



## Mid North Coast Rural Palliative Care Project – Link Nurse Education 2004

# Nausea and Vomiting

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# Nausea and Vomiting

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- Nausea is a subjective unpleasant sensation associated with the upper G.I.T, often accompanied by an urge to vomit
- Vomiting is the forceful expulsion of G.I.T. contents through the mouth (Twycross and Luck 1990)

# Vomiting

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Vomiting is caused by stimulation of the vomiting centre located in the medullary reticular formation. This stimulus may come from four key areas: the cerebral cortex, vestibular apparatus, chemoreceptor trigger zone (CTZ) located in the floor of the fourth ventricle or the vagal and sympathetic afferents found in the spinal cord.  
(Woodruff, 1996)

# Causes

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- Cancer - metabolic
- Treatment - radiotherapy, chemotherapy, drugs
- Concurrent illness - peptic ulcer
- Associated debility

# Nursing Assessment

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## **Nausea:**

- Is it constant?
- Related to drugs?
- Associated with vomiting or relieved with vomiting?

# Assessment

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- Vomiting
- Bowels
- Headache
- Coughing bouts
- Medication
- Exacerbating factors

# Determine the cause

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- This will be determined by an accurate assessment
- Where possible treat - remove the cause

# Pharmacological Interventions

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- Anti-emetic drugs
- Classifications

# Pharmacological Management

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- If it is unfeasible to remove/alter the cause, pharmacological management needs to be considered
- Anti-emetic drugs - these can relieve and prevent nausea and vomiting. There are a broad range of drugs that fit into several classifications

# Pharmacological Management

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- These drugs have different sites of action and hence should be selected on the basis of the underlying cause as opposed to personal favourites

# Anti-Emetic Drugs

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- Phenothiazines - CTZ
- Butyrophenones - CTZ
- Antihistamines - Vomiting centre
- Anticholinergics - Vomiting centre
- Orthopormides - CTZ and upper GIT
- 5-HT<sub>3</sub> receptor antagonists
- Other

# Non-Pharmacological Measures

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- Small meals
- Good oral care
- Position
- Environment
- Seabands
- Acupressure
- Distraction
- Behaviour therapy

# Administration of Anti-Emetics

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- Oral
- Intramuscular (rarely used)
- Intravenous (rarely used)
- Subcutaneous
- Rectal
- Dermal

# Nursing Interventions

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- Dietary
- Position
- Oral
- Environment
- Helpful interventions - seabands, acupressure, distraction, behavioural therapy

# References

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