

# Hepatitis C symptom #8: Nausea

Many people infected with hepatitis C may show no symptoms, however some show flu-like symptoms, including nausea.

Hepatitis C may cause periods of nausea which can affect appetite. These symptoms can cause varying degrees of discomfort. Most who experience nausea would describe it as feeling sick to the stomach, and that feeling can range from a mild queasiness to an overwhelming urge to vomit. Others can experience nausea-related digestive symptoms without feeling sick to the stomach, such as pain in the abdomen.

## Why hepatitis C causes abdominal pain and nausea

The liver performs over 500 functions that help regulate digestion and a person's overall health. First, the liver produces bile, which helps break down fats in our food. The bile produced by the liver is stored in the gallbladder, and from the gallbladder it is sent to the beginning section of the small intestine, called the duodenum. When bile reaches the duodenum, it combines with digestive fluids from the pancreas and stomach acids. Bile, digestive fluids and stomach acids all help nutrients enter the bloodstream through the intestines.

Because hepatitis C infection can hinder the liver's ability to produce bile, the body struggles to digest fatty foods, causing the gallbladder to become inflamed. That inflammation may trigger symptoms of pain in the upper right

portion of the abdomen. A damaged liver may also have trouble producing enough albumin – a substance that regulates the amount of fluid in cells. When too much fluid builds up in the stomach (ascites), people can feel pain in the abdomen from additional inflammation.

Hepatitis C regimens can also cause nausea in some people. In fact, nausea is one of the most common gastrointestinal symptoms from interferon and ribavirin medications.



## Ways to reduce nausea

Nausea can significantly impact someone's quality of life and overall well-being, and, as a result, frequently influences a patient's decision to discontinue treatment.

When nausea persists or becomes worse, always contact your healthcare provider. Both over-the-counter and prescription medicines are available for nausea but should be used under the supervision of a medical practitioner and with your individual issues considered.

Sources: <https://hepatitisc.net/living/symptoms-nausea/>, <http://www.hepatitisaustralia.com/symptom-management/>

## Tips for managing nausea

Avoid having an empty stomach. Eat smaller meals more frequently.



Eat when you feel most hungry. For many people this may be at breakfast time.



Avoid eating large meals.



Try eating bitter foods before main meals to improve digestion (e.g. olives or rocket lettuce).



Many people find they do not feel well after having fatty foods or alcohol. Limit your intake of these.



Do not lie down immediately or within 30 minutes of eating.



Rinse your mouth with cold water before eating. This can help make food taste more appealing.



Try different foods to stimulate appetite, such as sweet or sour foods.



Avoid cooking odours where possible. Try seeking assistance with meal preparation or using pre-prepared foods. It can be a good idea to prepare and freeze meals when you are feeling well for use when you are experiencing nausea.



Ginger, peppermint, spearmint, fennel seed and aniseed teas can reduce nausea, bloating and abdominal cramps. Fresh ginger, ginger tablets or ginger beer may also help.



**If nausea and loss of appetite is frequent, persistent or severe, talk to your medical provider.**