



## Management of Nausea and Vomiting

Nausea and vomiting may be caused by chemotherapy, radiation therapy, cancer, electrolyte imbalance, blocked intestines (including severe constipation) or other medications. It may prevent you from eating, drinking, and other daily activities and can lead to weight loss, dehydration, depression and fears about receiving more chemotherapy or radiation. It may be mild, where you just feel a little queasy, or severe, where you cannot keep anything down. **Nausea is best controlled when it is managed early.** We have prescribed three different nausea medications for you to help you stay in control of your nausea. We recommend you take the prescribed nausea medications as follows:

### **#1 Zofran/ondansetron**

- This medication was developed specifically for chemotherapy induced nausea and is the medication we recommend taking first.
- You may take one 8 mg tablet every 6 hours.
- If your nausea does not go away 30 minutes after taking this medicine take the next prescribed medication, Compazine (#2).
- It does not cause drowsiness and other side effects are **rare** (possible headache, constipation or diarrhea).
- It is in the same family as the IV medication you were given just prior to receiving your chemotherapy.
- If you received Aloxi in your IV as a chemotherapy premedication, do not start to take Zofran until 24-36 hours after your treatment. Aloxi is a long lasting medication in the same drug family so it will still be active in your system 24-36 hours after treatment.

### **#2 Compazine/prochlorperazine**

- This is an older medication that has been around for a while, however it can be very effective for mild nausea or in combination with Zofran.
- It works differently in your body than Zofran.
- You may take one 10 mg tablet every 6 hours and you may alternate this medication with Zofran so you are taking an anti-nausea medicine every 3 hours. For example – 6am Zofran, 9am Compazine, 12pm Zofran, 3pm Compazine, etc.
- If your nausea does not go away 30 minutes after taking this medicine take the next prescribed medication, Ativan (#3).
- This medication may cause drowsiness.

### #3 Ativan/lorazepam

- This medication works for nausea, anxiety and insomnia.
- It may be taken every 8 hours, and may be dissolved under the tongue if you are unable to swallow a pill.
- **It will make you very drowsy** and is best taken before bed, if you are planning to take a nap, do not have anything you need to do or cannot swallow a pill.
- It may be alternated with the Zofran.
- This medication is also recommended if you feel anxious or nauseous before receiving chemotherapy.
- A condition known as anticipatory nausea exists for patients who have received prior chemotherapy and became nauseous from it. These patients may become nauseous thinking about chemo, going to their Oncologist office or prior to future doses of chemo. This is good medication to take if you experience anticipatory nausea and someone else will be driving.

### Hydration

- It is extremely important that you remain hydrated.
- If you are vomiting, be sure to replace lost electrolytes with drinks such as Gatorade.
- If the taste is too strong or sweet, it can be diluted with water.
- It is also very helpful to eat small frequent meals and avoid letting yourself become too hungry.
- Some other tips to combat nausea are to avoid strong smelling foods (cold or room temperature foods are typically less odorous), eat foods that are easy to digest, avoid fatty, greasy or extremely salty foods, and take your anti-nausea medication 1 hour before meals.

### Call Us 530-582-6450

- If you are unable to control your nausea or vomiting with these suggestions, please call the office. We are available to provide IV hydration, electrolyte replacement and anti-nausea medications. Dehydration and/or electrolyte imbalance can cause **serious** problems to your body and should be managed as early as possible.
- If it has been more than 24 hours since you have been able to keep anything down, please call immediately.
- We have multiple tools at our disposal to help you and we really want to work with you to make this the best experience possible.