

Managing Nausea and Vomiting

What is nausea and vomiting?

There are many different causes of nausea and vomiting that may be related to your illness or treatment. Your hospice and palliative care team will try to discover the underlying reason in order to offer treatment options.

- Nausea is an unpleasant feeling that may occur in the back of the throat or stomach prior to vomiting
- Vomiting is the emptying of stomach contents

What to report to the hospice/palliative care team?

- Amount and frequency of nausea and vomiting
- Description of vomited fluid
- Altered mental status

What can be done?

The good news is that there is much you, your caregiver and the hospice/palliative care team can do for nausea and vomiting. Discuss with your healthcare team which options are best for you. These may include:

- Record what causes you to feel nauseated or to vomit and what decreases the nausea and/or vomiting
- Sip carbonated drinks that have gone flat
- Drink sports drinks (such as Gatorade®) – with children use Pedialyte®
- Provide small amounts of salty foods (such as crackers, chicken broth)
- Provide foods as requested by patient in small frequent amounts as large meals may be overwhelming
- Provide frequent mouth care
- Try sips of water or ice chips before eating again
- Maintain a comfortable room temperature
- Increase air flow by opening a window or placing a small fan in the room
- Try alternative therapies such as massage, guided imagery, or progressive muscle relaxation
- Engage in relaxing activities that may distract from the nausea, such as listening to music, watching TV, working puzzles, sketching or drawing, reading, or yoga
- Use medications as ordered by your healthcare provider

- Avoid juices (such as cranberry, grape, apple)
- Avoid fried foods, milk products, or foods with strong smells
- Avoid strong odors such as perfume and deodorizers
- Avoid eating immediately after vomiting
- Avoid constipation

Contact your hospice/palliative care team if nausea/vomiting continues.

Other HPNA Teaching Sheets on are available at www.HPNA.org.

References

Core Curriculum for the Generalist Hospice and Palliative Nurse. Dubuque, IA: Kendall/Hunt Publishing Company; 2010.

Ferrell B, Coyle N. *Textbook of Palliative Nursing*. 2nd Ed. New York, NY: Oxford University Press; 2010.

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