



# How to Induce Vomiting

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If someone swallows something poisonous, inducing vomiting can sometimes be used to get the substance at least partially out of his or her system. **If you or someone else has ingested poison, then you need to call your Poison Control Center immediately at 1-800-222-1222 (USA)** before you induce vomiting. When you have no idea what the person swallowed, you should avoid inducing vomiting until you talk to Poison Control. If the person is not breathing, is getting drowsy, is agitated or is having convulsions, call 9-1-1 or your local emergency services. Note that in recent years studies have shown that often, vomiting does not do enough on its own to get poisons out of the stomach and emetics can be detrimental in poison control emergencies.

Method  
1

## Inducing Vomiting with the Gag Reflex

- 1 Open the victim's mouth.** Make sure the head is pointed downward to prevent choking. Make sure they are not laying on their back, which could cause them to choke. Put them in the recovery position.
  - It is possible to use the gag reflex to induce vomiting in either yourself as well, using this same method. Using this as a self-method, however, can take some willpower to gag enough to vomit.
- 2 Insert your index and middle fingers into the person's mouth.** Place your fingers on the tongue and move along the tongue with your fingertips toward the back of the person's throat.
- 3 Press downward with your fingertips when you touch the back of the person's throat.** If that doesn't induce vomiting, then tickle the back of the person's throat with your fingertips.
- 4 Be prepared for the vomit.** If the person starts to convulse and vomit, do your best to get out of the way and direct them towards a toilet, container, or other convenient spot. However if they swallowed something poisonous and you need to act quickly, don't delay for the sake of the carpet.
- 5 Wash your hands.** If the person vomits on your skin, you need to make sure to wash your hands thoroughly with warm water and soap.

Method  
2

## Unverified Home Remedy: Preparing a Mustard Solution

- 1 Mix mustard and warm water.** One tablespoon of mustard spread into one cup of warm water will create an emetic, or a substance that induces vomiting.
  - There is little scientific evidence to suggest that this solution is effective and safe. It is considered an unverified home remedy and should be treated as such.
- 2 Drink the mustard solution quickly.** If the warm mustard water sounds unappetizing, it's because it's supposed to make you vomit. Try pinching your nose or holding your breath while you drink the solution if it's too hard to get it down.
- 3 Wait for 20-30 minutes for vomiting to take effect.** If that time passes without vomiting, the solution was likely ineffective.

Method  
3**Unverified Home Remedy: Preparing a Saline Solution**

- 1 Mix salt and warm water.** 3 teaspoons of salt into 16 ounces of warm water will create a good emetic.
  - Be careful when drinking salt water as an emetic. Too much of it can potentially be deadly.<sup>[1][2]</sup>
- 2 Drink the saline solution quickly.**
- 3 Wait for 20 to 30 minutes for vomiting to kick in.** If vomiting does not occur organically, consider another method.

Method  
4**Unverified Home Remedy: Slime Gag**

- 1 Mix two or three raw egg whites or 1 cup of okra slime (the liquid left after boiling okra).** If you think egg white is risky, do not use it or use a pasteurized version.
- 2 Slowly gargle with egg white or okra solution till the gagging reflex is induced.**
- 3 Spit the egg white or okra solution into a cup.** If necessary, repeat with same solution till vomiting occurs.

Method  
5**Watching Someone Else Vomit**

- 1 Ask someone to vomit.** Watching someone else vomit can induce vomiting. Scientists call this sympathy vomiting.<sup>[3]</sup> Sympathy vomiting can occur even if the indirect vomiting party doesn't have an illness like the direct party.
  - The safest and most effective way to do this is to activate the gag reflex, as detailed.
- 2 Wait for the person to vomit.** When the person does vomit, watch closely and try to inhale the smell of their vomit. If it triggers a wave of nausea, don't try to fight it, but use that nausea to cause yourself to vomit.
  - Only use this method after other safe methods have failed and you've called the relevant professionals.

**Community Q&A****What happens if it doesn't work for someone?**Jonas DeMuro,  
M.D.

Depending on the gag reflex of an individual, there is a variable response to vomiting. Some folks are just less likely to vomit with the same stimulus, and this cannot be changed. If you're inducing vomiting because of a medical emergency, take the person to the hospital.

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Chat with this expert

**Is it okay for me to make myself vomit when I'm depressed or under a lot of stress?**Jonas DeMuro,  
M.D.

No, this is not okay. Self-induced vomiting is generally a sign of bulimia, which would require psychiatric treatment.

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Chat with this expert

**Could lack of food be a cause of vomiting?**

Yes, lack of food can cause vomiting. Instead of normal vomit, however, it will be more of a stomach acid.

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Contributor

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### Can I induce vomiting so I can relieve nausea and feel better?

