Nausea & Vomiting
Care After Surgery

Nausea and vomiting is common after surgery with patients who have had anesthesia.

CAUSES

Factors that increase the risk of getting sick following anesthesia include:

- Female.
- Obesity.
- Younger patients.
- People who are known to get:
  - Motion sickness.
  - Vertigo.
  - Have had problems with anesthetics in the past.
- Certain anesthetics.
- The presence of pain, low blood pressure or low blood sugar in the postoperative period.
- Type of surgery, especially:
  - Inner ear.
  - Eye.
  - Laparoscopic.
  - Any procedure resulting in blood in the stomach.
- Certain anesthetics seem to lead to nausea and vomiting after surgery. Some of these include:
  - Narcotics.
  - Nitrous oxide.
  - Anesthesia gas.
  - Spinal anesthesia.

SYMPTOMS

Nausea and vomiting can be a cause of significant problems after surgery. Effects can include:

- High or low blood pressure.
- Very fast or slow pulse.
- Breaking stitches.
- Pneumonia (*aspiration*).
- Prolonged hospitalization.

TREATMENT

- Prophylactic therapy is used to decrease nausea and vomiting in:
  - Morbidly obese patients.
  - Patients who have hiatal hernias.
  - Patients who are pregnant.
- No anesthetic technique can be guaranteed to stop nausea and vomiting completely. Use of drugs associated with less risk, if possible, should help decrease the incidence of nausea and vomiting.
- Treatment should initially be directed at evaluating and treating any underlying cause such as:
  - Low oxygen in the blood.
  - Low blood pressure.
  - Low blood sugar.
  - Pain.
- Remaining on your back and avoiding sudden movements.
- Remain hydrated.
- Anti-nausea drugs should be given as they are needed.

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