

Information for patients and families



Niagara Health System
Système De Santé De Niagara

Walker Family Cancer Centre

Nausea & Vomiting

What you need to know and why:

Nausea: An unpleasant sensation often difficult to describe. A vague uneasiness or discomfort at times in the throat area or felt throughout the abdomen.

Vomiting: Is the forceful expulsion of the contents of the stomach up through the mouth.

There may be several reasons for your nausea and vomiting. Nausea is a common side effect of some chemotherapy drugs. Nausea and vomiting can occur by themselves or together. Vomiting can lead to the loss of food, fluids and medications.

What to do:

Take your anti-nausea medications as directed by your oncologist or nurse, for example Stemetil, Gravol or Maxeran by pill or suppository form

- Take ½ hour prior to mealtime for most effect
- Use suppository if vomiting (insert suppository into rectum)
- Use bland mouth rinse after any vomiting (see Oral Care Fact Sheet)
- Follow the Nutrition tips for cancer treatment on the following pages
- If medications don't work or you are still feeling nauseated, call clinic for other options

Call if the above measures are not working, or:

- Nausea or vomiting continues for 24 – 48 hours
- Poor fluid intake

Call:

- Oncology Clinic - Monday to Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.: **905-682-6451**
- After hours and holidays call: **905-685-8082**

Personal Notes/Reminders:

Nausea & Vomiting / Nutrition Management

The best plan is to prevent nausea and vomiting before it happens!

- Eat a low-fat meal before treatment (avoid fried foods or foods with more than 2 teaspoons of butter, margarine or oil added)
- Limit spicy, fried foods and foods with strong smells
- Take medication(s) as discussed with your nurse, pharmacist or doctor
- Avoid lying down for at least 30 minutes after you have eaten.
- Suck on hard candy, popsicles, or ice during chemotherapy
- Keep your mouth clean; brush at least twice a day. Rinse your mouth often throughout the day with a the mouth rinse*

*Mouth rinse: 1 teaspoon salt, 1 teaspoon baking soda in 1 liter/4cups of water - rinse especially before and after meals and snacks

If you have nausea:

- Eat several small meals a day as tolerated
- If the smell of foods makes your nausea worse, choose cold foods or foods at room temperature such as: fresh or canned fruit, cheese and crackers, vegetables and dip, yogurt fruit, cottage cheese and fruit custard
- Avoid overly spicy foods, sweet desserts and greasy or fried foods
- Do not drink with meals
- Avoid eating your favorite foods at this time as you could develop a dislike for them later.
- Sip ginger tea (ask your dietitian for a recipe).
- Eat in a relaxing environment (e.g. dim lighting and soft music may help).
- Also avoid eating in a stuffy or warm room.
- Wear loose clothing.
- Place a cold cloth on your face
- Avoid caffeine and smoking
- Try relaxation and diversion techniques – things you can do to take your mind off the nausea and vomiting such as resting quietly, watching TV, reading, listening to music or doing yoga

