

Postoperative Nausea and Vomiting (PONV), Adult

Postoperative nausea and vomiting (PONV) is defined as any nausea, retching, or vomiting occurring during the first 24-48 hours after surgery. Risk factors that increase likelihood of PONV include female gender, non-smoker, history of motion sickness, history of PONV, younger age, and intended administration of opioids for postoperative pain management. Nausea is feeling that you have an upset stomach and that you are about to vomit. Vomiting is when food in your stomach forcefully comes out of your mouth. Vomiting can make you feel weak. If you vomit, or if you are not able to drink enough fluids, you may not have enough water in your body (get dehydrated). If you do not have enough water in your body, you may:

- Feel tired.
- Feel thirsty.
- Have a dry mouth.
- Have cracked lips.
- Pee (urinate) less often.

Older adults and people with other diseases or a weak body defense system (immune system) are at higher risk for not having enough water in the body. If you feel like you may vomit or you vomit, it is important to follow instructions from your doctor about how to take care of yourself.

Follow these instructions at home:

Watch your symptoms for any changes. Tell your doctor about them.

Eating and drinking



- Take an ORS (oral rehydration solution). This is a drink that is sold at pharmacies and stores.
- Drink clear fluids in small amounts as you are able, such as:
 - Water.
 - Ice chips.
 - Fruit juice that has water added (diluted fruit juice).
 - Low-calorie sports drinks.
- Eat bland, easy-to-digest foods in small amounts as you are able, such as:

- Bananas.
- Applesauce.
- Rice.
- Low-fat (lean) meats.
- Toast.
- Crackers.
- Avoid drinking fluids that have a lot of sugar or caffeine in them. This includes energy drinks, sports drinks, and soda.
- Avoid alcohol.
- Avoid spicy or fatty foods.

General instructions

- Take over-the-counter and prescription medicines only as told by your doctor.
- Drink enough fluid to keep your pee (urine) pale yellow.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If you cannot use soap and water, use hand sanitizer.
- Make sure that everyone in your home washes their hands well and often.
- Rest at home until you feel better.
- Watch your condition for any changes.
- Take slow and deep breaths when you feel like you may vomit.
- Keep all follow-up visits.

Contact a doctor if:

- Your symptoms get worse.
- You have new symptoms.
- You have a fever.
- You cannot drink fluids without vomiting.
- You feel like you may vomit for more than 2 days.
- You feel light-headed or dizzy.
- You have a headache.
- You have muscle cramps.
- You have a rash.
- You have pain while peeing.

Get help right away if:

- You have pain in your chest, neck, arm, or jaw.
- You feel very weak or you faint.
- You vomit again and again.
- You have vomit that is bright red or looks like black coffee grounds.
- You have bloody or black poop (stools) or poop that looks like tar.
- You have a very bad headache, a stiff neck, or both.
- You have very bad pain, cramping, or bloating in your belly (abdomen).
- You have trouble breathing.
- You are breathing very quickly.
- Your heart is beating very quickly.
- Your skin feels cold and clammy.
- You feel confused.
- You have signs of losing too much water in your body, such as:
 - Dark pee, very little pee, or no pee.
 - Cracked lips.
 - Dry mouth.

- Sunken eyes.
- Sleepiness.
- Weakness.

These symptoms may be an emergency. Get help right away. Call 911.

- **Do not wait to see if the symptoms will go away.**
- **Do not drive yourself to the hospital.**

Summary

- Nausea is feeling that you have an upset stomach and that you are about to vomit. Vomiting is when food in your stomach comes out of your mouth.
- Follow instructions from your doctor about eating and drinking.
- Take over-the-counter and prescription medicines only as told by your doctor.
- Contact your doctor if your symptoms get worse or you have new symptoms.
- Keep all follow-up visits.

This information is not intended to replace advice given to you by your health care provider. Make sure you discuss any questions you have with your health care provider.