

Nausea and Vomiting: Tips for Coping

Nausea is a common side effect of cancer treatment that can limit how much food you eat. The tips listed below may help you feel better.

Foods

- Eat small, frequent meals (six to eight times per day) to keep something in your stomach.
- Relax and chew food well to prevent or decrease stomach tension.
- Snack on dry foods, such as crackers, toast, dry cereals or breadsticks between meals.
- Avoid foods that are causing problems for you.
- Try not to eat your favorite foods during periods of nausea or vomiting. Later, you may associate these with nausea.
- Avoid greasy or spicy foods and foods with strong smells. Cold and bland foods may be more appealing because they tend to have fewer odors.
- Suck on lemon drops, mints or ginger candy.
- Tart foods, such as pickles or lemons, may help reduce nausea.

Fluids

- Hydrating your body with fluids is important. Try to drink eight to 10 cups (1 cup = 8 ounces) of fluid per day.
- Drink fluids between meals instead of with meals.
- Try clear soups, flavored gelatin, carbonated beverages, popsicles, mint tea and ice chips made of any kind of liquid.
- If smells are triggering nausea, try drinking fluids from a cup with a lid and use a straw.

Additional Tips

- Your doctor can prescribe medicine to decrease nausea. Take this medicine 30 minutes before meals.
- Some patients find that ginger relieves their nausea. Try cooking with ginger or drinking ginger tea or ginger ale.
- Do not lie down immediately after eating. If you want to rest after eating, sit or recline with your head elevated for at least 30-60 minutes.
- Eat in a well-ventilated area or outside, to avoid smelling food.

- Have a friend or family member prepare your meals for you. This will prevent you from smelling the food for a long period of time.
- Nausea and vomiting can sometimes cause bowel problems, such as constipation. Taking in the right amount of fluid and fiber will help regulate bowel function. If you have bowel problems, contact your nurse or dietitian.