Hyperemesis Gravidarum
(Nausea & Vomiting of Pregnancy)

Hyperemesis gravidarum is known as uncontrolled and persistent *nausea* (feeling sick to your stomach) and vomiting of pregnancy. It is not related to other sickness. Hyperemesis gravidarum occurs in about 0.5 to 2% of pregnancies. It commonly occurs in the first four months of pregnancy. This condition is less common now than in the past.

CAUSES
The cause of this condition is not completely known but is thought to be due to changes in the body's hormones when pregnant, a high level of the pregnancy hormone and/or an increase in estrogen. This condition usually improves after the first three to four months of pregnancy.

DIAGNOSIS
The usual Nausea and vomiting of pregnancy that cannot be controlled with diet and simple/safe medications can progress to hyperemesis gravidarum if not treated. Unless there are not other medical findings, nausea and vomiting in the first three to four months of pregnancy is probably hyperemesis gravidarum. Your caregiver may order tests if *symptoms* (problems) persist. These tests help to make sure something else is not causing the problem.

TREATMENT
You may only need medication to control the problem. If medications do not control the nausea and vomiting, you will be treated in the hospital to prevent dehydration, acidosis, weight loss and changes in the electrolytes in your body that may harm the baby. You probably will need intravenous fluids and medications to treat the problem.

HOME CARE INSTRUCTIONS
- If you have nausea and vomiting when pregnant, try eating a couple of dry crackers or toast in the morning before getting out of bed.
- Avoid foods and odors that upset your stomach.
- Avoid fatty and spicy foods. Eat 5 to 6 small meals a day.
- Do not drink when eating meals, drink between meals.
- For snacks, eat high protein foods (cheese) or ginger snaps (ginger helps nausea).
- Avoid iron pills and iron in your multivitamins until after 3 to 4 months of being pregnant.
- When possible, begin multivitamins before getting pregnant.

SEEK MEDICAL CARE IF:
- You are unable to keep fluids down.
- Nausea and vomiting are very constant.
- Your *abdominal* (belly) pain increases since the last time you saw the caregiver.
- You develop an oral temperature above 101º F (38.3º C). Seek medical care if this temperature lasts for 2 days or longer and is not controlled by medication.
- You have excessive weakness, dizziness, fainting, or extreme thirst.
- You have a severe headache.
- You develop problems with your vision.
- You feel you are losing weight.
- You vomit blood.

MAKE SURE YOU:
- Understand these instructions.

- Will watch your condition.
- Will get help right away if you are not doing well or get worse.

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