

Coping with nausea and vomiting

 **Information for patients**
Sheffield Dietetics



PROUD TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

SHEFFIELD TEACHING HOSPITALS NHS FOUNDATION TRUST



Nausea (feeling sick) and vomiting sometimes occur as a result of medication such as chemotherapy, side effects of treatment such as radiotherapy, or an infection. They are usually temporary symptoms. If you are having problems with nausea or vomiting your doctor can prescribe medication to help.

In addition, here are a few helpful suggestions:

Tips to help reduce nausea and sickness:

Avoid preparing food if possible and avoid the smell of cooking.

- Have plenty of fresh air in the house
- Try not to let your stomach get too empty or too full
- Avoid drinking half an hour before or after meals, and while you are eating
- Eat slowly and avoid lying down just after eating
- Keep your mouth and teeth clean

How can I ensure I get enough nourishment without making my nausea and vomiting worse?

Consider the following

- Have small frequent meals. Keep snacks handy for when you feel less sick
- Try to eat dry foods like toast, biscuits or crackers first thing in the morning before getting out of bed
- Ginger flavoured drinks or foods may help, for example ginger biscuits, ginger ale, ginger beer or ginger chewing gums (**ask your pharmacist**)
- Cold foods such as sandwiches or salads can be easier to eat as they have no smell and are easy to prepare
- Tinned foods and frozen meals which are easy to prepare
- Try sipping cool non fizzy drinks through a straw

- Supplement drinks are available from chemists or supermarkets. Discuss this with your dietitian, GP or nurse

Avoid:

- Greasy, spicy and very sweet foods which may upset your stomach
- Tight fitting clothes
- Bending over too quickly after eating
- Lying down for at least 2 hours after eating

If you are being sick try to drink plenty of fluids. Aim for at least two litres (4-5 pints) a day. Sip drinks slowly and frequently throughout the day and limit your intake of tea and coffee which could make you urinate more frequently, losing more fluid.

Choose high calorie drinks not diet or low sugar (**unless you have diabetes**) rather than just tea or water. Here are some examples:

Fizzy drinks:

- Lucozade, lemonade, cola, ginger ale, bitter lemon, Lilt

Still drinks:

- *Fruit juices such as apple, pineapple, orange, cranberry or grapefruit
- Squashes and cordials such as barley water or Ribena with added vitamin C
- *Herbal teas such as peppermint and ginger

***Bovril and some fruit juices such as grapefruit and some herbal teas can interact with some medications. Please check with your pharmacist if you have these in your diet or are thinking of trying them.**

When your sickness settles try something more nourishing such as milk and milky drinks. Choose full fat milk if possible. Supplement drinks and soups are available from some chemists and supermarkets (Complan,

Nestlé Build up or Boots Recovery) and can improve your nutritional intake.

It is important to start eating again as soon as possible. Introduce small snacks and gradually build up to normal meals.

It may be better to start with plain foods such as toast, crackers, plain biscuits or cakes. Then move on to light meals such as fish, chicken or plain meat with potatoes.

Milk puddings, ice cream and yoghurts are also good foods to start with.

If you cannot get back onto normal foods contact your dietitian, but if episodes of nausea and vomiting persist consult your doctor as your anti-sickness medication may need reviewing.

Patient's name

This information has been given to you by:

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Contact number:



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