

MANAGING NAUSEA

How can I manage nausea symptoms?

Nausea (feeling sick) and vomiting can be caused by many things and it is often short term, for example, constipation and some medications and treatments including cancer treatments and anti-retroviral drugs can cause you to feel or be sick for longer periods.

What can I do?

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

Consult your HIV clinic before taking any over-the-counter medication. If the first anti-sickness drug you try does not work, your doctor may recommend you try a different one. Taking an anti-emetic 30 minutes before you eat and take your anti-retroviral as prescribed. Nausea can occur at the start of a new drug regimen and often symptoms will subside after a few days or weeks.

What should I drink?

Try the below option and see what works for you:

- Stay hydrated! When able you should start with small sips of water every 10-15 minutes and gradually increase the amount over time.
- Having drinks between meals/snacks rather than with your food can help.
- You may find strong mints or mint tea can help.
- Sipping on ginger beer or ginger tea or sucking crystallised ginger may help. Adding ginger to food and ginger tea. Ginger is anti-emetic and is traditionally used to help with nausea.



What should I eat?

Try the below option and see what works for you:

- Cooking smells can often make the problem worse. Keep windows slightly open to allow fresh air to come in. Cooking in a microwave or using a pan with a close-fitting lid can prevent cooking smells escaping.
- Avoid food with strong smell, as this can trigger nausea.
- Aim to eat small meals/snacks every 1-2 hours. Aim for light, bland foods (e.g., tinned soups, potatoes, biscuits, toast, plain crackers)
- Taking your time eating, sitting as upright as possible, and avoiding moving around after eating can help.
- Sometimes avoiding fried/fatty/spicy foods can help.
- Cold foods may be more appealing, such as sandwiches, salads, or breakfast cereals.
- Eat dry foods such as plain crackers, ginger biscuit, toast, or bread sticks.



Should I see my doctor?

If after the above tips your nausea and vomiting continue, it is important to visit the doctor if you:

- Have been vomiting uncontrollably for more than 24 hours.
- Have not been able to keep down fluids for 12 hours or more.
- Have severe stomach pain.

Call 111 for advice if you cannot see a GP.

- If you have blood in your vomit or what looks like coffee granules, Call 999.

If you find that you are losing too much weight, ask to see a dietitian who can give you individual advice.

For more information website the NHS website [Feeling sick \(nausea\) - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](http://www.nhs.uk)