

How to Deal with Nausea and Vomiting

Nausea and Vomiting

Chemotherapy and radiation may cause nausea (upset stomach) and vomiting (throwing up) because they affect the stomach lining and the part of the brain that controls vomiting. The amount of nausea and vomiting a patient has varies from person to person. Nausea and vomiting can usually be controlled with medicine.

When to Call Your Nurse

You should call your nurse if:

- vomiting occurs more than three times in 1 hour for 3 or more hours
- you are unable to keep liquids down for 12 or more hours
- you are unable to eat for more than 2 days
- you have any blood in the vomit or if the vomit looks like coffee grounds
- you are unable to keep medicines down.

How to Manage Nausea and Vomiting

- Take anti-nausea medicine as prescribed.
- Eat small, frequent meals during the day.
- Eat foods cold or at room temperature to decrease strong smells.
- Avoid fried, fatty, greasy or spicy foods.
- Try eating bland, starchy foods such as toast, crackers or cereal.
- Avoid foods that are hard to digest like red meat.
- Avoid your favorite foods during episodes of nausea and vomiting. You may develop a dislike for those foods.

- Drink more liquids:
 - clear liquids such as water, ginger ale, fruit juices
 - try Popsicles®, Jell-O®, ice chips and sport drinks.
- Drink liquids 1 hour before or after meals. Avoid drinking during meals.
- Rest after meals. Do not lie flat. Instead rest in a chair for 1 to 2 hours after meals.
- Avoid unnecessary stimulation or excitement during meals. Try a cool, well ventilated environment with less noise and light.
- Avoid odors that bother you, such as smoke, perfume or cooking odors.
- Avoid eating for a few hours before treatment if nausea usually occurs during chemotherapy.
- Keep crackers or bread within reach.
- Try distractions such as music, watching TV, or visiting with friends or family.
- Do not force foods or liquids if you are vomiting.
- Do not lie flat on your back to avoid inhaling vomit into your lungs. Try resting on your side or stomach.

Because eating well and drinking liquids play a vital role in your body's healing process, it is important to try and control or minimize nausea and vomiting during your treatments. Be sure to let your doctor or nurse know if your nausea is not being controlled.

Talk with your nurse if you have any concerns or questions about nausea and vomiting.