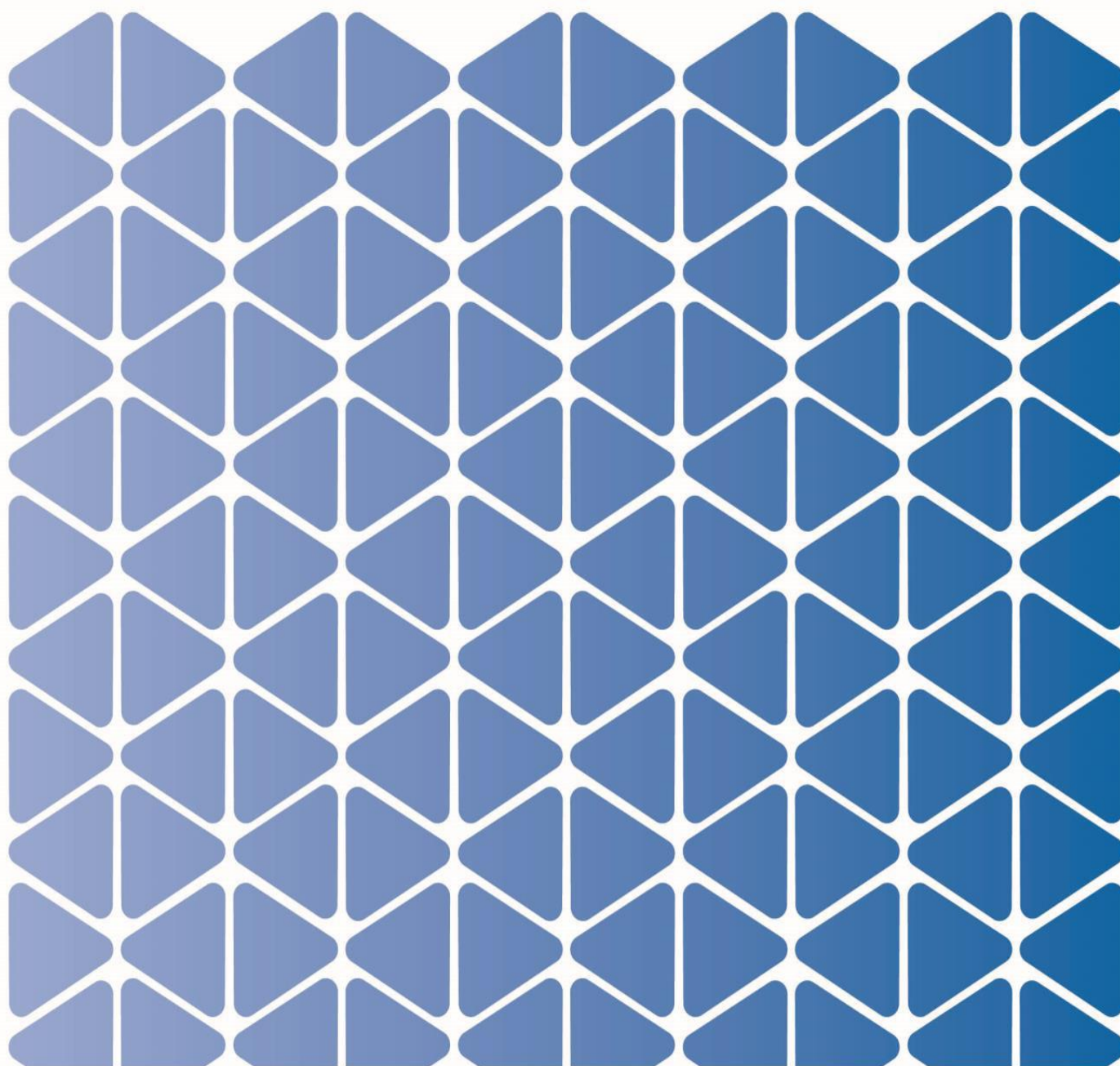


PATIENT INFORMATION

# Coping With Nausea And Sickness



Nausea and sickness often occur due to medications, infection, cancer treatment, general unwellness and are usually temporary symptoms. Vomiting can be triggered by smells, tastes, anxiety, pain, motion, certain images or even thoughts. If you continue to be sick and do not improve, consult your doctor.

### **General Tips:**

- Eat small, frequent meals throughout the day instead of three large meals.
- Avoid skipping meals as an empty stomach can worsen nausea.
- Eat slowly and chew your food well.
- Keep your mouth and teeth clean to avoid lingering tastes that may trigger nausea.
- Avoid cooking smells if possible. Let someone else do the cooking if you can.
- Sit up or keep your head elevated for at least an hour after eating.
- Stay hydrated by sipping on fluids slowly throughout the day, rather than just with meals.

### **Try:**

- Dry Foods: Cheese & crackers, toast, rice cakes, biscuits, nuts or trail mix.
- Foods without much sauce or gravy may also be better tolerated.
- Cold foods or drinks: Yogurt, smoothies, cold meats, jelly, ice cream, fruit sorbet. Tend to have less of a smell and may be more appealing. Readymeals/ foods from the freezer require heating up only and may reduce cooking smells, which may help.
- Bland Foods: Boiled potato, rice, pasta. Opting for less seasoning/ spices may help to avoid triggering nausea. Some find salty / tart flavours help
- Sipping cool fizzy drinks slowly through a straw. Letting them settle first may help.
- Ginger & ginger flavoured drinks: Ginger biscuits, ginger ale, ginger beer. Ginger can help settle nausea
- Peppermint flavours: Mint sweets, chewing gum, peppermint tea. Helps to “cleanse” the palette in between meals and can help get rid of lingering tastes.