Try drinking some mint tea first; it can help relieve nausea. If it doesn't work, and you still feel horrible, you can induce vomiting. Remember to drink plenty of water afterward, however, in order to stay hydrated.

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Contributor

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### What does "induce" mean?

"Induce" means to make something happen.

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Contributor

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### Is it okay to vomit if you need to get some food out of your system because your parents yell at you for eating the wrong thing?

No, that is an extreme reaction. Vomiting food because it is the "wrong" thing is a symptom of an eating disorder and if your parents are encouraging you to do this, they are wrong. However, if your parents are worried that whatever you ate is poisonous or not meant for human consumption, that is okay.

Doggo

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### What can I use to vomit in if I don't a restroom nearby?

You can use a bucket or plastic bag, but try to get some fresh air as soon as you can, as the smell can make you feel sick again. If you are outside, you can also use a bush or trashcan instead.

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Contributor

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### Is it okay to stick my finger down my friend's throat to help her vomit?

Only in the case of a medical emergency, this could easily cause injury.

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Contributor

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### In the mustard suggestion, are you talking about mustard or mustard seeds?

Use actual mustard, which you buy in bottles or can make up from a powdered form.

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Contributor

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### Is it okay to make yourself vomit to lose weight?

No, it is not. It is a way of permanently staining your teeth, creating an unhealthy habit and disrespecting yourself and the food you are fortunate enough to have. It is not good for your body and you can end up hospitalized. Eat smaller portions and aim to eat only healthy food, the food that has plenty of nutritional content. Learn to love your body and you won't even think about vomiting for weight control purposes.

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Contributor

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## Tips

- If you know what poison the victim swallowed, keep the bottle, and give it to the paramedics. Any information that you can give paramedics will ensure that your victim gets the best possible treatment.
- Monitor the condition of the victim after the vomiting, as vomiting may not remove all the harmful substances from the body. Even if you have successfully gotten the person to vomit, the person still needs medical attention.
- Drink a large amount of water (750mL) before using your fingers.
- Don't self induce vomiting for the purpose of weight lose or "purging". Doing so can be dangerous and result in death.
- Sympathy vomiting can also work by watching a video of someone puking.
- Put your index finger deep inside your mouth and tap the uvula, or the part of the mouth that dangles downward. After, pull it out quickly.
- Drinking milk can help. If you are lactose intolerant, this may cause you to go to the restroom and may exclude the waste your were going to vomit.
- Try mixing sauces and water, then drink some of it. The weird texture and the taste will get to you.
- Worst case, eat a large pepper if available.(Ghost pepper works),then eat some foods if you haven't already. The spiciness will literally make you vomit and or having the runs will exile the toxin.
- Try eating a really bitter pill, it may taste bad enough to induce vomiting.

## Warnings

- Never ever make someone vomit that isn't conscious anymore. This'll cause them to choke right away.
- If you are inducing vomiting regularly as a way to lower your weight, or if you binge on food and then "purge" (vomit) to get the food out of your system, then you may be suffering from an eating disorder known as [bulimia nervosa](#). Long-term vomiting can cause dehydration, damage to your tooth enamel or permanent damage to your esophagus. If you think you have an eating disorder like bulimia, you need to talk to someone, either a counselor or a doctor, right away.
- This should only be done in an emergency if a doctor instructs you to do so.
- Inducing vomiting can be harmful, especially in certain health circumstances. Never induce vomiting if:
  - Your victim has swallowed a cleaning product or something that is acidic or alkaline. The chemicals could severely burn the throat and mouth if you make the person vomit.
  - The victim swallowed a petroleum-based product. If the person vomits, then the fumes that come up could be inhaled and could cause pneumonia.
  - The person is confused or seems groggy
  - The person is a child who is too young to follow directions
  - You are in doubt. If you do not know what to do, either call Poison Control or call for emergency medical help.
- Ipecac syrup was for decades commonly used as an emetic to induce vomiting in poison control situations. It is a poison that reliably induces uncontrollable vomiting in those that take it. However in recent years it has been shown to be ineffective and even harmful in poison control situations, reducing the effectiveness of antitoxins and other treatments.<sup>[4]</sup> Its production and recommended use has been discontinued. It can also cause serious allergic reactions in some people.<sup>[5]</sup> If you have ipecac syrup, don't use it unless poison control directs you to as a last resort. Also never use ipecac syrup on patients who are pregnant, have heart disease, or have digestive tract problems like ulcers, Crohn's disease or infections.<sup>[6]</sup>

## Sources and Citations

1. <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/14677797>
2. <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/2255221>
3. <http://goaskalice.columbia.edu/why-do-i-gag-when-someone-vomiting>

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