



Managing Nausea and Vomiting

Nausea (the feeling of being queasy or sick to your stomach) with or without vomiting (throwing up) can be caused by your cancer, chemotherapy, or radiation therapy. If caused by chemotherapy, nausea and vomiting can occur on the day you receive your treatment and can last for 3 or more days after your chemotherapy. If you are receiving radiation therapy, nausea and vomiting may start within 1 to 2 hours after receiving treatment to your chest, abdomen, or pelvis, and may last for several hours. Other causes of nausea and vomiting include intense pain, fatigue, illness, medications, and the stress of coping with cancer.

Feeling nauseous for a long time can affect your appetite and can cause you to lose weight. If you vomit a lot, you can get dehydrated and have other problems from losing body salts. To find an effective treatment for nausea and vomiting, you need to know what is causing the problem. Prescription medication is often needed to control nausea from chemotherapy and radiation therapy. Nausea from anxiety and fatigue can often be managed by using physical and mental relaxation techniques or by making a change in your diet. Effective treatment for nausea may be different for each person. Here are some suggestions to consider:

- ◆ Eating six to eight small meals a day, instead of three large meals, will make you more comfortable.
- ◆ To help remove bad tastes, rinse your mouth before eating with a solution made of 1 teaspoon of baking soda, $\frac{3}{4}$ teaspoon of salt, and 1 quart of warm or cool water.
- ◆ Bland foods and foods served cool or at room temperature may be easier to eat than hot and spicy foods.
- ◆ Foods that are very sweet, fatty, greasy, or spicy can aggravate nausea.
- ◆ Create a peaceful eating place, if possible. A relaxed atmosphere will help calm you and make eating easier. The room should be well ventilated and not smell of strong food or cooking odors.
- ◆ Sip fruit juices, sports drinks, or flat soda pop throughout the day. This will help you get enough calories, nutrients, and fluids.
- ◆ Hard candies, such as peppermints, lemon drops, and root beer barrels, can relieve nausea and get rid of the bad taste in your mouth.
- ◆ If you are vomiting, dehydration is a serious concern. While it may be very difficult, you need to drink clear liquids as often as possible during this time. After a bout of vomiting, rinse your mouth and spit out the water. Try not to drink for 30 minutes; then try to consume sips of apple juice, cranberry juice, flat soda pop, broth, or bites of frozen flavored ice.

Medication Advice

- ◆ Do not hesitate to ask for anti-nausea medication; there are excellent options for relief. It is important to follow the instructions on the bottle. Take the medication as often and as long as you need it. Do not wait until you are nauseated! If your nausea persists, tell your doctor. Another medication may be more effective.
- ◆ Do not take medications on an empty stomach unless your doctor or pharmacist tells you to! This is a recipe for disaster. Having something in your stomach will help control your nausea. Eat dry foods, such as crackers, toast, dry cereal, or bread sticks, when you wake up and every few hours during the day.



Recipe Recipe Recipe

Cantaloupe and Chicken Salad*

¼ cup plain yogurt
¼ cup mayonnaise or salad dressing
1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice
1 tablespoon chopped fresh chives
¼ teaspoon salt
5 cups of cantaloupe, cut into 1-inch squares
2½ cups cut-up chicken
1 cup red or green grapes, cut in half
1 medium cucumber, cut into 1-inch bite-sized strips

Mix yogurt and mayonnaise in large bowl. Stir in lemon juice, chives and salt. Stir in remaining ingredients. Serve immediately, or refrigerate until chilled (at least 2 hours). Store no longer than 24 hours.

Makes six 1½-cup servings. Each serving contains 250 calories and 19 grams protein.

*From *Betty Crocker's Living with Cancer Cookbook*. Copyright © 2001 General Mills. All rights reserved. Reproduced here by permission of Wiley Publishing, Inc.

Strong odors can cause nausea

If you are in the hospital, remember to open the cover on the food tray away from you, rather than toward you. This will carry the food smell away and not into your face. Also, ask friends, family members, and any visitors (including those on your health care team) to avoid wearing perfume, aftershave, and scented body lotions. Encourage cleaning help to avoid strong-smelling cleaning agents and room fresheners.

Food Lists

Foods for Intense Nausea (Day of Therapy)

This list is very restrictive; do not limit yourself to these foods for more than 1 to 2 days.