- Boiled sweets may also work in a similar fashion. Sucking on them throughout the day may help.

### **Avoid:**

- Sweet, spicy or fatty foods **if they make you feel worse.**
- Foods with strong odours
- Tight fitting clothes around the waist.
- Lying down within two hours after eating.

### **If you are being sick:**

It is important to try and keep your calorie and fluid intake up as much as possible. Take frequent sips of drinks slowly through a straw. Choose drinks that contain calories rather than plain water.

### **Try:**

- Fizzy drinks such as lemonade, Lucozade, Vimto, Lilt, Cola, bitter lemon, tonic water, ginger ale. Avoid diet or low calorie drinks.
- Still drinks such as squashes and cordials, barley water, Blackcurrant with added Vitamin C.
- Fruit juices such as apple, orange, grapefruit, pineapple, tomato, grape. These can be bought in cartons.

**Note:** Some medications can interact with fruit and fruit juices such as cranberry with warfarin and grapefruit with statins (cholesterol lowering tablets). Please consult your Doctor or Pharmacist if you are unsure about your medication.

## **Vomiting and Electrolyte Losses:**

When you vomit or are sick your body loses:

### **Fluids**

**Electrolytes** like sodium, potassium and chloride which help your body with its functions.

If loss continues without replacement, it can lead to:

- Dehydration
- Muscle Cramps
- Fatigue
- Low Blood Pressure

If you are struggling with continued vomiting for more than a few hours, are unable to keep fluids down, or there is a risk of dehydration (older adults, children or those with medical conditions) you may benefit from electrolyte replacement drinks as below.

### **Oral Rehydration Solutions (ORS):**

Dioralyte & Electrolade which can be obtained from pharmacies or supermarkets.

Sports Drinks such as Lucozade sport- (although these are often high in sugar & those with medical conditions such as diabetes, may need to be wary of this).

Please consult with your Doctor or Pharmacist if you are unsure whether you require the above.

### **Will I Be Getting Enough Nourishment?**

It can be difficult to get the energy your body needs when you are feeling nauseous or sick.

It is important to try and get enough calories and protein to keep yourself nourished.

## **Try:**

Nourishing Drinks like Horlicks, hot chocolate, hot or cold full fat milk, smoothies with ice cream/ sorbet.

Fortified Milk. Add 4 heaped tablespoons of dried milk powder with a pint of your usual milk (preferably full fat milk).

This can be used on its own or in place of ordinary milk for drinking or cooking.

Dairy / non-dairy alternative yogurts or puddings i.e. Greek style yogurt, Alpro soya, rice pudding, trifle pots

Add heavy cream to homemade / shop bought soups.

If you wish for more advice on this, or are losing significant weight, please consult with your Doctor or Dietitian

## **Anti-sickness Medications:**

If your symptoms continue, you may benefit from some medications which are prescribable from your GP.

It is important to take these at least 30 minutes before a meal, to have optimum effect & support you in eating and drinking.

Consult with your doctor for more information.

## **Returning to normal eating and drinking:**

It is important that when your symptoms improve, you return to a normal balanced diet.

This may be a gradual build up, however it is important to try to do this as soon as possible.

**If your symptoms or condition worsens, or if you are concerned about anything, please call your GP, 111, or 999.**

### **Patient Experience**

We know that being admitted to hospital can be a difficult and unsettling time for you and your loved ones. If you have any questions or concerns, please do speak with a member of staff on the ward or in the relevant department who will do their best to answer your questions and reassure you.

### **Feedback**

Feedback is really important and useful to us – it can tell us where we are working well and where improvements can be made. There are lots of ways you can share your experience with us including completing our Friends and Family Test – cards are available and can be posted on all wards, departments and clinics at our hospitals. We value your comments and feedback and thank you for taking the time to share this with us.

### **Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)**

If you have any concerns or questions about your care, we advise you to talk with the nurse in charge or the department manager in the first instance as they are best placed to answer any questions or resolve concerns quickly. If the relevant member of staff is unable to help resolve your concern, you can contact the PALS Team. We offer informal help, advice or support about any aspect of hospital services & experiences.

Our PALS team will liaise with the various departments in our hospitals on your behalf, if you feel unable to do so, to resolve your problems and where appropriate refer to outside help.

If you are still unhappy you can contact the Complaints Department, who can investigate your concerns. You can make a complaint orally, electronically or in writing and we can advise and guide you through the complaints procedure.

### **How to contact PALS:**

**Telephone Patient Services: 0300 123 1732 or via email at: [wah-tr.PALS@nhs.net](mailto:wah-tr.PALS@nhs.net)**

### **Opening times:**

The PALS telephone lines are open Monday to Friday from 8.30am to 4.00pm. Please be aware that you may need to leave a voicemail message, but we aim to return your call within one working day.

If you are unable to understand this leaflet, please communicate with a member of staff.