

Nausea and Vomiting



Medical Management

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 prevention of these side effects. By working with your health care team, you can find the right medication or combination of medications to prevent these side effects from happening in the first place. Please talk to your doctor or nurse for additional information about medical management of nausea if you have questions about this issue.

Using Nutrition to Help Yourself

If you do have any remaining nausea or queasiness, you can manage this by choosing the right food, avoiding things that may worsen nausea, and carefully planning your eating schedule.

Nutrition Tips for Nausea

- If you cannot eat for more than a day because of nausea and vomiting, call your doctor or nurse right away.
- Avoid food odors, which can worsen nausea. Stay away from the kitchen when food is being prepared. Ask friends and family to help you with this.
- Stick with food that has a low odor and a short cooking time. When drinking liquids, use a cup with a lid or cover to further reduce odors.
- Eat five or six small meals and snacks each day to prevent an “empty stomach” feeling. Keep quick and easy snacks, such as granola bars, yogurt, or pudding, handy.
- Set some times to eat, such as every one-half to one hour. Be sure to have at least one or two bites of food at each set time. Eating often is important, while quantity and type of food are less important.
- Rest, but do not lie down flat, for at least 1 to 2 hours after eating.
- Experiment with both hot and cold food to see what temperature sits better in your stomach.

What to Eat and Drink

- Try food that has minimal odor and is easy to prepare, such as scrambled eggs; French toast; pancakes; oatmeal; cream of wheat; cold cereal; canned peaches, pears, or fruit cocktail; and shakes and smoothies.

- If sweet things don't taste good to you, try sour, tart, or mildly bitter food and drinks, such as a smoothie flavored with frozen cranberries or lemon and lime or a liquid supplement, such as Ensure or Boost flavored with 1 to 2 teaspoons of finely ground, decaffeinated coffee.
- Focus on convenient food, such as granola bars; fruit; nuts; yogurt; pudding; pretzels or crackers; single-serving sizes of canned fruit, tuna, or chicken; trail mix; power bars; oatmeal; hard-boiled eggs; and ice pops.
- Try bland, warm food, such as oatmeal, cream of wheat, or soup.
- If cold food sounds better to you, try frozen fruit, such as frozen grapes or frozen watermelon wedges.
- Sip ginger tea throughout the day, suck on ginger candy, and flavor your food with chopped, fresh ginger root or a tiny sprinkle of dried ginger spice.



What to Avoid

- Gas-producing food, including beans, cabbage, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, and cauliflower; onions, corn, peas, cucumbers, and peppers; and some fruit, such as cantaloupe and other types of melon, and apricots, prunes, and raw apples.
- Sugar substitutes, such as Nutrasweet, Splenda, mannitol, and sorbitol.
- Wheat bran and high-fiber whole wheat products.
- Chewing gum.
- Fatty, greasy, fried, and spicy food.
- Rich desserts, such as candy, cakes, pies, chocolate, and cheesecake.
- Food with strong odors and “long-cooking” items, such as stews, casseroles, crock pot recipes, and baked meat or fish.