

Are you experiencing severe nausea and/or vomiting in pregnancy?

It could be hyperemesis gravidarum.

Up to 9 in 10 pregnancies involve some nausea and vomiting — what most people call morning sickness. Hyperemesis gravidarum (HG) is the severe end of that spectrum: a recognised medical condition that needs treatment.

1–3%

of pregnancies are affected by HG

No.1

reason women are admitted to hospital in the first trimester

49%

of women treated for HG met the criteria for probable antenatal depression



How do I tell the difference?

	PREGNANCY SICKNESS	POSSIBLE HG
Nausea/retching or vomiting	Comes and goes, can be worse in the morning, but can be anytime of day.	Nausea and/or vomiting is severe. You do not need to vomit - severe nausea, retching and dry heaving count too.
Eating and drinking	You can eat or drink normally or with some adjustments.	You cannot eat or drink normally.
Daily life	Unpleasant, but you can generally continue everyday activities.	Your everyday activities are strongly limited.
Weight/hydration	Weight is stable and you stay hydrated.	Weight loss and dehydration may occur, but neither is required for an HG diagnosis.
Home remedies	Eating little and often, small meals and rest usually help.	These measures may not be enough.

Sources: RCOG Green-top Guideline No. 69 (BJOG 2024); Mitchell-Jones et al. (BMJ Open 2020); Nana et al. (Lancet 2025). Full references at hgcollective.org.uk/sources

You do not need to prove it

You do not have to be vomiting to have HG. Persistent, disabling nausea alone can count. Ask for help early — treatment works better started early.

It affects your mind too

Weeks of relentless sickness take a toll: anxiety, low mood, isolation, guilt. That is a normal response to a severe illness, and it is treatable as well.

Get help today, or right now

Contact your GP, midwife or NHS 111 today if:

- your nausea is severe or you are continually vomiting or retching
- you cannot keep fluids, food or medicine down
- sickness/nausea is stopping normal daily activities
- you are losing weight

Call your GP or midwife immediately—or NHS 111 out of hours—if:

- you have kept nothing down for 24 hours
- you have not passed urine for eight hours, or your urine is very dark
- you feel dizzy, faint or weak when standing
- you vomit blood, it has stopped, and you have no other symptoms
- you have severe abdominal pain or a high fever
- you are having thoughts of suicide or of harming yourself

Call 999 or go to A&E if:

- you vomit blood and feel faint, dizzy or confused, or have cold, clammy, pale skin or rapid breathing
- you are in immediate danger or unable to keep yourself safe
- you have severe breathing difficulty or chest pain
- you collapse or become confused

What treatment looks like

1	2	3	4
Assessment Symptoms scored, weight recorded, urine checked including for infection — ketones not to be used to diagnose the severity of HG.	Medicine One or more anti-sickness medications that can be taken in pregnancy.	Fluids IV fluids and Thiamine when intake is very low, as a day case, or on a ward.	Review A plan for the rest of the pregnancy, including mental health support.

Care pathway per RCOG Green-top Guideline No. 69 (BJOG 2024). Red flags per NHS.UK.

Where to get help

NHS 111	Open 24 hours, every day, including nights and weekends. Call 111 or go to 111.nhs.uk when you are not sure who to contact.
Your GP surgery	Ask for an urgent same-day appointment. Your GP can prescribe anti-sickness medicine and can refer to Early Pregnancy Assessment Units (EPAU's).
Midwife or maternity unit	Your community midwife, or the maternity assessment line, for review and rehydration.
Mental health support	If HG is affecting your mental health, speak to your GP or midwife. They can assess you, offer support and refer you to specialist perinatal mental health services, if appropriate.
If you need to talk now	Call Samaritans on 116 123 or text SHOUT to 85258 — free, 24 hours. If you cannot keep yourself safe, call 999 .
The HG Collective	Information, a symptom guide and support for people living with HG. Message us on WhatsApp, 07915 376364 , 10am to 4pm. We are not an emergency service. We can also signpost you to other pregnancy sickness and HG services.