

HEALTHY PREGNANCY GUIDE: WHAT TO KNOW ABOUT INFECTIONS IN PREGNANCY AND HYPEREMESIS GRAVIDARUM

During pregnancy, changes in the immune system, hormones, and the urinary and vaginal environments increase the risk of infections and other conditions, including hyperemesis gravidarum (severe nausea and vomiting). Early recognition, prevention, and appropriate treatment are essential to protect the health of both the pregnant person and the developing baby.

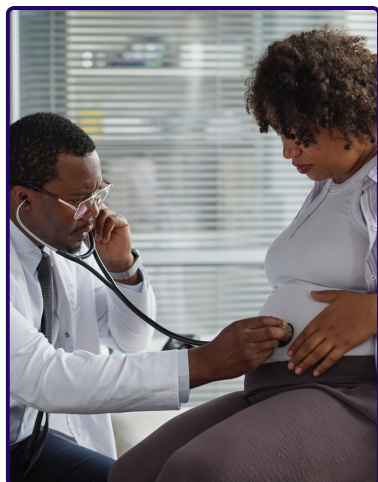
Common Infections in Pregnancy

- **Urinary Tract Infections (UTIs):** A bacterial infection of the bladder or kidneys, which is common during pregnancy and linked to preterm birth and low birth weight.
- **Bacterial Vaginosis (BV):** An imbalance of vaginal bacteria that can increase pregnancy complications.
- **Yeast Infections:** a fungal infection that affects most women at some point in life.
- **Group B Streptococcus (GBS):** A type of bacteria that can naturally be found in a pregnant woman's vagina or rectum and may be passed to the baby during childbirth.
- **Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs):** Infections caused by bacteria, viruses, or parasites that are spread primarily through sexual contact and can affect pregnancy if left untreated.



General Care and Prevention

- Practice good personal hygiene.
- Attend regular prenatal checkups and recommended screenings.
- Stay hydrated and maintain healthy lifestyle habits.
- Avoid douching and other products that disrupt the vaginal environment.
- Practice safer sex to reduce the risk of sexually transmitted infections.
- Wear loose-fitting, breathable cotton underwear and keep the genital area clean and dry.
- Seek medical care promptly if symptoms such as pain, burning, unusual discharge, itching, or fever occur.



Treatment and Management

- Seek early diagnosis and treatment from a healthcare provider.
- Take all prescribed medications as directed (e.g., antibiotics, antifungals, or antivirals).
- Receive intravenous (IV) antibiotics during labor if diagnosed with Group B Streptococcus (GBS).
- Attend follow-up appointments to ensure the infection has resolved.
- Ensure sexual partners are evaluated and treated when appropriate to prevent reinfection.
- Complete the full course of treatment, even if symptoms improve.

Hyperemesis gravidarum (HG): a severe form of nausea and vomiting during pregnancy. Unlike typical morning sickness, HG can make it difficult to keep food or fluids down and may lead to dehydration, weight loss, and poor nutrition. If you are concerned about your symptoms, contact your healthcare provider.

Common Signs and Symptoms:

- Severe or frequent nausea and vomiting
- Difficulty keeping food or fluids down
- Dehydration, such as peeing less than normal
- Weight loss
- Weakness or extreme fatigue
- Difficulty completing normal daily activities



How Is HG Managed?

Treatment depends on the severity of symptoms and may include:

- **Hydration:** Fluids by mouth or through an IV may be needed to prevent or treat dehydration.
- **Nutrition:** Small, frequent meals and nutritional support may help maintain adequate nutrition.
- **Medications:** Healthcare providers may recommend medications to control nausea and vomiting.
- **Vitamins:** Certain vitamins, such as thiamine (vitamin B1), may be recommended when vomiting is prolonged.
- **Hospital care:** Severe cases may require hospitalization for IV fluids, medications, and nutritional support.



Helpful Tips

- Eat small, frequent meals instead of large meals.
- Choose foods that are easier to tolerate.
- Sip fluids frequently rather than drinking large amounts at once.
- Avoid foods, smells, or other triggers that worsen nausea.
- Rest when needed and keep track of your ability to eat, drink, and urinate.

Key Takeaway

Pregnancy comes with many changes, but you do not have to manage concerning symptoms alone. Knowing the signs of infection and hyperemesis gravidarum, keeping up with prenatal care, and seeking medical attention when symptoms are severe or persistent can help protect the health of both you and your baby. When in doubt, reach out to your healthcare provider, early recognition and treatment can make a meaningful difference.



For more information about MCAH, please email us at askMCAH@dph.sbcounty.gov or call 800-227-3034.