

MANAGING NAUSEA AND VOMITING DURING TREATMENT



What to do when you experience nausea or vomiting

Nausea – A feeling of sickness in the stomach that may lead to vomiting.

Vomiting – The emptying of the stomach contents through the mouth.

Prevention of nausea and vomiting:

- Take the medication as prescribed by your treating doctor to prevent nausea on a regular basis.
- Eat small but frequent meals.
- Limit your intake of spicy, greasy foods and foods with strong smells.
- Eat food at room temperature or cold, if you prefer.
- Avoid alcohol and excess coffee.
- Rest, but do not lie down flat on your back.
- Try focusing your attention on something else like watching TV, listening to music, reading or getting some fresh air.
- Ask someone else to prepare food for you if possible.

- If nausea does not settle with medication and it lasts longer than 48 hours, consult your doctor.
- If your vomiting persists even though you're prescribed nausea medication, your doctor may need to change your treatment.

MANAGING YOUR NAUSEA AND VOMITING WITH MEDICATION

A corticosteroid such as Dexamethasone may be used alone or in conjunction with another medication to manage your nausea and vomiting caused by chemotherapy. It may also be used as an analgesic or to decrease the swelling of tissue.

Instructions for taking your medication

- Must be taken with food.
- Take the amount prescribed by your doctor, at the frequency prescribed – ask the pharmacist to explain this to you and read the medication label if you are unsure.
- If you vomit within 1 hour after taking this medication, you may take another dose.
- Do not stop taking Dexamethasone without first checking with your doctor or pharmacist.
- If you have diabetes, you should monitor your blood sugar level closely. Some medications may increase your blood sugar levels. If you notice a rapid increase in the results of your blood sugar, consult your doctor.
- Tell any new doctor or dentist that you visit that you are taking this medication.
- Store medication away from heat and bright light. Keep out of reach of children.

Potential common side-effects include:

- Increased risk of infection. Signs of infection include: fever, chills, cough, sore throat, burning on urination. Limit your contact with people who are sick or have colds. Rest often and wash your hands often – before eating and after using the bathroom.
- Consult your doctor if you have any of these signs of infection:
 - Nausea; heartburn; stomach pain. If your stools become black and tarry, consult your doctor.
 - Increased thirst and frequent urination are potential signs of increased blood sugar. Contact your doctor if these signs persist.
 - Increased appetite, trouble sleeping, nervousness, restlessness or mood swings may occur. Consult your doctor if these side effects become troublesome.



For more information about Life Oncology's treatment options visit www.lifehealthcare.co.za or contact your nearest healthcare provider.

