



**University  
Hospitals Sussex**  
NHS Foundation Trust

# Coping with nausea and sickness

Patient information

Nausea and sickness often occur as a result of medication, illness and/or infection, and are usually temporary symptoms. If you continue to be sick (vomit) consult your doctor as soon as possible.

There are some drugs which may reduce nausea and sickness and products available on prescription which may improve food intake. Ask your doctor or pharmacist for advice.

## Ways to help prevent nausea

- A walk in the fresh air may increase your appetite
- Eat in a well-ventilated room and in relaxed surroundings
- Avoid drinking too much fluid with your meal and do not have a drink for at least half an hour after finishing your food to avoid feeling too full
- Eat frequent small meals or snacks
- Avoid letting your stomach get too empty or overloaded
- Six small meals or snacks a day, e.g. sandwiches, cheese and biscuits, scones, toast, and yoghurts may be better tolerated than three large meals
- Avoid cooking smells if possible
- Let someone else do the cooking or have cold foods
- Eat slowly and chew your food well
- Keep your mouth and teeth clean
- Do not worry if you fancy something unusual or at a strange time of day
- Eat what you like, when you like
- Avoid eating too near to bedtime

### Try the following suggestions:

- Try dry meals, i.e. not too much gravy or rich sauce
- Cool foods and drinks have less smell and so may be more acceptable
- Sip iced or fizzy drinks slowly through a straw
- Try salty foods or sharp tasting foods e.g. crisps, cheesy biscuits

- Nibble a dry biscuit or dry toast before getting out of bed. Get up slowly
- Try peppermint flavoured foods, such as peppermint tea
- Try ginger flavoured drinks and food.
- Try fruit sorbets, ice cream and jelly, which may be easier to swallow and manage.

## Try to avoid

- Very sweet, spicy or fatty foods
- Tight fitting clothes
- Be comfortable whilst eating
- Lying down just after eating
- Strong cooking smells.

## If you are being sick

Try to maintain your energy and fluid intake.

Take frequent sips of fluids, through a straw may help. Always have a drink that contains calories rather than plain water, e.g. flavoured fizzy drinks, squashes and cordials, fruit juices or milk-based drinks.

DO NOT use diet or low calorie drinks.

Ready mixed rehydration sachets can be purchased from chemists and added to drinking water. These are useful for replacing lost fluid and salt. Follow the manufacturers' recommendations.

If you have diabetes, please contact your dietitian, diabetes nurse specialist or practice nurse.

## When your sickness settles

Try to take something more nourishing. Milk is a very good source of nutrition.

Try hot or cold milk or milky drinks such as milkshakes, Horlicks or Ovaltine. Commercially available products such as Complan or Build Up may also be useful when your intake has been poor.

# Returning to solid foods

It is important to do this as soon as possible but start with snacks and gradually build up to normal meals.

- Savoury foods may be better to start with, e.g. crackers or crispbreads
- Plain toast and a well cooked boiled egg
- A sandwich with any filling you fancy
- A light meal.

## Contact us

For further information or to provide feedback

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