

Eating Advice for Women Suffering Pregnancy Sickness

Throughout pregnancy, we are bombarded with advice about what and what not to eat. Women with HG often find that the list of food and drinks that they can keep down is very small and not at all from the healthy options. Many women find that eating vegetables and some fruits causes immediate vomiting in the peak stages, making it even more difficult to follow a healthy diet.

For some reason, women with hyperemesis often find sweet and salty foods i.e. sweet drinks like lemonade, and crisps, are more likely to stay down than healthy foods. Their peculiar diet can lead to disapproving comments and the incorrect assumption that this is how they normally eat.

Although it is important to follow current guidelines regarding avoiding certain foods which may contain harmful bacteria such as pâté, liver, soft cheeses and undercooked eggs.

If you are able to tolerate small quantities of food and fluid then try to fortify what you do eat and drink.

Fortified Milk: Add 4 tablespoons of milk powder to 1 pint of full cream milk. This milk can then be used for drinks that you find tolerable such as milkshakes, hot chocolate or smoothies, or use it on cereal or in puddings, porridge or jellies.

Snacks: Try to have snacks available at all times in the house so that as soon as you feel able to eat something you can. Snack bars or cereal bars, crisps, crackers and so on.

Fortify Meals: If you are managing to eat small amounts at your family mealtimes then try to add calories to your meal by fortifying with hard or pasturised cheese, butter, crème fraiche, margarine, fortified milk pulses, meat and so on.

Getting enough fluid

If you are finding it difficult to drink water and/or keep it down, then you are not alone, it's very typical. You may have to become quite creative about how to take fluids. Suggested drinks and methods of taking them are:

- Lucozade
- lemonade
- milkshakes (try to fortify as suggested above)
- IronBru
- Dr Pepper
- orange squash
- apple juice
- lime juice
- ice cubes made of flat coke or just tap water or bottled water
- ice lollies
- sips of tepid water
- continually sipping tiny amounts of liquid through a straw
- just holding water/drinks in your mouth
- if you can't tolerate tap water try mineral water, freeze a half empty bottle and then top up with fridge cold water - this keeps it cold for hours.

When the illness is at its worst during the early hormonal surges - typically between eight and ten weeks- then it is difficult to retain any liquids and you may need to be hospitalised for rehydration by IV (intravenous) fluids. If you are unable to keep down fluids, don't delay in asking for treatment. Speak to your GP, midwife or go to A&E.

When solids do become bearable suggestions to try are:

- jelly (make with fortified milk, above)
- tinned fruit
- ice lollies
- ice cream
- ice cold cherries
- frozen grapefruit segments
- crisps
- fish fingers
- potato cakes
- crumpets
- soda bread
- other potato based or salty foods

If you are able to eat food with a high water content such as melon, cucumber, apples and other fruits, it is a good way of taking some fluids on board without having to drink water. If you develop a craving for something then go with it, it may be your body's way of getting a nutrient it needs.



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