



Managing feeling and being sick (nausea)

This information is a guide to help you deal with feeling or being sick (nausea) until you can talk to your doctor. It is not intended to replace medical advice.

If you are currently taking anti-sickness medicines, take them about 15-30 minutes before meals.

If you are still feeling sick, you should tell your doctor. There are many other types available and changing type may help.

Surgery, radiotherapy, chemotherapy and some medicines are all treatments which may cause you to feel sick. However it is usually temporary. It is important to try to take some food during this time, as being hungry can sometimes make the nausea worse.

The following tips may help to overcome these feelings and help you to eat:

- try to avoid preparing food when you feel sick. Use ready-meals or pre-prepared food
- accept any offers to have food made for you
- try to keep away from cooking smells. You may want to try eating ready prepared meals. Some patients find that having cold food and drinks is easier as they have less smell
- avoid eating greasy/fried food and hot/spicy foods
- try to have food which you fancy and eat smaller meals more often e.g. six small snacks per day
- keep meals fairly dry e.g. toast/crackers
- don't drink a lot before meals, or with meals. Wait for half an hour after food before having a drink
- when drinking, try taking sips slowly. Some patients find sipping a fizzy drink such as soda water, dry ginger ale, lemonade or fizzy water can help. Ginger and peppermint teas can also help

- try getting some fresh air before meals to distract you from the thought of food
- avoid tight or restrictive clothing
- the oils in ginger can help to reduce nausea - try crystallised ginger, ginger biscuits and ginger tea
- if you feel sick in the morning, try eating a cracker or a dry biscuit before getting out of bed
- try rinsing your mouth with fizzy water between meals
- sucking ice cubes can sometimes help
- good mouth care is important so gently clean your mouth and teeth after every meal
- try to sit down and relax, and avoid lying down immediately after eating

Can complementary therapies help?

Acupressure bands (available from chemist) can help to control feelings of sickness. These apply pressure to specific parts of the body, usually the wrist.

Complementary therapy and relaxation sessions may also help. Please ask in the Lynda Jackson Macmillan Centre for more details or see leaflet 'A patient's guide to complementary therapies at Mount Vernon Cancer Centre' (PI16).

Can I be prescribed anti-sickness tablets?

Remember to tell your doctor about your symptoms. If they continue you may be prescribed anti-sickness tablets.

Further information about feeling and being sick

Information is available from Macmillan Cancer Support in the following:

- Nausea and vomiting (anti-emetic therapy)
Macmillan Factsheet
- Eating problems and cancer (booklet)

These are available from the Lynda Jackson Macmillan Centre or from Macmillan Cancer Support website www.macmillan.org.uk

If you would like further advice please contact the Mount Vernon Cancer Centre Dietitian,
Tel: 020 3826 2129.