Radiation Therapy: Nausea and Vomiting

You may have nausea and vomiting during and after radiation treatments. This handout will give you some tips to relieve nausea and help your nutrition.

Try these:

- Eat 5 to 6 small meals throughout the day instead of 3 large meals.
- Do not drink liquids with meals. Drink liquids at least 30 minutes before or after meals.
- Eat slowly and chew well.
- Drinking carbonated beverages such as cola, lemon-lime and ginger ale soda may help relieve nausea.
- Eating crackers, toast or soup may help relieve nausea, especially after you wake up.
- Try not to mix eating hot and cold foods together. This can cause vomiting.
- Limit your activity after eating. Rest with your head raised at least 4 inches higher than your feet. Do not lie down flat for at least 2 hours after eating.
- Try bland foods that are low in fat such as gelatin, popsicles, fruit juices, sherbets, custard, dry cereals and potatoes.
- If the smell of food being cooked makes you feel like throwing up, go to another room while food is being prepared. Try to reheat frozen foods at a lower temperature to reduce the odor.
- Loosen your clothing and get fresh air if you feel nauseous.
- Stay away from concentrated sweet and rich foods such as fried foods, sauces, gravies, nuts, cream, butter, rich pastries, pork products and fatty meats.

If your nausea does not go away, ask your radiation oncologist or nurse about anti-nausea medications.

If you have any questions, please call the radiation oncology team at 312.926.2520 (Galter Pavilion) or 312.472.3650 (Prentice Pavilion).