



Hyperemesis
Ireland

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
Jam 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.

10am  + 	11am  + 	12pm  + 
1pm  + 	2pm  +  + 	3pm  +  + 
4pm  + 	5pm  + 	6pm  + 
7pm  + 	8pm  +  + 	9pm  +  + 

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.