

Is Emetophobia (Fear of Vomiting) a Problem for You?

Objective

To identify if fear of vomit or vomiting is a problem for you.

What to Know

Emetophobia is a specific phobia that involves an extreme fear of vomiting, seeing vomit, watching other people vomit, or feeling nauseous. If you have emetophobia, you might live with anxiety and engage in avoidance behaviors that affect your daily life.

If you have this phobia, you might spend a lot of time worrying about vomiting, even if you or the people around you do not feel ill. Just the thought that someone may vomit might cause intense distress and affect almost every part of your life. You may also have some of these fears:

- being unable to find a bathroom in time
- repeatedly vomiting and being unable to stop
- choking on vomit
- embarrassing yourself in front of others

The anticipation of vomiting can be worse than the act itself. This worksheet will help you identify if you suffer from emetophobia.

What to Do

Section 1. Rate the following statements from 0-5, where 0 = not at all, 1 = a little, 2 = sometimes, 3 = often, 4 = a lot, and 5 = always.

___ I worry about myself vomiting.

___ I worry about someone else vomiting.

___ I avoid situations or activities because of my fears.

___ I avoid fast-moving activities like rides at amusement parks because I may vomit or see someone else vomit.

___ I avoid sea travel (boats, cruises, and so on) because I may vomit or see someone else vomit.

___ I avoid air travel because I may vomit or see someone else vomit.

___ I avoid other forms of travel because I may vomit or see someone else vomit.

___ I try to find reasons why I feel nauseous.

___ I avoid objects that other people have touched because of my fears.

___ I focus on whether I feel ill and could vomit instead of my surroundings.

- I closely observe others to see if they are ill and may vomit.
- If I think I am going to vomit, I do something to stop myself from getting sick.
- I try to avoid or control thoughts or images about vomiting.
- I restrict the amount or type of food I eat because of my fear.
- I avoid drinking alcohol because of my fear.
- Feeling nauseous makes me feel anxious.
- I think about how to stop myself or others from vomiting.
- I seek reassurance from others that I (or they) will not vomit.
- I avoid situations because I am afraid I or others may vomit.
- I avoid new trying new foods or going to restaurants because of my fear.
- I avoid foods, beverages, or restaurants associated with past vomiting.
- I avoid saying or hearing the words "vomit," "barf," "puke," or "tossing your cookies."
- I close my eyes and plug my ears during vomiting scenes on television or in movies.
- I throw away food before it has reached its expiration date.
- I smell and check food excessively.
- I overcook food to kill potential pathogens.
- I use antacids or anti-emetics preemptively.
- I check the locations of bathrooms when I am out in public.
- Add up your points in Section 1.

Section 2. Rate the following statements from 0-4, where 0 = strongly disagree, 1 = disagree, 2 = unsure, 3 = agree, 4 = strongly agree.

- Exposure to vomit causes illness.
- If I see vomit, I will vomit.
- If I smell vomit, I will vomit.
- I experience physical symptoms of anxiety when I am exposed to vomit.

Check off the physical symptoms you experience:

- fainting or passing out
- increased heart rate

___ sweating

___ trembling or shaking

___ dizziness

___ other (describe): _____

___ other (describe): _____

___ other (describe): _____

___ I avoid places where others may vomit (e.g., amusement parks, parties, or bars).

___ I avoid children who are likely to vomit.

___ I avoid adults who are likely to vomit.

___ I avoid places where there is no easy access to facilities in case I need to vomit.

___ Add up your points in Section 2.

___ **Total your points in Section 1 and 2.**

If you scored more than 120 total points, you probably have emetophobia that negatively affects your daily life.

If you scored 70-119 points, it likely means vomit and vomiting makes you very anxious and it may have an impact on your daily life.

If you scored 69 or lower, you probably do not have anxiety about vomit or vomiting.

Next, answer the following questions.

Rate how much emetophobia affects your life from 0-10, where 0 = not at all, and 10 = my fear of vomiting and vomit negatively affects my life every day: ____

How has this fear impacted your life? Be specific and as detailed as possible.

How has emetophobia impacted your relationships? Explain.

What have you missed out on?

Can you remember specific incidents involving vomiting when you were younger? If so, write about it. Include what happened, how you felt, and what you were thinking at the time.

Are there environmental factors that contribute to your current fear of vomiting? Explain.

Identify a fear you once had or something that caused you discomfort that you overcame. This can be recent or several years ago. How did you overcome it? Write about how you reduced your discomfort and anxiety.
