

When you are having cancer treatments, you may feel sick to your stomach (like you want to throw up). This is called nausea.

Your cancer treatment may also make you vomit, or throw up. You may have nausea without vomiting. You may vomit after a few hours, a day, or even longer after you have cancer treatment.

Your cancer, the medicines you are taking to control the pain, or being constipated (if you cannot have a bowel movement) can also cause nausea and vomiting.

## What should I do if I have nausea or vomiting after my treatment?

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- Talk with your health care team.
- Your doctor may prescribe a medicine to get rid of your nausea and vomiting. This medicine is called an anti-emetic.
- Your doctor may prescribe anti-emetics for you to take regularly for 2-3 days after your chemotherapy treatment. You should take this medicine when recommended, even if you do not feel “sick to your stomach”.

## How can I cope with nausea and vomiting?

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- After eating, relax in an upright position.
- Talk to your doctor, nurse, or pharmacist about medicines (anti-emetics) to control your nausea and vomiting.
- If your doctor prescribes medicine for you, use it as recommended.
- Take your anti-emetics 30 minutes before meals, if scheduled around meal time.
- Wear clothes that are loose around your stomach.
- Eat slowly.
- Eat lighter meals on treatment days. Try frequent small meals and snacks rather than a few large meals.
- Try a diet of bland, odourless, low-fat foods. Do not eat fatty or spicy foods.
- Drink lots of fluids. Use calorie-dense high-protein drinks, when able, such as milkshakes or commercial supplements like Boost®, Ensure® and Carnation Instant Breakfast®. Clear fluids between meals like apple juice, ginger ale, or

Resource® fruit beverage may be better tolerated if nausea or vomiting continues.

- If the smell of certain foods makes you feel sick to your stomach, try to have someone else cook the meal. You may be better able to tolerate cold foods like sandwiches, cheese, fruit, yogurt and puddings than hot cooked foods.

## Questions to ask your health care team

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- Will the treatment upset my stomach?
- What medicine should I take?
- If I have nausea and/or vomiting, should I tell you about it right away? Or should I wait until my next appointment?
- What should I do if I vomit my medicine?
- Can I meet with a dietitian or nutritionist to discuss what kinds of food I should eat?

## Looking for more information on this topic?

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You can contact the Canadian Cancer Society at [www.cancer.ca](http://www.cancer.ca) or call the Cancer Information Service of the Cancer Society at 1-888-939-3333. You can also contact your local public library for books, videos, magazine articles and online health information. For a list of public libraries in Nova Scotia go to <http://publiclibraries.ns.ca>.

For more information visit *Cancer Care Nova Scotia* website [www.cancercare.ns.ca](http://www.cancercare.ns.ca)

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