Hyperemesis Gravidarum (HG)

Many women have some nausea and vomiting during the first 3 months of pregnancy. It is often called morning sickness, but it can occur at any time of the day. Some women can develop a condition called Hyperemesis Gravidarum (HG). This is when the vomiting becomes so often and severe that the woman loses a large amount of weight. It can lead to dehydration, or not enough water in the body. This makes it hard for your body to get enough nutrition. If HG becomes severe, it can be dangerous for mother and baby.

Signs of HG
Call your doctor if you have these signs, which are more than morning sickness:

• Vomiting more than 6 times a day
• Weight loss of 5 pounds or more
• Not able to keep any food or fluids down for 24 hours or longer
• Urine is dark yellow or not able to urinate for long periods
• Abdominal pain, fever, or weakness
• Feel faint

Treatment of HG
Your doctor may try several treatments to help your condition. These may include:

Changes to Your Diet

• Eat small meals often to avoid an empty stomach. Eat dry crackers, toast, or cereal before getting out of bed or when feeling queasy or nauseated.
• Wait at least 15 to 30 minutes after eating before drinking fluids. Take sips of clear liquids only. Examples of clear liquids are clear fruit juices (apple, pear, white grape), weak tea, soft drinks like Sprite, 7-UP, or ginger ale, and broth. Try low sugar or no sugar type drinks such as Gatorade or Powerade Zero.
• Eat foods that are easy to digest such as bread, toast, plain crackers, dry Cheerios, or other dry, low sugar cereals, or bagels. Try gluten-free options, such as Rice Chex.
• Avoid greasy or spicy foods. Try bland foods until nausea gets better.
• Avoid strong food smells that can trigger nausea.

After 2 or 3 days with little or no vomiting, follow the Hyperemesis Diet (Dry Diet) handout for more food choices.
Food Diary
Keep a record of when vomiting occurs and what you ate or were doing before it happened, such as certain foods, odors, activities, or places. The goal is to find anything that triggers the nausea. Share this information with your doctor and care team.

Medical Treatment
If severe dehydration occurs, intravenous fluids (by vein) may need to be given through a tube into your vein, called an IV.
Most doctors avoid giving medicines during pregnancy. However, in this situation, the risk of using medicines is less than the risk of poor nutrition and weight loss from HG. These medicines may be used to help you. Please talk with your doctor, nurse, and pharmacists about questions you may have using these medicines.

Talk to your doctor or health care team if you have any questions about your care.
For more health information, contact the Library for Health Information at 614-293-3707 or e-mail health-info@osu.edu.

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