Patient Instructions: Nausea Control (Anti-Emetics)

What Are "Anti-Emetics"?

Anti-emetic drugs work by blocking, binding to, or interfering with the receptors in the brain and stomach that trigger nausea and vomiting. There is not one known combination of anti-emetic drugs that works for everyone. The Doctor or Nurse Practitioner will prescribe what they feel are the most effective anti-emetics for the chemotherapy drugs that you are receiving. If this combination is not helpful for you, they will try a different one. Please notify your Physician, Nurse Practitioner or Nurse if you continue to have a problem with nausea and/or vomiting. Please take your anti-emetic drugs when you start to feel nauseous, do not wait until you are vomiting. It is harder to control the nausea if you wait until it is very bad.

Please check with your doctor, nurse practitioner or nurse before trying new anti-emetic drugs. Your drugs should be prescribed for you by your Cancer Care team and not used from a different health care provider.

First Anti-Emetics to Try

1. PROCHLORPERAZINE (COMPAZINE): 10 mg. tablets.
   - Take one every 6 hours as needed for nausea, queasiness or general loss of appetite. When having a problem with nausea, you may want to take one before rising from bed.

2. LORAZEPAM (ATIVAN): Lorazepam comes in 0.5 – 1 mg. tablets.
   - Take one in your cheek pouch or under your tongue (or it may be swallowed) every four to eight hours for nausea unrelieved by Compazine or Reglan. This drug causes relaxation and may make you sleepy as well.

3. METOCLOPRAMIDE (REGLAN): Reglan comes in 10mg. tablets.
   - Take one tablet every 6 hours as needed for nausea, queasiness or general loss of appetite.
   - Take this medication one half hour before meals.
   - Stop if you have diarrhea.

Second Group of Anti-Emetics to Try

4. ONDANSETRON (ZOFRAN), DOLASETRON (ANZEMET), GRANISETRON (KYTRIL)
   - For nausea not relieved within an hour after taking the first two drugs. Take the prescribed dose of Zofran, Anzemet or Kytril.
5. *DEXAMETHASONE (DECADRON)* Decadron comes in 4 mg. tablets.

- The doctor may prescribe this medication to be taken in two doses the night before chemotherapy or as needed after chemotherapy.

*This medication has some side effects that include changes in appetite, changes in mood, sleeplessness, restlessness and it can irritate esophageal reflux.*

6. **APREPI TANT (EMEND):** Emend comes in 125mg. and 80mg. tablets.

- This drug is helpful for those who have acute and delayed nausea and vomiting.
- Take 125 mg. on Day 1 and 80 mg. on Day 2 and Day 3.

**Getting it Right for Your Comfort**

Your Doctor or Nurse Practitioner will try to come up with the best combination of medications for you. If you are given prescriptions for more than one anti-emetic drug, please fill them and have them on hand.

You do not need to wait for hours if one of the drugs is not helping. *If you don't have relief of your nausea within 30-60 minutes, please take a different anti-emetic drug.*

If none of the medications you have are giving you relief, please call the clinic and talk with the Triage Nurse or call the Doctor On Call if it is after clinic hours.