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Morning sickness 'lowers cancer risk'

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If there's any good news about morning sickness, this may be it. Women who experience nausea and vomiting during pregnancy may have a lower risk of breast cancer later in life, according to new research.

Dr Jo Freudenheim from the University at Buffalo in New York reported the finding this week in Boston, at the annual meeting of the Society for Epidemiologic Research.

Freudenheim and her colleagues interviewed 1001 women with recently diagnosed breast cancer, ages 35 to 79, and 1917 "control" subjects matched to the case patients by age, race and county of residence.

Several pregnancy-related factors - pregnancy-induced high blood pressure, preeclampsia, gestational diabetes, and weight gain - were evaluated, but had no significant effect on future incidence of breast cancer.

In contrast, pregnancy-associated nausea and vomiting was associated with about a 30 per cent lower risk of breast cancer. Greater severity and longer duration of the symptoms reduced the risk even further.

Freudenheim cautioned, however, that this is an epidemiologic study, so the findings should not be "over-interpreted." Confirmation of their findings, she added, will require replication in other populations.

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