

# Nutrition Tips for Pregnancy

While you are seeing amazing changes to your body during pregnancy, it is also normal to experience some discomfort as well. These tips may help alleviate some of your discomfort and help keep you nourished throughout your pregnancy.

## **Nausea and Vomiting**

Many women experience nausea and vomiting during their pregnancy. This is commonly referred to as morning sickness, although it can occur at any time of day. If you are experiencing nausea and vomiting, try the following tips:

- Try to eat six small meals/snacks during the day. Small meals may be easier to tolerate than large meals.
- Keep easy-to-digest foods, such as crackers and pretzels, with you during the day and at your bedside. You may even try eating a few crackers before getting out of bed in the morning.
- Drink water or other beverages (caffeine-free) between meals.
- Eating ginger or drinking ginger ale may improve nausea.
- Lower-fat foods are easier to digest. High-fat foods can make nausea worse.

Follow up with your health care provider if your nausea and vomiting is severe or if you think you are losing weight.

## **Constipation**

Increased hormones during pregnancy can cause your digestive system to slow down and can cause constipation. Constipation occurs when you have less than three bowel movements per week - your stools may be hard, dry, and difficult to pass.

Eating high fiber foods and drinking plenty of fluids can help prevent constipation. Slowly increase the amount of fiber (up to 25-35 g per day) you eat over a few weeks and remember to drink water. Adding too much fiber without water could make your symptoms worse.

Choose foods high in fiber; whole grain cereals and breads, vegetables and fruits with the skin on, beans of all varieties, and brown or wild rice are all good choices.

## **Heartburn**

Acid reflux (heartburn) occurs when the muscles at the bottom of your esophagus don't open and close properly. This allows food and stomach acid to back up into your esophagus and can cause a burning sensation in your chest and throat.

To help prevent and manage reflux, you can try the following:

- Eat small, frequent meals.
- Avoid foods that make your symptoms worse. Common irritants include: caffeine, chocolate, high-fat foods (e.g., fried meats, nuts and nut butters), peppermint, spearmint, and pepper.
- Avoid lying down after eating.
- Elevate the head of your bed (or elevate your head with pillows).

If you continue to have heartburn, talk to your health care provider. They can determine if over-the-counter or prescription medications might help alleviate symptoms.

## Taking Vitamins

Along with a healthy diet, prenatal vitamin and mineral supplements help ensure you are getting all the nutrients you need. Some women, especially those already experiencing nausea or vomiting, find that supplements upset their stomach.

To avoid this, try to take your supplement with a small meal or snack and not on an empty stomach.

Do not take any herbal supplements or over-the-counter medications that have not been prescribed by your health care provider.



24-Hour Breastfeeding Hotline  
1-800-833-4642

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