

Nausea is a common and distressing side effect of chemotherapy, affecting up to 80% of patients depending on the drugs used and individual risk factors³. Effective management is important to maintain nutrition, hydration, and quality of life.

Key strategies for managing chemotherapy-induced nausea:

- **Preventive (prophylactic) anti-nausea medications:**
 - These are most effective when taken *before* chemotherapy begins, rather than waiting until nausea starts³⁸.
 - Commonly used medications include 5-HT₃ receptor antagonists (such as ondansetron or palonosetron), dexamethasone, and sometimes NK1 receptor antagonists or olanzapine²⁷.
 - For breakthrough or rescue, drugs like prochlorperazine, promethazine, or lorazepam may be used as needed².
- **Diet and lifestyle adjustments:**
 - Eat small, frequent meals throughout the day instead of large meals⁴.
 - Stay hydrated with sips of fluids, ice chips, or clear liquids⁵.
 - Try tart foods (like lemons or pickles) or ginger root, which some patients find helpful¹⁴.
 - Avoid strong odors and foods that worsen your nausea⁴⁶.
- **Non-drug approaches:**
 - Aromatherapy with peppermint oil, relaxation techniques, and behavioral therapy can provide additional relief for some people⁶².

When to contact your care team:

- If your nausea is not controlled with prescribed medications
- If you are unable to keep fluids down, have signs of dehydration, or are losing weight
- If you have additional symptoms such as severe vomiting, abdominal pain, or confusion

Summary:

Take anti-nausea medications as prescribed, ideally before chemotherapy starts, and use dietary and lifestyle strategies to minimize symptoms. If your nausea persists or worsens, notify your oncology team for further management and possible adjustment of your treatment plan³⁸.

1. <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC3188425/>
2. <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC4046471/>
3. <https://www.cancer.gov/about-cancer/treatment/side-effects/nausea/nausea-hp-pdq>
4. <https://www.mdanderson.org/cancerwise/how-to-manage-nausea-caused-by-cancer-treatment.h00-159459267.html>
5. https://www.rch.org.au/rchcpg/hospital_clinical_guideline_index/chemotherapy_induced_nausea_and_vomiting/
6. <https://www.cancer.org/cancer/managing-cancer/side-effects/eating-problems/nausea-and-vomiting/managing.html>
7. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2468294220301131>
8. <https://www.cancer.gov/about-cancer/treatment/side-effects/nausea-vomiting>