

Nausea and vomiting

Nausea and vomiting can be common side effects of an illness, medical treatment or medication. Here are some tips to help you deal with nausea and vomiting.

When to eat

- Eat small, regular meals spread over the day. An empty stomach can make nausea worse.
- If you feel better at certain times of the day, plan meals at these times.
- If you are unable to eat food, try sipping on nourishing fluids instead. Look at the 'nourishing drinks' fact sheet for ideas.

What to eat

- Cold foods with no smell (for example sandwiches or cold desserts).
- Small amounts of salty foods (for example dry biscuits or clear salty soups).
- Small amount of tart foods (for example lemon or citrus foods).
- Plain starchy foods (for example plain boiled rice or noodles).
- Some people find that ginger helps with nausea. Try sipping flat ginger ale.

What to avoid

- If possible, avoid smelling foods while they are being cooked. Ask family or friends to help with meals. Or keep frozen meals for times when you are unable to cook.
- Avoid fatty, spicy or very sweet foods. These can make your nausea worse.
- Avoid drinking at meal times. Instead drink 30- 60 minutes before or after eating.

Before you eat

- Rinse your mouth with water.
- Begin eating slowly.
- Relax and try to enjoy meal times. Sit down with others if possible and have a small snack or listen to some music.
- If you have been prescribed anti-nausea medication, remember to take it before your meal or as directed by your GP.

After you eat

- Rest after eating.
- Avoid lying flat for at least one hour after your meal or snack.
- Use pillows to keep your head and shoulders raised if you need to lie down.

Vomiting

- Make sure you drink plenty of fluids if you have been vomiting.
- Drink fluids slowly. Have small sips often.
- Try ice chips or icy poles if you are having trouble keeping fluids down.
- Try sipping on lemonade, clear fluids, soda water and ginger ale.
- Try electrolyte solutions such as Hydrolyte™ or Gastrolyte™. They can be bought at your local pharmacy or supermarket.
- When the vomiting settles, start by eating bland foods such as dry salty biscuits or dry toast.

Talk to your GP if the nausea or vomiting doesn't settle down within a few days.