

Nausea or Vomiting

Online version with active resource links at: <http://cancer-help.me/nausea-vomiting>

Feeling nauseous, sick to your stomach?

Nausea is that feeling you have when you are going to throw up. You feel sick to your stomach and may not know how to describe the uncomfortable feeling you are experiencing.

Vomiting (emesis) is throwing up what is in your stomach. It usually comes out your mouth, can also come out through your nose. After vomiting, your nausea may be better for a period of time.

Many types of chemotherapy may cause mild to severe nausea and vomiting. Radiation therapy, especially to the brain, spinal cord, abdomen, and pelvis, may also cause nausea and vomiting.

Before treatment starts, ask your care team if any part of your treatment plan has potential for you to experience nausea and vomiting. If so, ask what are your options to prevent or minimize these side effects.

At any point in your care, it is important to tell your health care team if you experience nausea or vomiting so they can help you prevent or manage it.

What are the risks of nausea and vomiting?

- Mild nausea and vomiting can be uncomfortable. Usually, it does not cause serious problems.
- Vomiting a lot and often is a problem. It can cause dehydration, electrolyte imbalance, weight loss, and depression. Severe vomiting can reopen surgical wounds, create tears in the esophagus (the tube through which food passes from the throat to the stomach), or break bones. This may result in the need to stop cancer treatment, for some people.

How are nausea and vomiting prevented and treated?

- Nausea and vomiting can be prevented with medications. However, some patients may still have nausea even if they are not vomiting. Medications to prevent nausea and vomiting should be taken as prescribed, even after treatment, because the risk of vomiting can continue for several days after treatment. If you have nausea and vomiting even if you are taking your medication as prescribed, tell your health care team. They can recommend other medications.
- Other options, such as distraction, relaxation, positive imagery, and acupuncture, may help. Some herbal medications, like ginger, may help with nausea. However, you should discuss your plans with your health care team before starting any of these other options.

What if nausea and vomiting don't stop or get worse?

- If your nausea and vomiting does not stop or gets worse, talk with your health care team. The cause may need to be identified.
- If you cannot keep food or water in your body because of severe nausea and vomiting, it can lead to serious dehydration and electrolyte imbalance. Dehydration can lead to other health problems.

It is important to talk to your health care team if your symptoms get worse.

Content adapted from websites below.

Resources for Additional Information:

- [NCCN Guidelines for Patients®, Nausea and Vomiting](#)
- [ASCO answers, Nausea and Vomiting](#)
- [Cancer.Net, Nausea and Vomiting](#)
- [NIH, NCI Nausea / Vomiting - Cancer Treatment \(PDQ®\)](#)
- [Chemocare, Nausea, Vomiting & Chemotherapy](#)
- [American Cancer Society Nausea and Vomiting](#)
- [CancerCare.org, Chemotherapy-Induced Nausea and Vomiting](#)

Recursos en Español:

- [NIH, NCI, Náuseas y vómitos](#)
- [Cancer.Net, Náuseas y vómitos](#)
- [Chemocare, Náuseas, vómitos y quimioterapia](#)
- [American Cancer Society, Náuseas y vómitos](#)
- [CancerCare.org, Consejos para controlar las náuseas y aumentar el apetito durante el tratamiento del cáncer](#)
- [CancerCare.org, Náuseas y vómitos inducidos por la quimioterapia](#)