

# CANCER INSTITUTE PROGRAMS

## COPING WITH SIDE EFFECTS OF TREATMENT

The most common side effects of treatment are anorexia (loss of appetite), nausea and vomiting, constipation or diarrhea, and mouth problems, such as dry or sore mouth or sore throat. It is very important for you to contact your physician regarding problems of diarrhea, vomiting, etc., if they persist for longer than 48 hours.

### Tips for Dealing with Nausea and Vomiting

- Eat small, frequent meals.
- Eat slowly and chew thoroughly.
- Drink cold beverages such as juice, clear soups, gelatin, carbonated beverages, and popsicles between meals or before eating. Try freezing favorite beverages in ice cube trays.
- If clear liquids are well tolerated, try adding low-fat foods such as yogurt, sherbet, skinned poultry (baked or broiled, not fried), soft fruits and vegetables.
- Try cold foods such as sandwiches, fruit, and cold soups rather than hot foods.
- Try dry foods such as toast, crackers, or pretzels to relieve nausea, particularly first thing in the morning.
- Wear loose clothing.
- Keep your mouth fresh with mints, chewing gum, or sour balls.
- Use a fan or open windows if you must stay in the kitchen when food is being prepared.
- When in the hospital, request that covers on hot foods be removed prior to bringing the food into your room. This will reduce strong odors.
- Make family members/friends aware of nausea associated with perfumes, powders, or fragrances.
- Consult with your physician on the use of anti-nausea medications.

### Don't

- Eat your favorite foods when nauseated.
- Eat greasy, fatty, fried, or highly spiced foods. They tend to upset your stomach.
- Eat in a room that is stuffy or too warm.
- Lie down right after eating. It is better to sit quietly and comfortably for at least 30 minutes.
- Eat for 1 to 2 hours before treatment if nausea occurs during radiation therapy or chemotherapy.
- Spend much time in the kitchen when food is being prepared.
- Remain in areas where there are strong-smelling food odors such as cabbage, cauliflower, broccoli, and onions. These may increase nausea and loss of appetite.