

Nausea and vomiting

Nausea and vomiting are common symptoms that can occur for a variety of reasons. While often short-lived and harmless, they can sometimes indicate an underlying health condition that needs medical attention.

What causes nausea and vomiting?

Nausea and vomiting can occur due to a wide range of causes, including digestive, neurological, or systemic issues. Common causes include:

- **Gastroenteritis** an infection or irritation of the stomach and intestines, often caused by a virus or bacteria
- **Acid reflux or GORD** stomach acid flowing into the oesophagus, causing irritation and nausea
- **Gastritis** inflammation of the stomach lining, often due to infection (e.g., *H. pylori*) or medication use (e.g., NSAIDs)
- **Peptic ulcers** sores in the stomach lining that may cause nausea, particularly after eating
- **Gallstones** blockages in the bile ducts that can lead to nausea and vomiting
- **Motion sickness** a response to movement, such as while travelling in a car, boat, or plane
- **Pregnancy** particularly in the first trimester, when nausea and vomiting (morning sickness) are common
- **Migraine** severe headaches often accompanied by nausea and vomiting
- **Food poisoning** caused by eating contaminated food
- **Medications** some drugs, including antibiotics, painkillers, or chemotherapy, can cause nausea as a side effect

In rare cases, nausea and vomiting may be linked to more serious conditions, such as bowel obstruction, kidney or liver disease, or neurological issues like a brain injury.

What are the symptoms of nausea and vomiting?

Nausea is a sensation of unease or discomfort in the stomach, often accompanied by an urge to vomit. Vomiting, or being sick, is the act of forcefully expelling stomach contents through the mouth. Additional symptoms you may experience include:

- Loss of appetite
- Stomach cramps or bloating
- Dizziness or light headedness
- Sweating
- Dehydration, especially if vomiting is prolonged or severe

If nausea and vomiting persist or worsen, it's important to seek medical advice to determine the underlying cause.

When to seek urgent help

While nausea and vomiting are often harmless, you should seek urgent medical attention if you experience:

- Severe abdominal pain or cramping
- Blood in your vomit (bright red or coffee-ground appearance)
- Dark or black stools (a sign of bleeding in the digestive tract)
- Unexplained weight loss
- Persistent vomiting lasting more than 24 hours
- Signs of dehydration, such as dry mouth, reduced urination, or dizziness

How are nausea and vomiting investigated?

At Birmingham Endoscopy Clinic, we use advanced diagnostic tools to identify the cause of nausea and vomiting. Depending on your symptoms, your consultant may recommend:

- **Upper GI endoscopy** a thin, flexible tube with a camera is passed into your oesophagus and stomach to look for inflammation, ulcers, or other abnormalities
- **Imaging tests** such as ultrasound, CT scan, or X-rays to check for gallstones, bowel obstruction, or other structural issues
- **Blood tests** to assess for infections, liver function, or other underlying conditions
- **Stool tests** to check for infections or parasites
- **Helicobacter pylori (H. pylori) testing** to detect the bacteria associated with ulcers and gastritis

How are nausea and vomiting treated?

Treatment depends on the underlying cause of your symptoms. Options may include:

- **Lifestyle changes** such as eating smaller, more frequent meals and avoiding trigger foods
- **Medications** including antacids, anti-nausea drugs, or proton pump inhibitors (PPIs) to reduce acid production

- **Rehydration** through oral fluids or intravenous fluids if vomiting leads to dehydration
- **Antibiotics** for bacterial infections like H. pylori
- **Surgery** in rare cases, such as to treat gallstones or bowel obstruction

Your consultant will work with you to create a personalised treatment plan tailored to your needs.

Why choose Birmingham Endoscopy Clinic?

At Birmingham Endoscopy Clinic, we specialise in diagnosing and treating digestive issues like nausea and vomiting. With state-of-the-art facilities and an experienced team, we provide accurate diagnoses and effective treatments in a patient-centred environment. Whether your symptoms are mild or more serious, we are here to help you feel better and regain control of your health.

Contact us

If you are struggling with persistent nausea and vomiting, contact Birmingham Endoscopy Clinic today to book your consultation. Early diagnosis and treatment can make a significant difference in managing your symptoms and improving your quality of life.