



CANCER
INFAMILY
— build knowledge

SICKNESS (NAUSEA)

This leaflet discusses how to deal with nausea (sickness) and vomiting, both common side effects of chemotherapy and hormonal therapy. Ask your doctor if you are at risk of them during your treatment(s).

THE RECOMMENDATIONS IN THIS LEAFLET SHOULD NEVER REPLACE THOSE OF THE DOCTOR/ONCOLOGIST WHO CLOSELY FOLLOWS YOUR CASE.

Sickness (nausea)

Some (but not all) chemotherapy treatments cause nausea and vomiting.

Sickness and vomiting occur because the chemicals from the treatment are:

- ✘ Interfering with brain areas that control nausea.
- ✘ Affecting the cells lining the mouth, throat, stomach, ears and intestines.

Nausea and vomiting might start during the treatment and last for a few hours. Occasionally, though not often, you might feel sick for a few days.

Nausea should always be treated because it stops patients from eating and drinking what can be dangerous. Without food or liquids, there are no nutrients or energy to help the body recover from the treatment.

Current anti-nausea medication is very effective at both preventing and stopping the problem. If you are having problems coping with sickness, your doctor can prescribe medication to be taken before, during, and after chemotherapy.

Always be sure to follow your doctor's recommendations. Different medications work with different people and you may need to try several before finding the right one.

Do not give up! Talk with your doctor or nurse until you feel happy with the results.

A change in your eating habits might also help with nausea.

Some patients feel sick even before receiving treatment. This is a real symptom called anticipatory nausea and/or vomiting. If this is your case take effective anti-nausea medications and try relaxation techniques to prevent vomiting.



Things that might help coping/controlling nausea and vomiting:

Eating (changing the way and what you eat can help):

- × Do several smaller meals instead of 2 or 3 large ones. Stop eating before you feel too full.
- × Eat and drink slowly. Chew well to digest better.
- × Avoid fried, fatty, sweet, spicy food or pungent foods. Strong flavors can cause nausea.
- × Eat cold or just slightly warm food to prevent nausea caused by strong odors.
- × To stop morning nausea, try eating dry foods such as cereal, toast, or salt and water crackers before you get up (do not do this though, if your mouth is too dry or you have mouth/throat sores).
- × Have just a light meal a few hours before treatment (but not right before).
- × Ice cubes, peppermint candies or cold acid fruits such as pineapple help to keep your mouth moist and fresh (avoid anything acid if you have mouth/throat sores).

Drinking

- × Drink 8 to 10 glasses of liquids per day to stop getting dehydrated from vomiting. Drink them in small sips, 1 hour before or after (but not during) the meals. Sometimes it helps to take small spoons of liquid instead

of using a glass, as this reduces the vomiting reflex.

- × Favor cold drinks without pulp, such as apple juice, tea or ginger ale without gas.

Relaxing

- × During meals, distract yourself with friends and family, music, a movie or TV.
- × Rest in a chair after every meal, but do not lie down for at least 2 hours after finishing it.
- × Wear loose clothes.
- × Breathe slowly and deeply when starting to feel nauseous.
- × Learn relaxation techniques. Listen to calm songs, take a deep breath and think of pleasant things to keep yourself distracted.

General Recommendations

- × Avoid strong smelled food and other potentially upsetting odors, such as smoke or perfume.
- × Brush your teeth and keep your mouth clean. Rinse it after vomiting.
- × Take your medicine as directed by your doctor or nurse.
- × Ask your doctor to refer you to a nutritionist who can follow your treatment.



PATIENT INFORMATION LEAFLETS ARE NOT MEANT TO REPLACE THE INFORMATION, ADVICE AND SUPPORT PROVIDED BY YOUR DOCTOR

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