Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center

PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

Acupressure for Nausea and Vomiting

This information explains how to use acupressure (AK-yoo-PREH-sher) to help with nausea and prevent vomiting. Nausea is feeling like you're going to throw up. Vomiting is throwing up.

What is acupressure?

Acupressure is a kind of massage. It is based on the traditional Chinese medicine practice of acupuncture (AK-yoo-PUNK-cher). With acupressure, you put pressure on certain places on your body. These places are called acupoints (AK-yoo-poynts).

Pressing these acupoints can help your muscles relax and improve your blood flow. It can also help with many common side effects of chemotherapy, such as nausea and vomiting.

You can do acupressure at home by using your fingers to put pressure on different acupoints. Watch this video or follow the steps below to learn how to do acupressure.

Please visit www.mskcc.org/pe/acupressure-nausea-video to watch this video.

Pressure point P-6 (Neiguan)

Pressure point P-6 is also called Neiguan (nay-gwann). It is found on your inner arm near your wrist. Doing acupressure on this point can help with nausea and prevent vomiting.

Do not do acupressure on this point if:

- The skin at or near the point is peeling or blistering.
- There is an open wound at or near the point.
- There is a rash at or near the point.
- There is redness, swelling, warmth, or pus at or near the point.

How to find pressure point P-6

1. Position your hand so your fingers are pointing up and your palm is facing you.
2. Place the first 3 fingers of your other hand across your wrist (see Figure 1). Your fingers should be placed just below your wrist crease (where your wrist bends).
3. Place your thumb just below your index (pointer) finger. Remove the 3 fingers from your wrist but keep your

thumb on that spot (see Figure 2). Use your thumb to press down on the spot. You should be able to feel 2 large tendons (tissue that connects muscles to bones) in between your thumb. This spot in between the 2 tendons is pressure point P-6.

- Once you have found the pressure point, you can relax your hand and keep it in a comfortable position.

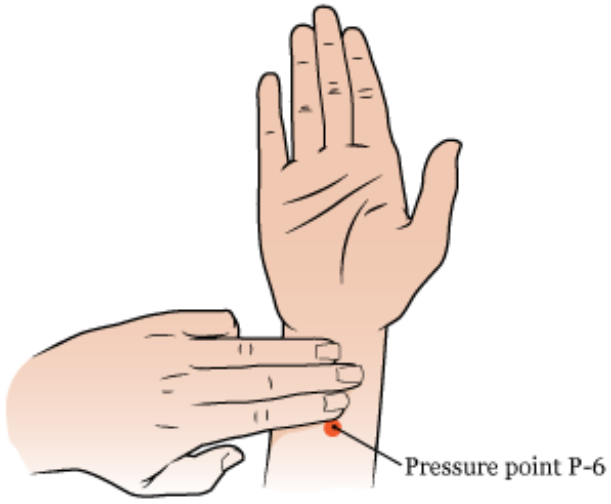

Figure 1. Placing 3 fingers across wrist to measure where to put thumb

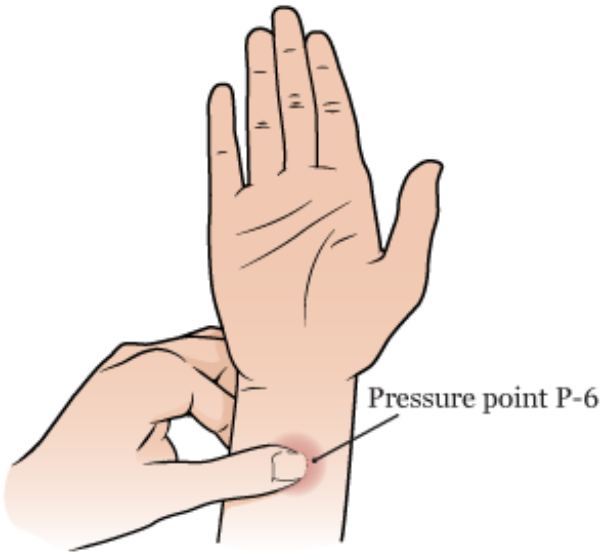

Figure 2. Placing thumb on point below index finger

4. Press down on this point with your thumb. Move your thumb in a circle while applying pressure. You can move it in clockwise (to the right) or counterclockwise (to the left) circles. Do this for 2 to 3 minutes.
    - Some people may find it hard to use their thumb. You can use your index finger instead.
    - Be firm when applying pressure, but do not press so hard that it hurts. You may feel some aching or tenderness, but it should not be painful. If you feel any pain, you're pressing too hard.
5. Repeat steps 1 to 4 on your other wrist.

You can do acupressure on this point a few times a day until your symptoms get better.

Acupressure is a complementary therapy. Complementary therapies are treatments you can use along with your cancer treatments. They can help ease your symptoms.

Visit www.msk.org/integrativemedicine or call MSK's Integrative Medicine and Wellness Service at 646-449-1010 to learn about other complementary therapies.

If you have questions or concerns, contact your healthcare provider. A member of your care team will answer Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Outside those hours, you can leave a message or talk with another MSK provider. There is always a doctor or nurse on call. If you're not sure how to reach your healthcare provider, call 212-639-2000.

For more resources, visit www.mskcc.org/pe to search our virtual library.

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