

Tips for eating and drinking

Hyperemesis is usually at its worst between weeks eight to ten of pregnancy. However, it can start very early in pregnancy and symptoms may continue throughout pregnancy making eating and drinking a challenge for quite some time. Some of the tips and suggestions below may help at various points during your pregnancy but if you are not managing to eat and drink enough to stay hydrated or maintain your weight then you should seek medical help. Some of these strategies may help in conjunction with anti-sickness medication or as symptoms improve.

Getting enough fluid

It is important that you do not become dehydrated. Try having water in different ways:

- Cold water (freeze a half bottle of water and top up the bottle with cooled water).
- Tepid water (sips throughout the day)
- Ice cubes
- Holding water/drinks in your mouth.
- Continually sipping tiny amounts of liquid through a straw

Some women find the smell of tap water difficult so you could try bottled water or using a filter instead.

If you are struggling to drink water and/or keep it down, try flavoured fluids instead of water.

- Weak tea / fruit tea
- Lemonade / fizzy drinks
- Milk / milkshakes
- Orange squash
- Apple juice / lime juice
- Hot chocolate

Some foods have higher water content and can help you stay hydrated:

- Fruits (oranges, apples, grapes, melon) / tinned fruit
- Jelly / Ice cream / ice lollies
- Ice cold cherries / frozen grapefruit segments
- Soups
- Puddings / yoghurts

If you can't hold down any fluids, get treatment immediately by asking your GP, midwife or by going to A&E for rehydration by IV (intravenous) fluids.

Getting enough nutrition

Start by eating foods that you are most drawn to in order to keep your energy up and prevent weight loss. The **colour, flavour, temperature and texture** of food may impact on what you can tolerate.

Many women find that they are able to tolerate specific categories of foods, such as salty or sweet foods. Be careful to follow current guidelines regarding avoiding certain foods which may contain harmful bacteria such as paté, liver, soft cheeses and undercooked eggs.

Do not worry if your diet is not the healthiest or this is a different way to how you normally eat.

Salty Foods

Mashed potatoes with salt (and cheese)

Noodles with salt (and cheese)

Thin slices of fresh ham/cheese

Toasted cheese sandwich

Tomato juice with added salt/lemon

Vegetable / Chicken Noodle soup

Laughing Cow cheese

Green apple / lemon sprinkled with salt

Fruity Foods

Fresh fruit/tinned fruit

Sultana Bran or Fruit 'n' fibre

lam on toast

Ham & pineapple toastie

Dried fruit

Club Orange

Fruit juice

Tart/Sour/Bitter Foods

Pickles

Oven chips with vinegar

Salt and vinegar crisps

Extra-sour lemonade

Lemon jelly with extra lemon juice

Grapefruit juice

Tonic water

Mandarin oranges

Fresh cranberries

Cranberry juice with squeeze of lemon

Sour apples

Salsa

Bland/Mild foods

Mashed potatoes

Rice / noodles

Custard

Rice pudding

Porridge

White toast

Cream crackers / Rich Tea biscuits

Pancakes / Waffles

Plain or vanilla yogurt

Scones / Croissants

Plain bagel

Earthy/meaty Foods

Cream of potato soup / mushroom soup

Brown rice / baked potato

Bran Flakes / Porridge / Rice cakes

Avocados / Spinach / Mushrooms

Cola drinks / homemade hot chocolate

Raisin bread / cheese bread

Hummus / Pesto / Nuts

Gouda / Emmental / Cream cheese

Sweet foods

Cakes

Tinned fruit / dried fruit

Ice cream / sorbet

Sweetened breakfast cereal

Jam

Jelly

Syrup

Porridge with brown sugar

Crunchy / hard foods

Celery / carrot sticks

Iceberg lettuce / cucumber

Crispy bacon / Fried egg roll

Apples / Watermelon / Grapes

Oven chips

Pretzels / Taco shells / Rice cakes

Pickles

Meringues /hobnobs / biscotti

Ice chips

Soft foods

French toast or egg bread

Mashed potatoes

Rice pudding / custard

Tinned peaches / pears

Baked potatoes with butter

Pancakes

Yoghurt / ice cream

Sponge cake

Danish pastry

Dry foods

Crackers

Bread/toast

Cookies/biscuits

Cereals without milk

Dried fruit

Oatcakes / Rice cakes

Wet foods

Sparkling water / Tonic water

Flavoured or bottled water

Milk

Fresh juicy fruits (orange, mango, melon)

or juices

Pureed fruit

Spicy foods

Ginger beer / Gingernut biscuits

Peppers / Salsa

Hot sauce / Tabasco sauce / Curry

Seafood sauce / Horseradish

Buttered toast sprinkled with cinnamon

Fragrant/aromatic foods

Mustard

Ginger / Garlic / Curry

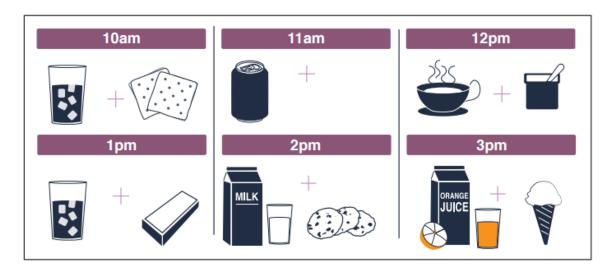
Peppermint tea

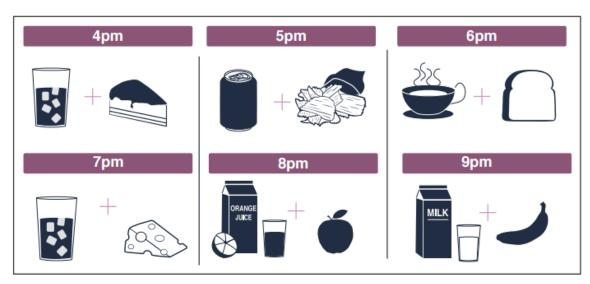
Licorice

Dill / Rosemary / Cinnamon

Sample meal plan

Eat little and often as this is one of the best ways to reduce / prevent the nausea from worsening. Try nibbling on **100 -200 calories every hour**. Sip **100 -200ml fluid every hour**. It can help to have drinks separately.





Some helpful hints and tips

Nausea-free times are important to increase your intake of food/fluids. To make the most of this opportunity:

- Keep a diary to become aware of nausea-free times.
- **Have food prepared** (sandwiches / ready meals / frozen batch cooked meals).

- Keep your cupboard stocked with easy meals e.g. cheese and crackers, scrambled eggs/beans on toast, tinned soup, packet noodles.
- Eat if you feel hungry before it turns into nausea. Nibble of your favourite food (little and often) and stop eating as soon as your stomach feels satisfied.

Symptoms are sometimes worse in the morning:

- Prepare clothes and shower before bed. Do the same with children.
- Leave some plain biscuits beside your bed to eat when you wake up.
 Then wait about 15 -20 minutes before getting up.
- **Ask for help** to avoid rushing in the morning (such as helping with other children).
- Take your **folic acid later in the day**/before bed if your symptoms are worse in the morning.

Ask for and accept help from others to help you cope better:

- Friends and family can complete chores/tasks (shopping, cooking and cleaning) to allow you to get some extra rest as becoming overly tired can worsen nausea.
- Ask someone to reorganise your household to reduce the impact of strong smells (e.g. perfumes) or remove yourself from the kitchen while others are cooking.

Remember! If these tips don't help or you're not keeping food and fluid down seek medical advice. It is important that you can eat and drink.