



# NAUSEA & VOMITING

*A guide for patients and carers*



**'always there to care'**

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There are different reasons why someone may develop nausea and/or vomiting. Some causes, such as gastroenteritis or overindulgence are self-limiting, and provided you can keep well hydrated should not necessarily require medical attention.

On other occasions (particularly if you're having chemotherapy or if you have recently commenced a new medication), or if your symptoms are not settling after a few days, it may be necessary to contact a health professional for further advice or treatment.

When you see a health professional about these symptoms they are likely to ask you a series of questions and may wish to examine you. They may also suggest some additional tests or investigations. This is to try and understand the reason for your symptoms and subsequently decide the best treatment plan.

It might be useful for you to consider if the nausea/vomiting is associated with any other symptoms, such as pain, dizziness, headache, bowel disturbance, fever, confusion.

## What can I do for myself?

Eating small, plain meals – 'little and often' might be better than big meals. Avoid greasy, fatty foods or spicy foods. Taking plenty sips of cold drinks. For some, peppermint or ginger tea is helpful.

Take medication as prescribed – some medications are better tolerated after eating rather than on an empty stomach. Anti-sickness drugs may be better taken 30 minutes before you eat.

Try to make the environment as calm as possible – additional stress, tension or worry can make nausea worse. Distraction may also be helpful.

Talking to others about what worries you may help the nausea. If you or a health professional feel you require additional support for your emotional health, a referral for counselling or psychological support may be appropriate.

Sea-bands can be helpful for some people and may be worth trying. They work by applying light pressure to the acupressure point for nausea, which is located at the wrist.

## Medications

There is a variety of medications that can help with nausea. Each work in a different way, and some counteract the action of others. Therefore, it is important you follow the directions given to you by those who are prescribing your medication.

Sometimes it can be matter of trial and error to find a medication, or combination of medications, that works best for you. This may be particularly the case if there is more than one cause for your nausea and vomiting.

If you are struggling with your other medications whilst your nausea and vomiting is being treated, then do discuss this with a health professional. It may be that some medication can be safely omitted temporarily, stopped altogether, or an alternative way to take them may be considered.

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