

Dietary advice for nausea and vomiting

Nausea is an uneasy feeling in the stomach that may or may not lead to vomiting. Both nausea and vomiting can be common side effects of some illnesses, medications and treatments such as chemotherapy. You may also feel nauseous if you are anxious or upset. Ongoing nausea and vomiting can affect what you eat and drink and can cause some people to stop eating and drinking all together.

General advice

- If you've been prescribed anti-emetic (anti-sickness) medication, make sure you take these exactly as prescribed, usually about 30 minutes before eating
- Some medications can cause nausea. If you believe this is the case, please speak to your doctor or nurse who may be able to alter your medication schedule slightly
- Try to take small, frequent meals, with snacks in between. Having an empty stomach can make you feel worse
- Eat slowly and give your food time to settle by relaxing after meals in a sitting or slightly reclined position, instead of lying down
- Have drinks between meals, rather than with your food
- You may need to change the time of your meals so that you can eat at times when the sickness is better controlled
- If you feel sick in the mornings, try eating plain biscuits or dry toast before you get up
- If you are regularly being sick, try to increase your fluid intake to replace lost fluids. This is best done by sipping small amounts throughout the day, rather than drinking large volumes at once

What can I eat?

There are some foods that are best avoided, but there are no rules – it is best to eat a little of what you fancy. Don't worry if you 'go off' your favourite foods as it's likely you will want them again once the nausea passes.

Recommendations

- Plain, dry foods such as toast, crackers or plain biscuits may help to settle your stomach
- Try sipping a cold, fizzy drink through a straw. You may find these are better if left to go flat
- Ginger can help to relieve nausea – try ginger biscuits, ginger tea or ginger beer. Peppermint tea may also help
- Avoid spicy, fatty or fried foods
- Suck on ice lollies or hard sweets/mints
- Keep your mouth fresh with regular tooth brushing or by using mouthwash. This can also help with unpleasant tastes

Advice on strong smelling food

Sometimes the **smell of food or cooking** can make the problem worse. To avoid smells you could:

- Take a walk outside while the meal is cooking
- Choose cold foods such as sandwiches, salads, cereal and milk as they have less smell than hot foods
- Ask a friend or relative to prepare meals and cook for you
- Try foods that only need to be heated up, such as ready meals or frozen leftovers (check that food is properly reheated before serving)
- Avoid strong smelling foods

If you have any concerns or would like further advice please speak to your Dorothy House Professional
dorothyhouse.org.uk