

Hyperemesis Gravidarum



Prevention and Health Education Unit
Prepared by Licensed Health Educators

Objectives

Explain what hyperemesis gravidarum is and how it is different from common pregnancy nausea.

Recognize the main signs and symptoms to know when to seek medical help.

Understand ways to manage it and the importance of support to care for the health of the mother and the baby.



What is hyperemesis gravidarum?



Hyperemesis gravidarum is a pregnancy condition marked by very strong and persistent nausea and vomiting that can affect the mother's health.

It usually happens during the first trimester, although in some cases it can last longer.

Unlike common pregnancy nausea, it can cause weight loss, dehydration, and may require medical care.

Nausea in pregnancy: when it is normal and when it is hyperemesis



Common morning sickness:

- Mild to moderate
- More frequent in the first trimester
- They do not significantly affect weight
- They allow you to maintain hydration and nutrition
- They tend to improve over time



Hyperemesis gravidarum:

- Severe and persistent nausea and vomiting
- Frequent vomiting during the day
- Significant weight loss (more than 5%)
- Dehydration
- Difficulty keeping food or liquids down
- May require medical treatment or hospitalization



Causes



The exact cause of hyperemesis gravidarum is not known. It is estimated that it affects a small percentage of pregnant women and is mainly associated with hormonal changes.



It is thought to be linked to elevated levels of the pregnancy hormone (hCG) and other biological factors.

Risk Factors

Multiple pregnancy (twins or more)

History of hyperemesis gravidarum in previous pregnancies

Being the first pregnancy

Family history with the condition

History of migraines or sensitivity to movement

Obesity in pregnancy



Symptoms

Severe and persistent nausea

Frequent vomiting (several times a day)

Dizziness or feeling weak

Significant weight loss

Signs of dehydration (dry mouth, little urine)

Difficulty keeping food or liquids down

Extreme fatigue

Warning signs with hyperemesis gravidarum

Inability to keep fluids down for more than 24 hours

Vomiting that does not stop and contains blood

Rapid or significant weight loss

Dark or small urine

Severe dizziness or fainting

Palpitations or extreme weakness

Severe abdominal pain

Confusion or difficulty concentrating

What can cause hyperemesis gravidarum?



In the mother

- Severe dehydration
- Significant weight loss
- Electrolyte imbalance (sodium, potassium)
- Nutritional deficiencies (vitamins, especially thiamine)
- Extreme weakness and fatigue
- Dizziness and fainting
- In severe cases: liver or kidney damage



In the baby

- Low birth weight
- Intrauterine growth restriction
- Preterm birth (in some cases)
- Increased risk of neonatal complications if the mother is not treated properly



Diagnosis



The diagnosis of hyperemesis gravidarum is primarily clinical, based on evaluation of symptoms and exclusion of other causes of vomiting in pregnancy.

Tests can also be done to rule out other conditions such as gastrointestinal infections or metabolic disorders.

It is important to see a doctor right away for proper evaluation and timely treatment.

Treatment

Treatment of hyperemesis gravidarum will depend on the severity of symptoms and focuses on stabilizing the mother and preventing complications.

Hydration: Giving intravenous fluids to correct dehydration.

Electrolyte correction: Replacement of sodium, potassium and other minerals.

Antiemetic medicines: To control nausea and vomiting.

Nutritional support: Fractional diet or, in severe cases, special nutrition.

Medical follow-up: It is essential to consult and follow up continuously with the doctor.



General recommendations

"Light" eating – foods that are easy to digest and avoid fats or spicy foods.

Calm environment - reduce stress and stimuli that make nausea worse.

Continuous medical follow-up – not just "consulting" but maintaining control.

Watch for warning signs - severe dehydration, dizziness, and marked weight loss..



Emotional impact

Hyperemesis gravidarum can have a significant impact on a pregnant woman's emotional well-being:

Anxiety related to the intensity and persistence of symptoms

Physical and emotional stress from difficulty feeding and maintaining energy

Feeling physically and emotionally exhausted

Need for family, medical, and emotional support



Overall...

Hyperemesis gravidarum is not a normal condition of pregnancy and requires proper medical attention.

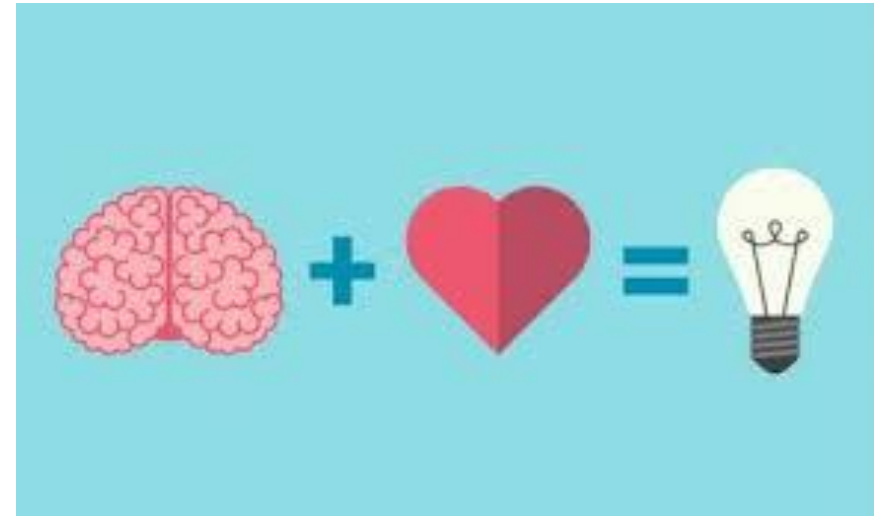
Early diagnosis is essential to prevent maternal and fetal complications.

Timely and comprehensive management significantly improves prognosis and quality of life.

The approach should include both the physical aspect and the emotional impact of the condition.

Social and Emotional Aspect

For recommendations, tools, and resources on how you and your family can cope with the emotional and physical concerns that arise during and after your medical treatment, please visit your primary care physician or contact the telephone lines listed below.



Available Service Lines

Medical Advice Line

24 hours a day / 7 days a week

1-844-347-7801

TTY/TDD: 1-844-347-7804

Customer Service

1-844-347-7800

TTY/TDD: 1-844-347-7805





Questions or Comments

References:

- <https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/001499.htm>
- <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK532917/>
- <https://www.merckmanuals.com/es-us/professional/ginecolog%C3%ADa-y-obstetricia/complicaciones-prenatales/hiperemesis-grav%C3%ADica>
- <https://www.fda.gov/consumers/knowledge-and-news-women-owh-blog/beyond-morning-sickness-hyperemesis-gravidarum>



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