

BEAT MORNING SICKNESS

A pregnant reader asks for advice on averting morning sickness, which affects up to 85 per cent of women and may continue through the day. It usually passes by the fourth month but nearly one in five suffers longer. According to naturopath Roderick Lane of the Eden Medical Centre, London SW3 (tel: 020 7881 5800), 'Morning sickness is the body attempting to clean up for the foetus. With today's junk food diets, midwives say it's much more common.'

As well as eating a wholesome diet, there are simple, safe solutions of which ginger has been the most extensively researched, says consultant gynaecologist Michael Dooley of Westover House Fertility Clinic in London SW18 (tel: 020 8877 1877, www.westoverhouse.com). Try taking Jan de Vries Ginger Tincture (Bioforce, £7.99, ten to 15 drops in water twice

daily) or Ginger Tea bags (Triple Leaf, £3.49 for 20), use two to three bags daily, one to a pot; from health stores and by mail order: tel 0800 389 8195 (www.victoriahealth.com).

Keeping blood sugar levels stable is key to treating morning sickness, says Roderick Lane, who recommends small meals every couple of hours, with snacks by your bedside. Helpful foods include:

- ▷ Figs, which contain chromium to help stabilise blood sugar – slice a couple, fresh or dried, and nibble at breakfast.
- ▷ Black strap molasses, which contains minerals and iron – try a dessertspoonful in a tub of plain live yoghurt.
- ▷ Avocado, a great blood sugar leveller and full of vital nutrients – start with half daily, if you can tolerate that but are still sick later, try a whole one the next day.
- ▷ High protein foods in the evening – they take longer to digest so blood sugar

levels won't plummet overnight leading to morning sickness. Eat small amounts of tuna or other oily fish, hard cheese, red meat or Quorn sausage.

Acupuncture definitely helps, as does acupressure (the simplest DIY way is to buy Seaband acupressure bands, available at pharmacies nationwide), and some experts recommend trying yoga and/or relaxation tapes.

A small number of women have such severe vomiting that they are unable to keep down any food or fluids. Unlike morning sickness, where the mother continues to gain weight steadily, mothers with hyperemesis gravida lose weight and may become dehydrated, which can pose risks for both mother and foetus. They should be admitted to hospital for tests, says Mr Dooley, including scans to check for multiple pregnancy or other complications.



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Illustration NILA AYE

EPILEPSY HELP

For many of the 456,000 people with epilepsy in the UK, treatment may be far from satisfactory, according to the Joint Epilepsy Council (JEC). 'Over 80,000 people are not getting the best possible care so their seizures are not well controlled,' says JEC chairman David Josephs. 'An additional 100,000 people may be having seizures but have not been diagnosed – some cases have proved fatal,' he adds.

For more information, contact the National Society for Epilepsy helpline on 01494 601400 (Monday to Friday, 10am to 4pm), www.epilepsynso.org.uk

NOT SUCH LEAN CUISINE

I've drooled over former pharmacist Michel Montignac's diet – which is essentially the original GI eating plan, first launched in France some two decades ago – ever since I found it included chocolate mousse (and cheese too, hallelujah!). And does it work? Emphatically 'oui', according to a straw poll of friends who have satisfied every gourmet desire and still seen the pounds drop away. Just the thing when you need to slink into the LBD for winter parties, then.

To have a copy of *The French Diet* by Michel Montignac, published by Dorling Kindersley, delivered to your door for just £9.99, post free, call the YOU Bookshop on 0870 162 5006, www.you-bookshop.com

MASSAGE FOR MIGRAINE

Migraine headaches are a nightmare, as all sufferers know. One of our dedicated guinea pigs says a gizmo called the Zen Chi Aerobic Massager, widely used in Japan and Australia, is wonderful. You lie face up on the floor or bed, with your ankles on a rest, linked to a small machine. Switch it on (start with a couple of five-minute sessions daily) and your ankles oscillate, sending energy up your spine, increasing blood and lymph circulation and opening up the chakras (energy centres). 'It's relaxing and yet invigorating; when it stops, you feel the most fantastic buzz as the circulation pulses round your body,' says our tester, Harriet. 'It reduces neck tension, which helps headaches, and the initial benefit was that I slept much better. Over the past month I've noticed a huge reduction in my general headaches and so far, no migraine. I'm buying the machine as I didn't want to return it after the trial.' It's also said to be good for back pain and irritable bowel syndrome.

The Zen Chi Aerobic Massager is usually £199, but YOU readers can buy it for just £169, post free, from the Stress Relief Centre, tel: 020 8885 2646 or 07885 707831 (www.stressreliefcentre.com). Phone to arrange a free trial at the Sloane Health Clinic, 27 King's Road, London SW3.

