

Nausea or vomiting

Some cancers and cancer treatments can cause nausea and vomiting. Feeling anxious can also make you feel or be sick.

There is an area in the brain called the vomiting centre. This controls nausea and vomiting. Different things can stimulate the vomiting centre and make you feel sick.

There are different types of drug that can help treat nausea and vomiting. These are called anti-sickness (anti-emetic) drugs. These drugs can be given as:

- tablets
- injections
- suppositories
- skin patches.

If you are having a cancer treatment that is known to cause nausea and vomiting, you may start taking anti-sickness drugs before your treatment starts. If the first anti-sickness drug you try does not work, your doctor may recommend you try a different one.

Anti-sickness drugs can cause side effects. These vary, depending on which drugs you are taking.

Other things can help you manage nausea and vomiting. These include eating small, frequent meals and avoiding foods with a strong smell or taste.

Tips to help manage nausea or vomiting

If feeling sick is making you not want to eat, the following tips may help:

- Avoid eating or preparing food when you feel sick.
- Avoid fried foods or foods with a strong smell.
- Make small meals and eat little and often.
- If the smell of hot food makes you feel sick, eat cold or warm food.
- Chew your food well.
- Try eating peppermints or drinking peppermint tea.
- Sip drinks slowly.
- Try eating ginger biscuits or drinking ginger beer.
- Try not to drink a lot just before you eat.
- It is often easier to control and prevent nausea if you take anti-sickness drugs regularly, rather than treating the nausea after it has started.
- Using relaxation tapes or doing activities you find relaxing may help you cope with nausea.
- Sea-bands® (acubands) are available from chemists and health food shops. They use a principle called acupressure. They apply pressure to specific points on the body – usually the wrist. Some people find acubands helpful in reducing nausea.

Local resources:

Resource	Contact details

Further information

www.macmillan.org.uk/information-and-support/coping/side-effects-and-symptoms/other-side-effects/nausea-and-vomiting

Our booklets and leaflets are available to order free on be.macmillan.org.uk

- **Eating problems and cancer**
- **Managing the symptoms of cancer**

More information and support

If you have more questions or would like to talk to someone, call the Macmillan Support Line free on **0808 808 00 00**, Monday to Friday, 9am to 8pm, or visit macmillan.org.uk

Deaf or hard of hearing? Call using NGT (Text Relay) on **18001 0808 808 00 00**, or use the NGT Lite app. Speak another language? Telephone interpreters are available. Please tell us, in English, the language you would like to use.

We produce information in a range of formats and languages. To order these, visit macmillan.org.uk/otherformats or call our support line.

Revised in June 2018. Next planned review in 2021.