel queasy now. If so, you could try sticking to more bland smelling or tasting foods for the short-term. This may mean you temporarily avoid some foods that are really healthy, such as cruciferous vegetables (broccoli, cauliflower, sprouts and cabbage for example) as the sulphur smell they produce can trigger nausea for some. The same goes for eggs and onions.

Root Ginger – This is one of the most well-known remedies for nausea and has been used for thousands of years. Slice it up and have it in herbal teas, or keep some in the freezer and grate it over porridge in the morning. You could also leave a jug of water in the fridge with fresh slices of ginger that will flavour it over time. Ginger not only helps with nausea, it's incredible all round for gut health and immune support.

Eat Enough Fruit and Vegetables - It's vital to include enough fibre in your diet to keep your digestion healthy. At the same time fruit and veg are an excellent source of antioxidants. So go for a bright and colourful range, including *berries, apples, melon, mango, kiwis, cherries, oranges and other citrus fruits*. These are all easy to digest and don't have a particularly pungent smell. Vegetables such as *carrots, squash, parsnips, butternut squash and pumpkin* are all great cooked veggies to include as they are again very easy to digest, as well as being grounding and nourishing foods. But don't



forget to include enough greens in your diet. Ensure you have regular helpings of *spinach, rocket, lamb's tail, chard and kale*.

Vitamin B6 – This vitamin is thought to reduce morning sickness due to its interactions with hormones. Foods that are high in B6 include *bananas, avocados, sweet potatoes, fish, chicken and pistachios*. One thing that some



people find helpful is leaving a banana beside the bed, then first thing in the morning before you even get up, eat the banana, wait another 10-15 minutes before getting up. This will also provide the body with a nice steady flow of glucose.

Water – Drinking water is essential for everyone, but if you have particularly bad nausea and even vomiting then it's vital you replace any lost fluids. If you do suffer from particularly bad vomiting then try some coconut water for the added electrolytes. You can try keeping a pint of mineral water by your bed with the juice of half a lemon and a pinch of salt. The lemon juice makes the water more alkaline and this seems to settle the stomach. Lemon is well known for relieving nausea, even its fragrance alone. You could try cutting a lemon in half and rub the juice on your hands, then hold your hands to your face and take a deep breath whenever you feel nauseous.

Coconut & Banana Porridge

The following recipe is aimed at providing foods high in vitamin B6 along with complex carbohydrates and protein, which together supply a steady source of glucose. Cinnamon is known for its ability to support healthy blood sugar levels and ginger can be added for an additional way to relieve nausea.

- Half a cup of oats
- Handful of fresh/frozen berries or cherries
- 1 small ripe banana
- 1 tsp unsweetened desiccated coconut
- Pinch of cinnamon
- 1.5 cups oat milk
- Sprinkling of chopped almonds
- Grated ginger - optional



Heat the milk and oats, then add the blueberries, mashed banana, desiccated coconut and cinnamon and stir well so that the banana has mixed completely with the oats. Sprinkle with chopped almonds and a little grated ginger and serve hot. For added sweetness you can always try mixing in one tsp of honey.

Sources and Further Information:

Huxley RR (2000) Nausea and vomiting in early pregnancy: its role in placental development. Obstetrics & Gynaecology. 95 (5): 779-82. Marilyn Glenville (2001) The Nutritional Health Handbook for Women. Little, Brown Book Group.