

# Nausea and Vomiting After Radiation

Nausea may occur when you receive radiation to the abdomen, stomach, or middle back. The degree of nausea you may have depends on which area of your body is being treated. You may feel ill or have an upset stomach for a few hours after your radiation treatment.

There are many ways to lessen or control nausea. Your nurse or doctor will review the following information with you and will answer any questions you may have. It is important that you tell your nurse and doctor about what helps decrease your nausea. Your doctor may prescribe medication that will help you feel more comfortable.

## Helpful Hints to Decrease Nausea and Vomiting

- If you are taking prescribed medication for your nausea, take the medication 30 minutes to one hour before eating, and also before your radiation treatment. You may need to take the medication as needed throughout the day as well or as prescribed by your Doctor.
- Eat smaller, more frequent meals, rather than three large meals a day.
- Before a radiation treatment, it may be helpful to eat foods that are easy to digest. Avoid fried, fatty, and highly seasoned spicy foods, which tend to upset the stomach. Some people are more comfortable when they do not eat two or three hours before treatment; some are more comfortable when they do not eat two or three hours after treatment. Find out what works best for you.
- Eat bland foods, such as toast, crackers, and applesauce.
- Avoid foods that are spicy and can irritate your esophagus and stomach; avoid juices and citrus, such as oranges, grapefruits, lemons, limes, and tomatoes.
- Drink clear beverages, such as ginger ale, apple juice, or sports drinks. Beverages and foods should be served at room temperature. Limit intake of alcoholic beverages.
- Sip liquids throughout the day, rather than drinking large amounts at one time.
- Eat foods that have a mild aroma or flavor. Avoid foods and beverages that have a strong smell. Hot foods generally have a stronger aroma than foods served cold or at room temperature.
- Listen to music, take a walk, or do some other relaxing activity to help decrease the nausea. Feeling anxious or fatigued may increase nausea.
- If the smell of food cooking makes you nauseous, have someone cook for you, arrange to have meals brought in (such as Meals on Wheels), or buy prepared meals.

## Other Suggestions

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## Things to Report Immediately

**Call immediately if you experience any of the following symptoms:**

- **Frequent vomiting for more than eight hours; dehydration from vomiting can be a serious concern.**
- **Temperature of 100.5° F (38° C) or above.**
- **Chills.**

**In an Emergency, Call:**

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