

Robert McDowell's Herbal Treatments

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The Morning Sickness Mix:

Morning sickness varies from the odd queasiness during the first 12 weeks to continuous vomiting and weight loss right throughout the whole pregnancy.

The vomit reflex can be seen naturopathically at several different levels as follows;

1. Massive changes occur in the reproductive system's hormonal rhythm the instant a fertilised egg attaches to the uterus. Since the various organs involved in metabolic harmony are dependent upon each other, and adjust their activity in response to the hormonal messengers which interconnect them, big adjustments reverberate through the organs including the Liver, Adrenals, Pancreas and Thyroid. A vomit reflex may be generated by any of these systems either alone or in combination with one another.

2. Immediately upon implantation the foetus begins to influence Mums metabolism. The foetus is programmed to adjust its surroundings to provide itself with the optimum environment in which to flourish. For example blood cleansing activity stimulated in this situation can overload the liver temporarily. Equally, the Kidneys and the Pancreas can be upset along with other aspects of the digestive system.

3. Emotionally, changes also begin to happen immediately upon falling pregnant. Some of these are obvious on the outside but others can be subconscious. One of the subconscious reactions can be one in which the mother to be finds herself initially unable to cope with the change in emotional circumstances implied by the pregnancy. The subconscious reaction of "I can't swallow (or adjust to) these implications" is sufficient in itself to prompt a gagging or a vomit reflex when confronted with food. Fear, panic, and apprehension are all capable of interfering with digestion in particular, and the parasympathetic nervous system in general.

As a naturopath I have to consider all these factors along with the individual mothers own expectations, history, personality and metabolism when coming up with a mixture to ameliorate morning sickness. The mixture, which I have developed to deal with the general case, in the absence of a consultation with the actual person, contains the following ingredients;

Liquid herbal extracts; of Liquorice, Sarsaparilla, Hypericum, Ginger, Vervain, Comfrey, Raspberry Leaf, and Milk Thistle. I also include the following remedies from the Bach Flower range; Olive, Gorse, Scleranthus, Oak, Walnut and Agrimony.

In addition, I always recommend that the mother will take up a regular Chamomile tea habit, which is a critical part of treatment and supports the efficacy of the other herbs in the list above.

The reason for not including Chamomile in the recipe is because it is so important to get the new-mother-to-be involved in taking some part in the treatment rather than just sitting back and expecting the therapist to take away all her problems without her involvement. This is as much a lesson in self-responsibility as a cure for Morning Sickness, but we are dealing with a whole person here and not just a set of symptoms.

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The lesson of the naturopathic approach above also illustrates why using the standard chemical approach to anti-nausea medication has always been so limited and sometimes also catastrophically dangerous as in the infamous case of the drug Thalidomide.

Treating morning sickness as an inconvenience, which must be zapped with a drug, shows a total lack of understanding and sensitivity. It is not surprising that new mums (whose instincts, designed to be finely honed during pregnancy) are very uncomfortable with this approach and with many other aspects of "medical pregnancy and birthing management"

My advice to all woman attempting to deal with any of the difficulties surrounding fertility, pregnancy, birthing and feeding is to listen to their inner voices and if the professional help you are being given does not feel right, change practitioners until it does.

I am always uncomfortable about treating someone without a consultation but as a first step this mix is safe and likely to help most newly pregnant ladies. If there is any aspect of your experience with this mix that does not alleviate discomfort I wish to be advised personally to give me the opportunity to revise it to suit the particular individual.

Robert McDowell

Herbalist

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