True Fortune Acupuncture

Nausea & Vomiting During Pregnancy

Please be aware that a woman's experience of morning sickness varies as much as her experience of labour. Therefore, do not be disappointed if the advice you receive from others doesn't help in your case. Also, do not feel judged by people who 'just got on with things' when they had pregnancy nausea. There are massive variations in the degree to which a woman will experience nausea and vomiting during pregnancy.

Acupuncture treatment can help support you with the experience of nausea and vomiting during pregnancy, but please note that your nausea will likely return if you overstep your body's limits. If antiemetics are prescribed, it can be very useful to combine them with acupuncture in order to reduce the need for medication. The following is advice that Debra Betts, a midwife and acupuncturist, has found useful over her many years of practice.

Fluid Intake

- It is essential to avoid dehydration – becoming even slightly dehydrated will make any nausea more intense. Signs of dehydration are dry lips, feeling thirsty and reduced urine output. You should Inform your doctor or midwife if your urine output decreases to only once a day.
- If you find it difficult to drink fluids in quantity, then try and consume small amounts frequently.
- Soups can be a great way to take in liquids (potato soup is particularly bland).
- Ginger tea is often recommended for morning sickness, but do not consume more than three cups in one day.
- If you find that ginger tea (which is heating) doesn't work for you, then you should try peppermint tea (which is cooling).
- If you find that belching helps your nausea, then try carbonated drinks (especially ginger based drinks).
- If your practitioner hasn't advised against the consumption of cold foods and drinks, you could try sucking on ice cubes and eating watermelon or pears.

Snacks

- Pay attention to what foods and drinks increase your nausea – this may be very different to the advice you receive from others.
- Having small regular snacks helps to keep blood sugar levels stable.
- Try to have a small snack every one to two hours, before a feeling of hunger sets in – this could be just a few raisins or nuts (almonds are recommended), a sandwich, or a piece of fruit.
- Overeating can intensify the nausea so each woman must find her own balance.
- It can help to give up the idea of regular meals, and instead spread food intake over the day.
- Sugary foods will quickly elevate and drop blood sugar levels so they should be avoided. You should focus on consuming slower releasing carbohydrates such as fruit, potatoes, bread, pasta and rice
- It may help to have a high protein snack (such as nuts or yoghurt) before going to bed and a carbohydrate snack (such as toast or oat cakes) on waking.

Liquids that may help: Apple Cider Vinegar – 1 tbs into a mug, fill with boiling water, add honey to taste; Chamomile Tea; Ginger Ale; Ginger Tea – grate root ginger the size of thumbnail, steep in boiling water for 10 mins, add honey to taste (drink no more than 3 cups a day); Water with Lemon Juice; Peppermint Tea; and, Potato Soup.

Foods that may help: Almonds; Plain Congee – 1 cup of jasmine rice to 8 cups water, boil for 30 mins until porridge like consistency; Oat Cakes; Dried Fruit – especially apricots and raisins; Egg Sandwiches; Grapefruit; Marmite; Miso; Noodles; Pasta; Peaches; Pears; Peppermints; Potatoes; Baby food; White Bread; and, Yoghurt.

Rest

- Resting is definitely beneficial. Your body is going through tremendous changes even though you cannot yet see any external signs of pregnancy.
- If you can, arrange some time off for the time of day when you feel the worst – can you start work an hour later or arrange child care for a few weeks?
- If you feel the need to go to bed early then do so as your body is telling you what you need.

Smells

- If you are feeling overwhelmed by smells you can try applying lemon oil (or whatever scent works for you) to the inside of a facemask or using an aromatic oil burner.
- Recommended scents are peppermint in the bedroom at night so that you experience the effects on waking, and vanilla essence in the kitchen

Credit: The Essential Guide to Acupuncture in Pregnancy & Childbirth by Debra Betts