



EAST CASCADE  
WOMEN'S GROUP

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## NAUSEA AND VOMITING IN PREGNANCY

Diet changes are the initial treatment for nausea and vomiting in pregnancy. Try:

- Small meals or snacks eaten slowly to avoid feeling hungry
- Eat before feeling hungry to avoid empty stomach which aggravates nausea.
- Avoid drinking fluids on an empty stomach
- A snack before getting out of bed in morning can be helpful.
- Protein-based meals/snacks decreases nausea.
- Try BRAT diet: Bananas, Rice, Applesauce and Toast when reintroducing food after period of nausea and vomiting.
- Eliminate coffee and spicy, odorous, high fat, acidic, and very sweet foods.
- Fluids are tolerated if cold, clear, and carbonated or sour
- Drinking peppermint tea or sucking peppermint or sour candies can reduce nausea after eating.
- Ginger may help- recommended dose is 250 mg four times daily or try ginger chews, tea or candy (pregnancy pops).
- Broth (vegetable or chicken or beef broth) eaten slowly by the spoonful.
- Lemonade or coke slushy: Pour lemonade or coke into a glass and place in the freezer until slushy (not frozen). Eat by the spoonful slowly.

Acupuncture is an alternative treatment proven to help with nausea and vomiting- ask for recommendations on an acupuncturist. May also try acupressure wrist bands (sea bands) that are used for motion sickness.

### Medication for Nausea and Vomiting

If diet changes and acupuncture do not work, then your doctor may recommend and/or prescribe medications for you. Many drugs have been shown to be safe during pregnancy but others have limited safety information. Diclegis or B6 (Pyridoxine) and Unisom (Doxylamine) are the only FDA approved drugs for n/v in pregnancy. Phenergan may be prescribed to you if this medication does not work. Zofran is one of the drugs that has some conflicting information about its safety for use in pregnancy.

### What are the facts about Zofran?

- Zofran has never been approved by the FDA for nausea and vomiting in pregnancy. (But, many drugs we use in pregnancy haven't been either, like misoprostol to induce labor, drugs to suppress pre-term labor, and steroids to mature baby's lungs). Zofran is approved (and works well) in non-pregnant adults.
- Some studies have shown no risk of fetal malformations, some have shown an increased risk of cardiac and cleft palate malformations when Zofran was used in first trimester. Only using Zofran in the 2<sup>nd</sup> trimester and 3<sup>rd</sup> trimester may help reduce risks to fetal development.
- Maternal risks of using Zofran include EKG abnormalities, this can be made worse by electrolyte imbalance (which happens in mod/severe vomiting), or with some antidepressants (ie: Celexa, Prozac, Lexapro, Paxil, and Zoloft).

### First Line Medication Treatment of Nausea and Vomiting in Pregnancy

- Over the counter medications Vitamin B6 (Pyrodoxine) 25 mg and Doxylamine 25 mg (Unisom- an over the counter sleep aid) can be used as directed here, for nausea and vomiting.



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- Doxylamine (Unisom) is widely available at most pharmacies but Vitamin B6 can be harder to find- call first as some pharmacies do not carry it. If you cannot find the Vitamin B6 in 25 mg tablet form, you can purchase 50 mg or 100 mg tablets and a pill cutter. You can cut a 50 mg tablet in half for a 25 mg dose or cut a 100 mg tablet into quarters for 25 mg dose.
- Your provider may prescribe Diclegis or Bonjesta which are prescription forms of these combined medications. Many insurance plans will not pay for these however, so check before picking this prescription.

**For nausea and vomiting take Vitamin B6 and Unisom tablets as directed below:**

*May take Vitamin B6 25 mg up to 3 times a day alone. Some women find that this is effective for nausea. If that does not work then:*

- Day 1: Take one- 25 mg tablet of Vitamin B6 and one half (12.5 mg) of a 25 mg tablet of Doxylamine (Unisom) at **bedtime**.

If no improvement or not enough improvement by day 3 then:

- Day 3: Take Vitamin B6, 25mg one tablet and one half (12.5 mg) of a 25 mg tablet of Doxylamine (Unisom) in **morning**, and Vitamin B6, 25mg one tab and one half (12.5 mg) of a 25 mg tablet of Doxylamine (Unisom) at **bedtime**.

If symptoms persist:

- Day 4: start Vitamin B6 25mg one tablet and Doxylamine 25mg half tablet (12.5 mg) in the **morning**, 25mg Vitamin B6 at **lunch** and Vitamin B6 25mg one tab and one half (12.5 mg) of a 25 mg tablet of Doxylamine (Unisom) at **bedtime**.

**Take as a daily prescription and not as needed.**

**If symptoms persist after 4 days, call East Cascade Women's Group for additional provider recommendations.**

**References:** Uptodate.com

Koren G. Treating morning sickness in the United States-changes in prescribing are needed. 2014

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.acog.2014.08.017>

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