

## Nausea and Vomiting

This resource is for people who are experiencing nausea, and provides suggestions for how to manage this symptom as well as continue to be able to eat and drink adequately

Nausea is an uneasy feeling in the stomach that may lead to vomiting. It is a common side effect or symptom from different illnesses, medications and treatments such as chemotherapy. You may also feel nauseous if you are anxious or upset.

Ongoing nausea and vomiting can stop you from eating well. Eating well and maintaining your weight is important for health and well-being. A Dietitian can provide help to manage these symptoms and improve your food intake.

### **Ideas that may help when feeling nauseous:**

- Take regular anti-nausea medication half an hour before meals or as prescribed by your Doctor. Let your doctor know if they don't seem to be working as they can offer you a different one to try.
- Do not skip meals. An empty stomach can make nausea worse.

- Eat small amounts, often and slowly. Try 6 to 8 smaller meals each day instead of three larger ones. Try 'cold' or room temperature foods, as these do not taste or smell as strong and may be better tolerated. E.g. sandwiches, salads, puddings such as creamed rice, custard, mousse, yoghurts, tinned fruit or jelly.
- Snack on dry biscuits, noodles, cereal, toast, pretzels, crackers.
- Salty foods, such as clear soup and potato crisps may help.
- 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, such as ginger beer, ale, tea or candied ginger. You might also try peppermints or peppermint tea.

- Some people find that fatty, rich, spicy or very sweet foods or caffeine drinks can make their nausea worse. If you find these things make your nausea worse, try avoiding them. If it doesn't improve your nausea, you can 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 mouth-washes to help reduce unpleasant tastes that may make you feel nauseated. To reduce bad mouth tastes, try sucking on sugar free lollies or peppermints.
- Try not to lie down or lean your chair back for at least one hour after eating.

### **Ideas that may help when you have been vomiting:**

- If you have been vomiting, drink plenty of fluids to prevent dehydration. Try drinks such as lemonade, ginger ale, clear juice, soda water or oral rehydration solutions such as Hydralyte™ or Gastrolyte™. You could also try sucking on ice blocks or icy poles
- Begin eating again slowly. Take sips of fluids. Then, increase to dry foods and then your usual foods as tolerated.

#### **Key References:**

Cancer Council NSW. (2019) *Nutrition and Cancer*. Cancer Council, New South Wa

Cancer Council Victoria. (2013) *Digestive Problems During Cancer Treatment*. Cancer Council Victoria, VIC

<https://www.eviq.org.au/getmedia/ef59033f-3718-4219-be6b-8c64a688012f/English-Nausea-and-Vomiting-During-Cancer-Treatments.pdf.aspx?ext=.pdf>

**If nausea and vomiting persist, talk with your Doctor or Nurse about regular anti-nausea medication.**

**If you are unable to drink enough fluid see your Doctor. You may need rehydration via a drip.**