**What is Morning Sickness**

Morning sickness is a term used to describe the experience of nausea/vomiting throughout a pregnancy. Despite its name, morning sickness can strike at any time during the day or can last for extended periods of time during the day.

While the exact cause of morning sickness is unknown, it is incredibly common, with upwards of 85 % of pregnant people experiencing it. While everyone will experience morning sickness differently, morning sickness usually starts at 4 weeks and reaches its peak between 7-12 weeks. Between 12-16 weeks, most people report an easement to morning sickness; however, some people will experience morning sickness throughout their entire pregnancy.

In extreme cases, people will report a sever form of morning sickness called hyperemesis gravidarum (HG). This is a condition that affects less than 2% of pregnant people and causes severe nausea/vomiting to the point of dehydration. In extreme cases, the pregnant person may be admitted to the hospital for IV treatments.

If morning sickness begin for the first time after 10 weeks of pregnancy, or stops and then starts again, talk to your healthcare provider as the symptoms might be related to other causes.

**What Causes Morning Sickness**

While the exact cause is unknown, morning sickness has been linked to the development of the placenta and the placental secretions. Morning sickness is more severe in twin pregnancies as there is more than one placenta. This can also occur if the placenta is too big. Other factors that could impact the occurrence of morning sickness are:

* Genetics
* A history of Hyperemesis gravidarum (HG)
* Carrying a female fetus

Along with this, increased hormone levels can slow down digestion, leading to heartburn, acid reflux and indigestion; these components can further lead to nausea and vomiting.

Morning sickness is also aggravated by foods and smells, this is intensified by hormonal changes that can lead to lingering bitter, sour or metallic tastes in the mouth, which further contribute to morning sickness. Some people also report an increased sense of smell during their pregnancy that can trigger morning sickness.

**Factors that Make Morning Sickness Worse**

* A multiple pregnancy (twins, triplets, etc)
* A placenta that is too big
* Thyroid problems: hyperthyroidism/ hypothyroidism
* Certain digestive issues: heart burn, acid reflux, Chron’s disease, ulcerative Colitis, gastritis, ulcers
* Stress, depression and other psychological conditions
* Certain viral or bacterial infections (such as cough and cold, flu, urinary tract infection, sinus infection, ear infection)
* Active migraines or headaches
* Helicobacter pylori infection
* Diabetes or gestational diabetes
* Obesity
* High blood pressure
* Untreated and/or poorly managed health conditions

**When Should I be Concerned?**

* You are not able to keep food or fluids down for a period of 24 hours or more.
* You are feeling weak or lightheaded.
* Your mouth and lips are dry.
* You produce much less urine than usual.
* Your urine is dark and has an odor.
* You are passing urine less than 3 times a day.
* You do not gain weight, or you lose weight (weight loss of 5 or more pounds over a 1 to 2 week period).

**Foods/Lifestyle Suggestions**

* Try to eat small amounts of food every 1 to 2 hours as this will help balance your blood sugar levels.
* Try not to eat or drink too much at one time.
* Don’t wait to be too hungry or too thirsty, this may cause you to feel sick.
* Do not skip meals.
* Try to eat high-carbohydrate, low-fat foods and low-fat dairy products, as they are easier to digest.
* Try to add any source of protein to each meal and snack
* Try to minimize or avoid spicy, fried and/or high fat foods.
* Try candies, gums and lozenges to help minimize the metallic taste in your mouth.

**Approved Medication**

* Diclectin® is a prescription product and the only medication specifically approved by Health Canada for morning sickness.
* Gravol
* Benadryl
* Phenergan
* Compazine
* Thorazine
* Zofran
* Unisom
* Vistaril

It is important to talk to your doctor about any medications you are taking. Along with this, your doctor can create targeted treatment plans with you.

**Sexual Health Questions? We have Answers!**

**Location:**

47 St. Clare Ave

St. John’s, NL

**Hours:**

Monday: 9am – 4:30pm

Tuesday: 9am – 4:30pm

Wednesday: 9am – 4:30pm

Thursday: 12pm – 7pm

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**Morning Sickness**

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