

Nausea and Vomiting

This resource is for people who are experiencing nausea or vomiting. It offers suggestions on how to manage symptoms so you can eat and drink enough during treatment.

Nausea is an uneasy feeling in the stomach that may lead to vomiting. Some illnesses, medications and treatments may cause nausea. You may also feel nauseous if you are anxious or upset.

Ongoing nausea and vomiting can stop you from eating well. Eating enough and maintaining your weight is important for health and well-being.

Ideas that may help when feeling nauseous:

- Try to take regular anti-nausea medication as prescribed by your Doctor, even if you don't feel sick. It is a lot easier to prevent nausea and vomiting than try to stop it once it starts.
- Let your doctor know if medications don't seem to be working as they can offer you a different one to try.
- Try not to skip meals. An empty stomach can make nausea worse.
- Eat small amounts often. Eating slower may help. Try 6 to 8 smaller meals each day.
- Try 'cold' or room temperature foods, as these do not taste or smell as strong and may be better tolerated. E.g., sandwiches, salads, and cold desserts such as jelly, custard and yoghurt. Snack on dry, bland foods such as; biscuits, noodles, cereal, toast, pretzels, crackers.
- Drink cold clear fluids between meals such as cordial, lemonade, dry ginger ale or fruit juice. You could also try sucking on ice blocks.
- Try ginger containing foods. Examples are ginger beer, ale, tea, ginger biscuits, or candied ginger.
- You might also try peppermints or peppermint tea.
- Avoid foods that you find make your nausea worse. Fatty, spicy, very sweet foods or caffeinated drinks can worsen nausea *for some people*. If avoiding these foods does not improve your nausea, reintroduce them.

- There might be times of the day when you feel more like eating. Make the most of these times by eating what you can.
- If the smell of food cooking causes nausea, try and stay away from the kitchen. You could also use a microwave to help reduce odours.
- Ask family or friends to help with meals. Think about frozen meals or make food in bulk to freeze for times when you are unable to cook.
- Take care of your mouth with regular brushing of teeth and mouthwashes. To reduce bad tastes, try sucking on sugar free lollies or peppermints
- Try not to lie down or lean your chair back for at least 30 minutes after eating.

Ideas that may help when you have been vomiting:

- If you have been vomiting, drink plenty of fluids to prevent dehydration. Try lemonade, ginger ale, clear juice and/or soda water. Oral rehydration solutions such as Hydralyte™ or Gastrolyte™ are more examples. You could also try sucking on ice blocks or icy poles
- Begin eating again. Eating slower may help. Take sips of fluids. Then, increase to solid foods and then your usual foods as tolerated.
- A Dietitian can provide help to manage these symptoms and improve your food intake.

Key Takeaways

- If nausea and vomiting persist, talk with your Doctor or Nurse about regular anti-nausea medication.
- Eat small amounts, often and slowly. Try to drink enough fluid.

Key References:

Cancer Council NSW. (2022) *Nutrition and Cancer*. Cancer Council, New South Wa

<https://www.eviq.org.au/getmedia/249cad52-8915-4670-a79c-5719a0c4612f/eviQ-PI-3100-Nausea-and-vomiting-during-cancer-treatment-v-4-22022022.pdf.aspx?ext=.pdf>

