

# Coping with Nausea and Vomiting

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## What are nausea and vomiting?

Nausea is feeling queasy or sick to your stomach, as if you're going to throw up. Vomiting is emptying your stomach by throwing up.

## How are they treated?

If your symptoms are severe, your care team can give you medicine to control them. You may need to try several drugs before finding the one that works best.

- If you know you get sick at a certain time each day or before certain events, take your medicine before you feel sick.
- If you do not take anti-nausea medicine at regular times, take it before meals or first thing in the morning, before you get out of bed.
- Some patients find alternative therapies help. Ask your health care team for more information.

## What else can I do to treat or prevent nausea and vomiting?

- Before getting out of bed in the morning, eat dry foods (crackers, toast, dry cereal).
- Eat several small meals throughout the day. Choose bland, starchy foods that are easy to digest, like toast, rice, dry cereals, chicken noodle soup and canned fruit.

- Eat foods cold or at room temperature. The smells from hot foods may make nausea worse.
- Do not eat favorite foods when you feel sick.
- If possible, have somebody else make meals when you feel sick.
- Avoid foods that are fatty, fried, very spicy, very sweet, hard to digest (like tough meat) and foods that have a strong odor. Also avoid caffeine and alcohol.
- Once vomiting has stopped, try small sips of fluids between meals. Slowly increase your fluids as you are able. Try water, ginger ale, Popsicles, sports drinks, soups, broths or frozen juice chips.
- If your body can handle it, drink 6 to 8 glasses of fluids a day (8 ounces each). Drink one hour before and after meals, but not during meals.
- Wear loose-fitting clothes when you eat.
- Eat in a cool, airy, quiet place. Avoid eating in a room that is warm or has cooking odors.
- Rest in a chair for an hour or two after meals. Wait one hour before lying flat.
- Distract yourself from nausea with music, TV or visits with friends and family.

- A clean mouth will make you feel better, so brush your teeth often. Rinse your mouth before and after meals.
- Suck on hard candies (such as lemon drops or mints) if you have a bad taste in your mouth.
- You can't eat for more than two days.
- You can't keep your medicine down.

**Comments:**

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**When should I call my care team?**

Call your care team if:

- You vomit more than three times in an hour for over three hours.
- You can't keep liquids down for 12 hours or more, or you can't drink more than 4 cups of liquid a day.
- You see blood in the vomit, or the vomit looks like coffee grounds.
- You choke while vomiting. You can't stop coughing after you vomit.

Food group	Recommended foods	Foods to avoid
<i>Meats, eggs and cheese</i>	Broiled or baked meat, fish or poultry. Cold meat or fish salad, lean ham, eggs (not fried), cream soups made with low-fat milk.	Sausage, bacon and other fatty and fried meats. Fried eggs.
<i>Breads and starches</i>	Saltine crackers, breads, toast, cold cereals, English muffins, bagels, plain noodles, rice.	Doughnuts, pastries, waffles, pancakes, muffins.
<i>Fruits and vegetables</i>	Juices, canned or fresh fruits, potatoes (baked, boiled or mashed). Other vegetables if your body can handle it.	French fries and hash browns. Breaded, fried or creamed vegetables.
<i>Milk products</i>	Low-fat milk, non-fat yogurt.	High-fat milk shakes, cream, ice cream.
<i>Drinks</i>	Soft drinks, iced tea, sports drinks. (No caffeine.)	Alcohol, coffee.
<i>Desserts</i>	Sherbet, Popsicles, juice bars, fruit ice, gelatin, angel food cake, sponge cake, vanilla wafers, pudding made with low-fat milk.	Pies, rich cakes.
<i>Other</i>	Butter or margarine in small amounts, low-fat gravy, pretzels. Salt and spices if your body can handle it.	Spicy salad dressings, olives, pepper, chili powder, onion, hot sauce, potato chips.