

Nutrition: When you have Nausea and/or Vomiting

This handout will give you ideas to help you cope with nausea and vomiting while you are in the hospital. Nausea and vomiting may prevent you from eating and drinking. It often gets better without treatment, but sometimes you may need medicine to prevent nausea or vomiting. Your doctor can order this medicine if needed. Ask your nurse for your nausea medication when you need it. You will be able to eat and drink better when you can prevent nausea.

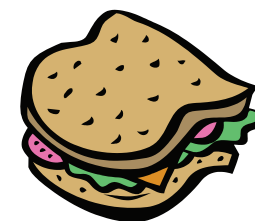
Eating Your Best When You Have Nausea

Identify what triggers your nausea. Is it the sight, smell, taste or thought of food or eating? Is it worse after you eat or at a specific time of day?

- If you have identified a trigger let your physician know so they can get you the right medication
- If there is a strategy that has worked well for you in the past tell your nurse or doctor
- If medication is not effective let the doctors and nurses know

When the smell or sight of meal trays causes nausea

- Ask your nurse for nausea medication before meals
- Meal trays can be held until you feel well enough to eat
- Ask for cold items at meal times, such as sandwiches, carrot sticks, mild cheese or yogurt with fruit



Prevent dehydration

- Sip cool liquids like flat ginger ale, fruit juice diluted with water or herbal tea

Portion sizes seem too big and cause nausea

- Ask for smaller portions
- Eat small meals or snacks often. Having an empty stomach may make nausea worse.

Make Mealtimes a Success

Get comfortable

Sit up in a chair, or on the edge of your bed for your meals. Use pillows to prop yourself up if you cannot sit.

- Don't lie down flat for at least 30 minutes after your meals
- Relax during meals and rest after eating

Keep your mouth fresh and clean

- Brush your teeth at least twice per day
- Use mouth swabs or rinse with cold water or normal saline (nurse can provide) if you cannot tolerate using a toothbrush
- Try sucking on sugarless lemon candies to keep your mouth fresh

Refresh yourself

- Rest before meals so that you have energy to eat at meal times
- Wash your face with a wet cloth before meals to feel fresh

Get fresh air everyday!

- Sit outside, or take a walk if you are able to do so

Other tips:

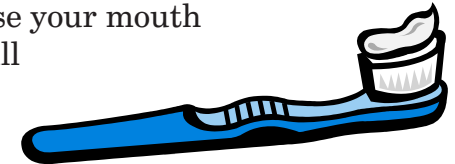
- Smelling a fresh cut lemon may help settle nausea. The kitchen can send these with your meals if requested.
- Peppermints, sour candies, candied ginger, ginger tea and plain crackers may help settle nausea. Ask family or friends to bring in these items and keep them at your bedside.

What to Do When Vomiting Stops You From Eating

Identify what makes you vomit. Is it the sight, smell, taste or thought of food or eating? Is it worse after you eat or at a specific time of day?

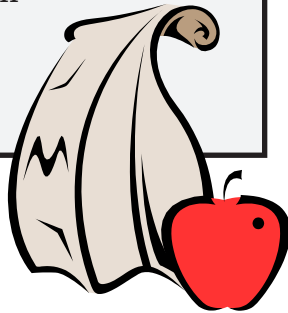
Tips:

- Take the medication your doctor has ordered to prevent or treat nausea and vomiting
- Keep your mouth as fresh and as clean as possible
- Brush your teeth or rinse your mouth after you vomit. This will clean your mouth and protect your teeth
- Rest your stomach
 - Once vomiting stops for at least an hour, try clear liquids such as broth, plain tea, water, diluted apple juice
 - If you tolerate clear fluids you may be ready to try crackers, dry toast, or cooked cereal such as oatmeal



Speak to your dietitian about the following services available from the kitchen to help you eat your best:

- Communicating to the kitchen about your food/ meal likes and dislikes
- Afternoon and evening snacks
- Alternate menu item list - list of foods available to use when you mark your menu
- Deliver meals to the nursing station
- Remove lid from meal tray before delivering it to your room



Other suggestions:

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