

What to Eat and Drink When You Feel Nauseated

This handout offers information on what to eat and drink when you feel nauseated. It is important to drink fluids throughout the day even if you don't feel thirsty. Drink 6 to 8 cups (1 cup = 250 ml) of fluid a day.

A list of fluid choices you can choose from:

• Water
• Jell-O
• Lemonade
• Juices with water added to them
• Ginger ale (it may be easier to drink if you let it go flat)
• Sports drinks (for example: Gatorade®, Powerade®, Vitamin Water)
• Clear soups
• Sherbet/Sorbet
• Popsicles
• Iced tea
• Weak decaffeinated teas

It may help to eat small amounts of starchy foods. Do this every 1 to 2 hours throughout the day. This is a list of starchy food choices you can choose from:

• Plain crackers or cookies (for example: arrowroot, digestive, social tea cookies, graham crackers)
• Bread sticks
• English muffins
• Plain noodles or rice
• Pretzels
• Plain bagel
• Crumpet
• Toast
• Rice cakes
• Dry cereal
• Boiled potatoes

Add more foods and fluids into your diet when you have less nausea. This is a list of food and fluid choices you can choose from:

• Cereal with milk
• Eggs and toast
• Pasta with a small amount of sauce
• Cheese and crackers
• Yogurt
• Custard
• Chicken or egg sandwich
• Soups with chicken, rice/pasta and vegetables

• Fish or chicken with potato and cooked vegetables
• Milk
• Pancakes
• Cream soups
• Canned fruit (for example: canned peaches)
• Cottage cheese with fruit
• Pudding
• Ice cream
• Applesauce

Choose foods or fluids that are cold or at room temperature if the smell of food makes your nausea worse. Do not eat spicy foods, sweet desserts, greasy or fried foods or drink alcohol. Do not drink more than 3 cups (750 ml) a day of caffeinated drinks such as: coffee, tea or colas.

What you can do to help manage your nausea:

- Rinse your mouth before and after meals. Make a mouth rinse using 1 teaspoon (5 ml) of salt and 1 teaspoon (5 ml) of baking soda in 4 cups (1000 ml/1L) of water. Store this mouth rinse in a covered container. Discard and make new mouth rinse after 24 hours.
- Sip liquids slowly. Drink fluids after or in between meals.
- Eat smaller amounts of food more often. You may feel more nauseated when your stomach is empty.
- Sit upright or recline with your head elevated for 30 to 60 minutes after you eat a meal.
- Relax and take your time when you eat.
- Avoid activity after eating
- Eat in a room where the temperature is not too warm.
- Wear loose clothing.
- Place a cold cloth on your face.
- Suck on candies such as peppermint, ginger or lemon drops to get rid of a bad taste you may have in your mouth.
- Chew crystallized ginger, ginger wafers or sip honey ginger tea (see the recipe on the back of this handout).
- If you start to vomit, stop eating and drinking until the vomiting stops. Start sipping fluids 30 to 60 minutes after you stop vomiting.

Honey Ginger Tea

Ingredients:

- 1 tablespoon (15 ml) freshly grated ginger (you don't need to peel it).
 - 1 tablespoon (15 ml) freshly squeezed lemon juice.
 - 1 teaspoon (5 ml) honey.
1. Put the ginger in a tea pot or medium bowl. Pour 1 cup boiling water over it and let it steep for 3 minutes.
 2. Put the lemon juice and the honey in a large mug. Strain the ginger tea into the mug. Stir until the honey dissolves.

Go to this website: <https://www.cookforyourlife.org/recipes/health-considerations/nausea/> for other recipe ideas.

Ask to talk to a dietitian in the cancer centre if you are not able to eat or you are losing weight.

This handout was created by the Patient Education Program at the Durham Regional Cancer Centre/Lakeridge Health. It was last reviewed in April of 2025.

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