

# Nausea / Vomiting



Réseau de  
cancérologie  
Rossy

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Cancer  
Network

## Symptom Management Tip Sheet

### Let's talk about nausea and vomiting...



- **Nausea** is a feeling of queasiness. **Vomiting** is a strong release of stomach contents through the mouth and may include retching/dry heaving.
- If you have nausea with a severe headache, or your vomit has blood in it or looks like coffee grounds, or you feel weak/dizzy **GO TO THE EMERGENCY ROOM**

Please call your healthcare team if you have any of these symptoms:

- you cannot keep down any liquids, food or medications
- you vomit twice in one day despite taking nausea medication
- you have abdominal pain

*\* If you are undergoing  
IMMUNOTHERAPY and have these  
symptoms please contact  
your healthcare team as soon as  
possible. Delays can increase side  
effects and toxicity.*



## What you can do

- Drink clear fluids, 6-8 glasses per day.
- Drink often and in small amounts instead of all at once.
- Avoid foods that are greasy/fried, very salty, spicy, or have strong smells.
- Avoid tobacco and alcohol.
- Sit upright or reclined with your head raised for 30-60 minutes after meals.
- Try relaxation therapy, like breathing techniques and listening to music.
- Consult with your medical team if you want to try acupuncture or acupressure therapy.
- Speak to your dietitian or pharmacist for other ideas.

*This information should not be considered as medical advice. It is not to be used in place of a visit with a doctor, nurse or other healthcare professional. If you have questions about your individual medical situation, please consult with your healthcare professional.*

Based on: Remote Symptom Practice Guides for Adults on Cancer Treatments © 2020 D Stacey for the Pan-Canadian Oncology Symptom Triage and Remote Support (COSTaRS) Team. University of Ottawa School of Nursing and the Ottawa Hospital Research Institute, Ottawa, Canada.

### Nausea:

- Take your nausea medication as prescribed in order to prevent nausea from starting.
- Try to take your nausea medication 30 minutes before eating to be able to digest the medication.
- Try to eat 5-6 small meals per day.
- If you are taking nausea medication and your symptoms have not improved, contact your health care team.

### Vomiting:

- Limit food and drink until vomiting stops. Always rinse your mouth after vomiting (to clean it).
- After 30-60 minutes without vomiting, sip clear fluids. Next, add dry starchy foods (crackers, dry toast, dry cereal, pretzels). Then try protein rich foods later (e.g. eggs, chicken).
- Try a bland rinse. Recipe: 1 cup warm water, ½ tsp table salt (or baking soda). Swish in your mouth for at least 30 seconds and spit out.

## Other resources

**Managing Nausea + Vomiting**  
<https://bit.ly/cco-nauseavomiting>

**Food Tips to Manage Nausea (video)**  
<https://bit.ly/youtube-nausea>

**More resources at**  
[mcgill.ca/rcr-rcn/patient](http://mcgill.ca/rcr-rcn/patient)

## Who can help



### Nurse Navigator (IPO)

If you have one, please speak with your IPO

### Oncology Pharmacy

514-340-8222 ext. 25940

### Dietitian

Ask your doctor or nurse for a referral

## If you are getting treatment at:

- **Oncology Clinic, call:**  
Symptom Management Hotline  
514-340-8222 ext. 25529  
Mon – Fri. 8h00-16h00  
Nights/Weekends: 514-340-8232
- **Radiation Oncology Clinic, call:**  
514-340-8222 ext. 24124