

**Marion L. Shepard Cancer Center**  
**(252) 975-4308**

**Nausea and Vomiting**

*Did you know?*

- Nausea is a common side effect of chemotherapy and radiation therapy and may be due to the treatment or the cancer itself.
- Nausea and vomiting used to be one of the worst side effects of chemotherapy. Fortunately, there have been many recent medical advances that allow for the prevention of these side effects.
- Vomiting may follow nausea and be brought on by chemotherapy or food odors.

*What to eat and drink:*

- Before your chemotherapy appointment, eat a small, light meal. Most people do better if they have something in their stomach.
- Eat what sounds good to you. Generally starches such as rice, bread, potatoes, hot cereals and puddings are well tolerated.
- Try not to skip meals. Eat five or six small meals and snacks daily. An empty stomach will worsen all symptoms.
- Rest, but do not lie down flat, for at least 1-2 hours after eating.
- Stick with foods that have a low odor and short cooking time. Have someone else cook if possible.
- Avoid fried, greasy and rich foods.
- Don't force yourself to eat your favorite foods when you feel nauseated, as you may develop a dislike for these foods.
- Sip ginger teas throughout the day, suck on ginger candy, and flavor your food with chopped, fresh ginger root or a tiny sprinkle of dried ginger spice.

*If you develop vomiting:*

- Do not eat or drink anything until you have the vomiting under control.
- Then try tiny amounts of clear liquid such as water, bouillon, apple or cranberry juice, fruit ices, ginger ale or 7-Up, popsicles, or sports drinks (Gatorade).
- Once these liquids are tolerated, try a softer diet with bland foods such as mashed potatoes, rice, pureed foods, smoothies, or yogurts.
- Drink and eat more potassium- and magnesium-rich foods when feeling better. These include bananas, potatoes, orange juice, tomato and apricots.

*How to treat:*

- At the first signs of nausea, starting taking Compazine (prochlorperazine) one tablet (10mg) every 6 hours until nausea resolves. Don't wait until you are vomiting because it will be more difficult to treat.
- Visualization and relaxation exercises may help.

*When to call the nurse:*

- Call the nurse if you have nausea that prevents you from eating and drinking and you have followed the above instructions.
- If you have vomited more than once a day and are following the above instructions, call the nurse.