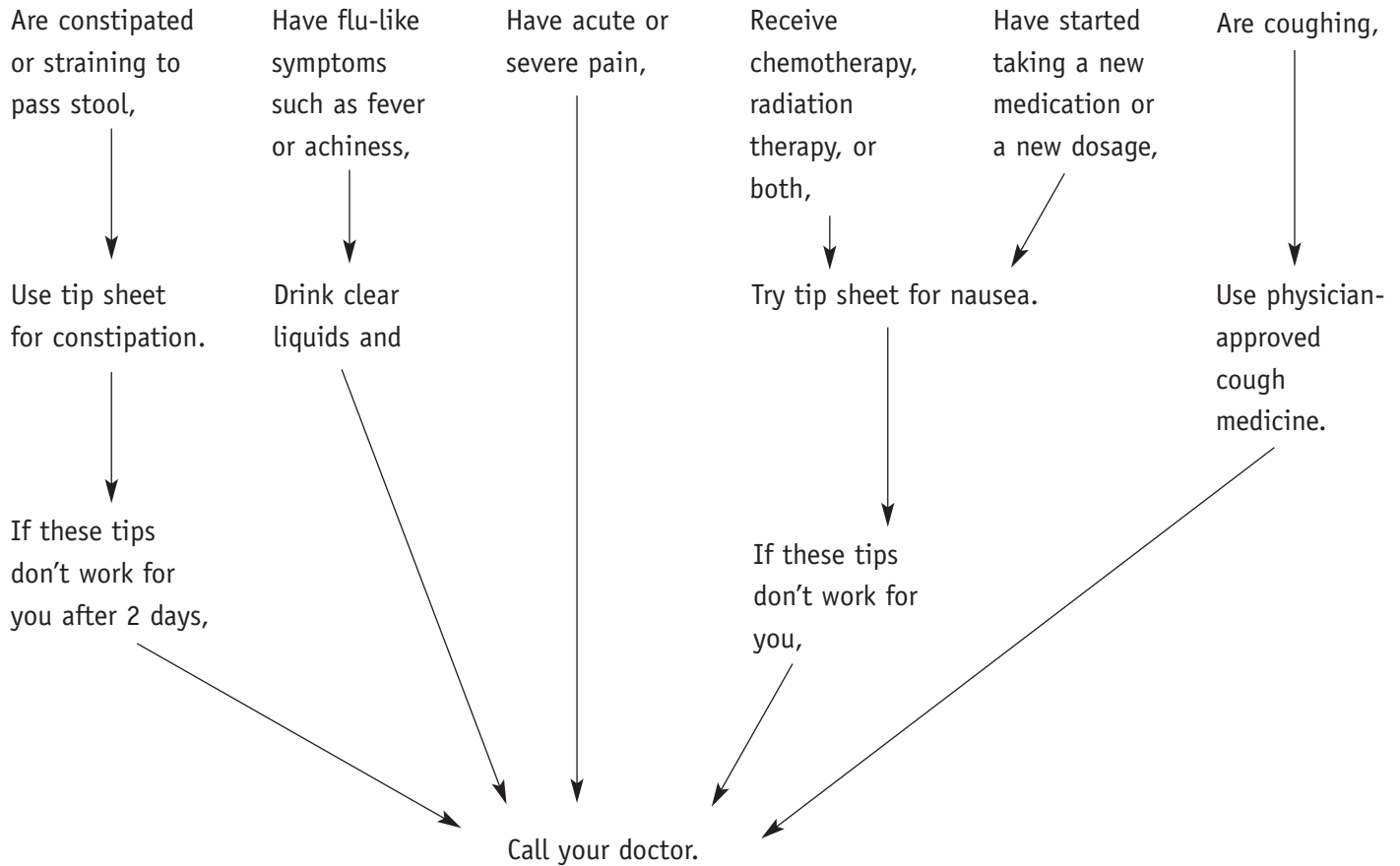
	Recommended	Foods That May Cause Nausea
Protein group	Juice-type commercial protein supplements (for example, Enlive™)	All others
Breads, cereals, rice, and pasta	Dry toast, saltines, rice	All others
Fruits and vegetables	Apple, cranberry, and grape juice	All others
Beverages, desserts, and miscellaneous	Ginger ale; caffeine-free and noncarbonated drinks, such as fruit punch and sports drinks; ginger and chamomile tea; ice pops, fruit ice, sherbet, and flavored gelatin; pretzels	All others

Foods for Managing Nausea and Vomiting on Other Days

	Recommended	Foods That May Cause Distress
High-protein foods	Boiled or baked meat, fish, and poultry; cold meat or fish salad; eggs; cream soups made with low-fat milk; luncheon meat; lean ham; nonfat yogurt	Fatty and fried meats, fried eggs, sausage, milkshakes (unless made with low-fat milk or ice milk)
Breads, cereals, rice, and pasta	Saltines, soda crackers, bread, toast, cold cereal, English muffins, bagels, plain noodles, rice	Doughnuts, pastries, waffles, pancakes, muffins
Fruits and vegetables	Potatoes (baked, boiled, or mashed), vegetable juices, canned or fresh fruits, vegetables as tolerated (omit if appetite is poor or nausea is severe)	Potato chips, french fries, creamed or fried potatoes or vegetables
Beverages, desserts, and miscellaneous	Cold fruit drinks, caffeine-free soda pop and iced tea, sports drinks, angel food cake, sponge cake, flavored gelatins, vanilla wafers, pudding (made with low-fat milk), ice pops, juice bars, fruit ices	Alcohol, coffee, tea

Nausea and Vomiting Decision Tree*

If You Are Nauseated and/or Vomiting and



* Adapted with permission from *Creative Ideas for Eating During Illness and Recovery*. Cleveland, Ohio: Department of Nutrition Services, Cleveland Clinic; 1994:9.