**GUIDELINES: Nausea**

This is to supplement the general information previously provided by your doctor and nurse. It will help you to manage the possible side effects from the cancer treatment.

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**Potential Side Effects**

**Chemotherapy:** Nausea and vomiting may be a side effect of chemotherapy. These symptoms may be mild or moderate. They may continue although usually subside after 24 hours to three days post-chemotherapy.

**Radiation Therapy:** Nausea and vomiting may be a side effect of radiation therapy to the abdomen (stomach/bowel), brain, head and neck, lung and esophagus. Since radiation therapy is a local treatment, the side effects depend on the area being treated. These symptoms may be mild or moderate. It generally occurs one to three hours post-treatment and then subsides. Sometimes, nausea may be continuous.

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**Recommendations**

- Clear liquids such as Popsicles, Jell-O and weak tea are easy to swallow and are soothing to the stomach.

- Ample fluid intake is essential to prevent dehydration. Frequent sipping (every 15 minutes) on water, juices and other clear calorie-containing liquids throughout the day is encouraged.

- Eat dry foods such as dry toast or crackers when getting out of bed in the morning.

*Continued*
Eat several small meals (4–6) a day, rather than 2–3 large meals.

Eat and drink slowly.

Foods at room temperature are generally easier to eat than very hot or cold foods.

Bland foods such as creamed soups, cream of wheat, custards, puddings, and mashed potatoes will help you maintain your nutrition.

Avoid spicy, salty, fried or greasy foods like potato chips or fried chicken.

Avoid going to bed right after eating. Stay up and move around after eating for at least one hour.

Odors might be bothersome. Avoid cooking or eating foods with strong odors or other smells. Cook outside on the grill or use boiling bags to reduce cooking smells.

Experiment with timing of meals around treatment. Sometimes eating before treatment reduces the nausea. Sometimes eating after the treatment is better. See what works best for you.

If nausea persists, medication may be prescribed. Try to identify a pattern of time when you experience nausea, and take the medication just prior to that time in an effort to prevent the nausea. Example: If you notice you are always nauseated after your radiation treatment, take the anti-nausea medication 30–60 minutes prior to the radiation treatment.

Contact Us

If you have concerns or questions, contact your doctor, nurse or dietitian.