

What to do about feeling sick to your stomach and throwing up (nausea and vomiting)



“I asked my doctor questions to make sure I knew when to take my medicine. The medicine really helped me.”

What are nausea and vomiting?

Nausea is when you feel sick to your stomach, like you are going to throw up. Vomiting is when you throw up.

- **Drink enough liquids each day to prevent dehydration (loss of too much water from the body).**
- **Ask your doctor or nurse about medicine that will help. Learn how you should take the medicine.**

Take these steps to feel better:

Take your anti-nausea medicine.

- Talk with your doctor or nurse about the best times and ways to take your medicine.
- Tell your nurse if the medicine is not helping. There are different kinds of medicine, and one may work better than another for you.

Try tips to settle your stomach.

- Eat foods that are easy on your stomach. See the list on the other side of this sheet.
- Eat 5 to 6 small meals instead of 3 large meals each day.
- Eat and drink slowly.
- Don't lie down right after eating. Instead, sit up for a while.

Avoid some foods.

- **Don't** eat greasy, fried, or spicy foods if you feel sick after eating them.
- **Don't** eat foods that are too hot or too cold if they make you sick to your stomach.
- If the smell of food bothers you, ask others to cook for you. Then let the food cool down before you eat it.

These foods and drinks may be easy on your stomach until you feel better:

Soups (clear liquids)	Drinks (clear liquids)	Meals and snacks	Fruits and sweets
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear broth, such as chicken, vegetable, or beef 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear soda, such as ginger ale, that has gone flat or lost its fizz • Cranberry or grape juice • Oral rehydration solution drinks, such as Pedialyte® • Tea • Water 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chicken—broiled or baked, without the skin • Crackers • Cream of wheat or rice cereal • Noodles • Oatmeal • Potatoes—boiled, without the skin • Pretzels • White rice • White toast 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Angel food cake • Canned fruit, such as peaches and pears • Gelatin (such as Jell-O®) • Popsicles and sorbet • Yogurt 

Try these tips on treatment days:

- Learn the best time for you to eat and drink. Some people find that it helps to eat a small snack before treatment. Others avoid eating or drinking right before treatment because it makes them feel sick.
- Listen to music or an audiobook before treatment, to help relax.

Questions to ask your doctor or nurse:

1. What problems should I call you about?
2. How should I take the medicine to prevent nausea and vomiting?
3. How much liquid should I drink each day?
4. What foods should I eat?
5. What foods should I avoid or have less of?
6. Could you give me the name of someone who can tell me about acupuncture and other things that may help prevent nausea?



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How can we help?

National Cancer Institute's Cancer Information Service

Phone: 1-800-422-6237 (1-800-4-CANCER)

Web: www.cancer.gov

Online Chat: www.cancer.gov/livehelp

NCI has a series of 9 Radiation Therapy Side Effects Fact Sheets at:
www.cancer.gov/radiation-side-effects

