

# Problems in Early Pregnancy



## 'Morning Sickness'

It is very common for women to feel unwell in the first few months of pregnancy. Although this is often called 'morning sickness,' it can occur at any time of the day – and sometimes all day.

Morning sickness can be very unpleasant, and women can experience either nausea, fatigue, and sometimes either 'dry reaching' or actual vomiting.

These feelings can be triggered by smells, particularly smells of food being prepared.

Many women find that they feel better if they have eaten a small amount of food. For this reason, it is worthwhile having a supply of 'snacks' that can be eaten regularly during the day. Using Vitamin B6 and ginger can help, and these are available in preparations from pharmacies.

Sometimes medication is required to settle nausea and vomiting, and it is important to discuss this with your doctor.

**A range of medications are available that are safe and effective.** In rare cases, the vomiting becomes so troublesome that women must be admitted to hospital for medical treatments such as fluids and medication through a drip.

## Fatigue

One of the problems that women commonly find in early pregnancy is fatigue, and loss of energy. This occurs for many reasons. The hormonal changes women undergo seem to lead to tiredness. Morning sickness, particularly if there is vomiting as well, can be very draining. Sometimes there are problems sleeping. In many cases, all of these factors combine to lead to fatigue and tiredness, particularly for women who have other children and busy lives.

Rarely, fatigue can be the result of other problems, such as anaemia, thyroid disease, or infection.

Trying to adjust sleep patterns, reduce work where possible, or have partner and family help with tasks can all help. Going to bed earlier, or taking naps if possible, all help. In most cases, feelings of fatigue and tiredness settle by the middle of pregnancy, but if there are ongoing problems make sure you alert your doctor or midwife.

## Anxiety and Depression

Anxiety and depression can be a major problem for many women. It can be difficult to admit to problems, and sometimes it is difficult to recognise what is happening. Anxiety and depression can lead women to feel worried, tearful, sleepless, tired, and have a sense that they are not coping. Sometimes women feel bad, but are not sure why. Partners and family members often sense that something is wrong, but find it difficult to understand or work out what the problem is. If there are any problems like this, it is very important to alert your doctor or midwife. This is especially so if women have a past history of treatment for anxiety, depression, or any mental health or emotional issues.

## Bleeding

Any bleeding in early pregnancy will be a concern for the woman and her family.

Bleeding may be harmless, and can sometimes occur after intercourse.

However, it is important to confirm that the pregnancy is progressing normally.

This will commonly involve an examination, ultrasound, and possibly blood tests. For women who have a negative blood group (for example, blood type O Negative) it could be necessary to have a dose of anti-D to reduce the risk of forming blood group antibodies.

## Thrush

'Thrush' is the result of overgrowth of yeast known as *Candida* in the vagina, and this can be common in pregnancy. This occurs because of changes in hormones, and their effect on the body.

Thrush can cause itching discomfort in and around the vagina, and some discharge. If thrush is suspected, see your doctor or midwife for advice and treatment.