



Managing Your Nausea and or Vomiting

This handout will give you information on how to prevent or stop your nausea and vomiting. Your nurse may give you other information on the medication prescribed for your nausea and vomiting.

What is nausea? Sick feelings in your stomach (upset stomach).

What is vomiting? Vomiting or “throwing-up”. Your stomach contents are brought up through your mouth.

What are ‘dry heaves’? Retching or “dry heaves” happen when your stomach is empty and nothing comes up.

You can feel nauseated without vomiting. You can vomit without feeling nauseated. You can have both nausea and vomiting at the same time.

Your nausea and vomiting may be caused by:

- Your cancer or another disease you may have
- Systemic therapy
- Radiation therapy
- Medications
- Constipation
- An infection
- Movement (motion sickness)
- Feelings of anxiety (worried about something)

Your nausea and vomiting may have more than one cause.

Your nausea may be worse right after your systemic therapy treatment and may last for several days. Some people may have these feelings before treatment even starts. Worrying about the nausea and vomiting you may have can make it worse.

The doctor will prescribe a medication for you to help prevent or stop your nausea and vomiting. It is important that you take this medication as it has been prescribed for you. If you have any questions about this medication, talk to your doctor or nurse.

What you can do to stop your nausea and vomiting

- Take the medication the doctor has prescribed for you. You may need to take the medication at regular times during the day before and after your treatment. You may be prescribed more than one medication. You may be told to take a suppository if you are unable to keep your pills down.
- Sip water and other fluids (juice, flat pop, sports drinks, broth, and herbal teas such as ginger teas).
- Suck on ice chips, popsicles or frozen fruit.

- Drink fluids at a different time than when you eat a meal.
- Rinse out your mouth before you eat any food.
- Eat a small meal before your treatment.
- After your treatment, eat small meals a number of times during the day. Do this for 2 to 3 days after your treatment.
- Eat less spicy or fried foods and foods that have strong smells.
- Eat bland foods or dry, starchy foods such as crackers and toast.
- Eat slowly.
- Sit upright for at least 30 to 60 minutes after you eat.
- Keep a basin with you in case you need to vomit.
- Distract yourself by watching TV, listening to music, reading or going for a walk. Relaxation exercises or deep breathing exercises may help too.

If you have any questions or concerns about your appetite or diet, please ask any member of your healthcare team to refer you to a dietitian.

Call to talk to a nurse if:

- Your nausea is severe (if you have it for more than 24 hours and you are not able to eat or drink).
 - You have vomited several times a day for more than 24 hours.
1. Call your primary nurse at the cancer centre from Monday to Friday, 8:30 am to 4 pm, (except on holidays). Use the phone number your primary nurse gave you.
 2. Contact CareChart Digital Health from Monday to Friday, 5 pm to 8:30 am and anytime on weekends and holidays for symptom management support.

Talk to a nurse using one of these options:

- Call the after-hours telephone line at 1-877-681-3057.
- Request a video call by going to www.carechart.ca.
- Use the CareChart Digital Health App. This App is available to download for iOS or Android devices.

Call 911 or go to the emergency department at the hospital closest to you for a medical emergency. Talk to any member of your healthcare team if you have questions or do not understand any of the information in this handout.

For more information about how you can manage your symptoms, go to Ontario Health - Cancer Care Ontario's website found at: www.cancercare.on.ca/symptoms.

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