

Information about Nausea and Vomiting in Pregnancy

Nausea and vomiting is common in pregnancy but sometimes it becomes persistent and prolonged. You may have a condition called hyperemesis gravidarum if you have:

- difficulty carrying out your normal responsibilities and/or going to work.
- Problems caring for yourself such as showering and preparing food.
- lost 5% of your pre-pregnancy weight, dehydrated and abnormal blood results

Why do I need to come to hospital?

Your doctor has tried to make you feel better by giving you anti-sickness tablets, but they don't seem to be managing your symptoms. We may want to bring you into hospital for the day to carry out some tests, give you anti-sickness injections or maybe put a drip into your arm to allow us to get water and nutrition into your body.

Why do I feel like this?

The exact cause is unknown, however the pregnancy hormones are new, and your body has to learn to adjust and cope with the changes that are happening inside you.

When will it stop?

For most women the nausea/vomiting will ease by 12 weeks, and usually stops before you reach 20 weeks. A small number of women will find the sickness lasts until delivery, although it is usually less severe.

Is this nausea/vomiting/weight loss harming my baby?

There is no evidence that severe vomiting has any harmful effect on your baby as your body should have enough reserves, and the baby will take its nutrition from there. Studies show vitamins seem to be most important during the few months prior to pregnancy and up to about 6 weeks gestation, so if you have been taking folic acid this will have helped to prevent problems such as Spina Bifida.

The risk to the baby is greater if you are severely ill which is why we would like to assess and treat you if necessary.

Are there other risks?

Women have a higher risk of blood clots in their legs or lungs in pregnancy. If you have had a blood clot before, blood clotting disorders in your family, you smoke or have a high body mass index, you may be at higher risk and need to start injections into your abdomen (tummy). Severe pregnancy sickness and reduced activity increase your risk further, so please try to keep as mobile as you can.

How long will I be in hospital?

We would expect you to stay with us for most of the day, but the majority of women will be ready to go home from about 5pm.

Some women need to return the following day for a second day of fluids/medicines, and some women may need to be admitted overnight. Once we have given you some fluids/medicines, we will have a better idea of how your body is responding.

Sometimes the vomiting comes back again after you have gone home, so don't be disappointed if you find that you need to continue the medication or even come back into hospital again. Your sickness will get better.

What do I need to bring?

Please bring whatever you think you need for the day, and come dressed in loose, comfortable clothing. You must bring:

- Two forms of ID – both need to show your home address and passport
- Any medicines that you are taking
- Any referral or medical information from your GP.

Could I come to the unit after 9am?

We need to complete your assessment and start getting the fluids into your body that it needs. To improve your symptoms and discharge you home before 6pm means we need to start as close to 9am as we can.

Can I bring someone with me?

We understand this is a difficult time for you, and will try to accommodate someone with you when you come for treatment. Please ask the staff about any current restrictions. We are unable to accept children into the unit at any time due to restricted space.

Counselling

We understand that this sickness may make you feel very low. The medicines and fluids should help, but if you find you are not improving, or you are feeling depressed, please speak to us – we may be able to offer you an appointment with our counsellor. You could also contact www.pregnancysicknesssupport.org.uk.

Contact Details:

<p>The Early Pregnancy Unit (EPU) Lily clinic, treatment Centre Hinchingsbrooke Hospital Huntingdon, PE29 6NT Opening hours may vary</p>	<p>The Emergency Gynaecology Assessment Unit (EGAU) 1st floor, woman and child unit, Bretton Gate Peterborough (City Hospital) PE3 9GZ Open: Weekdays 0800-1800-phone line open until 1730 Weekends/Bank holidays 0800-1200</p>
<p>Central triage line for EPU and EGAU: 01733 673758 (voicemail will cut in when the line is engaged – please leave a message for a call back) www.womenshealthpeterborough.co.uk</p>	
<p>For emergencies only, out of these hours, please attend the Emergency Department</p>	

Within this leaflet we use the term woman/women, however we acknowledge that it is not only people who identify as women for whom it is necessary to access our services. We recognise the importance of providing inclusive and respectful care to all people and their families, including those whose gender identity does not align with the sex they were assigned at birth. Please let us know if there is anything we can do to make you feel more comfortable while you are under our care.