

How to prevent nausea or vomiting caused by your medicines

Your health care provider prescribed a medicine that may cause nausea or vomiting. Here are some important things to keep in mind when taking this medicine:

- Many medicines can cause nausea or vomiting. These include some prescribed medicines (such as pain medicines) and some over-the-counter medicines (such as iron or potassium products, non-steroidal anti-inflammatory medicines, and aspirin). Taking several medicines that can cause nausea, or taking large doses of these medicines, increases your risk for nausea and vomiting.
- Nausea or vomiting from a medicine is not an allergic reaction.
- Pain medicines, such as opioids like codeine, hydrocodone, morphine, or oxycodone, can cause nausea or vomiting in different ways:
 - They can irritate your stomach.
 - They can affect the inner ear and cause dizziness and nausea.
 - They can slow down intestinal movement and make you feel bloated and sick to your stomach.
- For most people, the dizziness and mild nausea caused by pain medicine often goes away in 1 to 2 weeks.
- If your provider recommends that you follow a regular routine to prevent nausea and vomiting, do not wait until you are severely nauseated or vomiting to start the routine. It is much easier to prevent nausea and vomiting from happening than to treat it after it has started.
- If you have nausea or vomiting, your provider can prescribe medicines to lessen these side effects. If those medicines don't reduce your nausea and vomiting, your provider might change your pain medicine so you have fewer side effects.

Call your provider or the consulting nurse right away if you have any of the following:

- Nausea that lasts longer than 24 hours
- Vomiting that lasts more than 4 hours
- Blood in your vomit

After clinic hours, call the Consulting Nurse Service available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week: 1-800-297-6877.

Things you can do to help prevent nausea and vomiting:

1. Take it easy for the first several days after you start an opioid pain medicine for the first time, or when your dose has been increased.
2. Take your medicine with a meal or small amount of food. You can also take your medicine with 1 to 2 tablespoons of antacid to help coat your stomach.

3. If you have bloating that makes you feel sick to your stomach, make sure you're having regular bowel movements (infrequent bowel movements can make you feel bloated.) Read the instruction sheet on constipation and follow the directions if you're not having regular bowel movements.

Using medicines to treat nausea and vomiting

1. If you continue to have nausea or vomiting after trying the things listed above, your provider might prescribe medicine to help treat and prevent this side effect. To make sure you get the right medicine to help with nausea or vomiting, please tell your provider the following information:
 - Describe the side effect – is it nausea, bloating, dizziness, or vomiting?
 - When does the side effect happen – constantly or within an hour of taking your medicine?
 - When was your last bowel movement?
 - Have you taken your medicine with food or on an empty stomach?
2. Persistent vomiting can lead to serious health problems. Call your provider, nurse, or pharmacist if you have questions about your medicines or any side effects that concern you.
3. Sometimes changing to a different pain medicine will lessen or stop the nausea or vomiting. Your provider will talk to you about this if you continue having these side effects.
4. Check with your provider, nurse, or pharmacist before taking any herbal, naturopathic or homeopathic products for nausea and vomiting. We want to make sure there are no drug interactions or serious side effects that could happen.