

The Nausea Spiral: How to Stop It Before It Builds

When you feel nausea, it is easy to fall into the belief that “I feel sick, I’m going to be sick, panic.” However, that is not actually what is happening.

The real pattern is a cycle: sensation, interpretation, anxiety, and then more sensation. The key part of this cycle is the interpretation. Nausea itself does not directly create anxiety. It is the way you think about and interpret the sensation that creates the emotional response. If nausea directly caused anxiety, everyone would feel anxious every time they experienced it, but they do not. This shows that there is something in between that can be influenced (YOU CAN do something about it thankfully).

When nausea shows up, the mind often moves into catastrophic thinking. This can include “this is it” predictions, overestimating risk, and underestimating your ability to cope. Thoughts such as “I’m definitely going to throw up,” “I can’t handle this,” “this is dangerous,” or “I need to stop this right now” are what turn a physical sensation into fear and panic.

From here, imagination begins to take over. Instead of just noticing nausea, the brain starts replaying past experiences, creating mental images of being sick, and predicting worst case scenarios. The body then responds as if these imagined events are happening in real time. This increases adrenaline, increases sensitivity, and often increases the sensation of nausea itself. **In this way, the rule becomes simple: the more you imagine it, the more you feel it.**

At this point, many people try to force control or push the feeling away, but this often backfires. This links to Coué's Law (you will learn about this in my coaching sessions), which highlights that when the will and imagination are in conflict, imagination tends to win. **So if you are thinking "I must not feel sick," "I need this to go away," or "I have to stay in control," while also imagining yourself becoming sick, the imagination tends to dominate.** This creates internal tension, increases physical symptoms, and reinforces the fear response.

Another major driver of the nausea spiral is **hypervigilance** and body scanning. When you are constantly checking your body, you begin to notice every small sensation, amplify normal digestive activity, and remain in a heightened state of alertness. This ongoing monitoring tells the brain that something must be wrong, which keeps the nervous system activated and maintains the cycle.

Instead of this, the focus needs to shift outward. Rather than monitoring every sensation, the goal is to gently re-engage with the environment, stay present in what you are doing, complete the task, and allow sensations to exist without constantly checking or analysing them.

The power shift comes from changing your response, not from trying to eliminate the sensation. Instead of resisting or trying to stop it, the new response becomes "this is uncomfortable, but I can handle it," "this is just a sensation," and "my body knows what it is doing." This reduces urgency, resistance, and fear, which helps calm the nervous system.

It is also important to reduce safety behaviours that reinforce emetophobia thoughts and imaginations. These include constant reassurance seeking, avoiding food or situations, carrying unnecessary “just in case” items, or leaving situations early. While these behaviours may bring short term relief, they teach the brain that the situation is dangerous. Instead, progress comes from staying in situations, allowing uncertainty, and proving to yourself that you can cope.

You must first build your sense of power with me to have the full capacity to practice this.

The goal is not to guarantee that nausea will never happen. **The goal is to build trust in your ability to cope with it when it does. The belief becomes “even if I feel this, I can handle it.”** When this belief strengthens, fear reduces, and often the physical intensity reduces too.

In the moment, the reset is simple. Notice the sensation without reacting. Catch the thought that is creating fear. Stop catastrophic predictions. Gently bring attention outward. And remind yourself, “I can cope with this.”

The core truth is that nausea is uncomfortable, but it is not dangerous and doesn't ALWAYS signify impending soon scenerios. The real power is not in controlling the sensation itself, but in changing the way you respond to it.

Message me anytime to get started on your
Emetophobia Free Journey!

I offer complimentary discovery calls-Thanks!
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