

Nausea

Nausea, with or without vomiting, is a common side effect of surgery, chemotherapy, radiation therapy, and biological therapy. The disease itself, or other conditions unrelated to your cancer or treatment, may also cause nausea. Some people have nausea or vomiting right after treatment; others don't have it until two or three days after a treatment. Many people never experience nausea. For those who do, nausea often goes away once the treatment is completed. Also, there are now drugs that can effectively control this side effect. These medications, called antiemetics, are often given at the beginning of a chemo-therapy session to prevent nausea.

Whatever the cause, nausea can keep you from getting enough food and needed nutrients. Here are some ideas that can help:

1. Ask your doctor about antiemetics that might help you control nausea and vomiting.
2. Try foods that are easy on your stomach, such as:

- toast, crackers, and pretzels
- yogurt
- sherbet
- angel food cake
- cream of wheat, rice, or oatmeal
- boiled potatoes, rice, or noodles
- skinned chicken that is baked or broiled, not fried
- canned peaches or other soft, bland fruits and vegetables
- clear liquids
- ice chips
- carbonated drinks



3. Avoid foods that:

- are fatty, greasy, or fried
- are very sweet, such as candy, cookies, or cake
- are spicy or hot
- have strong odors

4. Eat small amounts, often and slowly. Eat before you get hungry, because hunger can make feelings of nausea stronger.
5. If nausea makes certain foods unappealing, then eat more of the foods you find easier to handle.
6. Avoid eating in a room that's stuffy, too warm, or has cooking odors that might disagree with you.
7. Drink fewer liquids with meals. Drinking liquids can cause a full, bloated feeling.
8. Slowly drink or sip liquids throughout the day. A straw may help.
9. Have foods and drinks at room temperature or cooler; hot foods may add to nausea.
10. Don't force yourself to eat favorite foods when you feel nauseated. This may cause a permanent dislike for those foods.
11. Rest after meals, because activity may slow digestion. It's best to rest sitting up for about an hour after meals.
12. If nausea is a problem in the morning, try eating dry toast or crackers before getting up.
13. Wear loose-fitting clothes.
14. If nausea occurs during radiation therapy or chemotherapy, avoid eating for 1 to 2 hours before treatment.
15. Try to keep track of when your nausea occurs and what causes it (specific foods, events, surroundings). If possible and if it helps, change your diet or schedule. Share the information with your doctor or nurse.