

Sniffing isopropyl alcohol effective for acute nausea in emergency settings

Patients inhale deeply and as frequently as required to achieve nausea relief from commercially available isopropyl alcohol pad held 1-2 cm below nares.¹ These are the alcohol pads we routinely use in our clinics.

A recent systematic review found no evidence to support any one pharmacologic treatment over another in Emergency Departments for nausea. Two trials with ~200 non-pregnant adults presenting to emergency found inhaled (smelling) isopropyl alcohol improved mild-moderate nausea/vomiting.

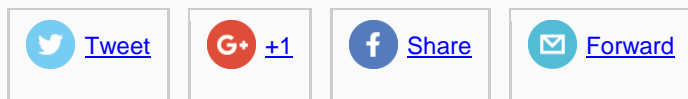
For example, after 30 minutes nausea improved from 50 out of 100 down to 20 with inhaled isopropyl alcohol versus 40 with oral ondansetron (may not have been long enough for absorption of ondansetron). Only one study reported adverse events and found none.

It has not been studied in pregnant women so cannot be recommended for morning sickness.

Reference:

1. Alberta Tools for Practice #213: Smell This: Isopropyl alcohol for nausea/vomiting in the emergency department. 2018. [Click here](#)
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Our mailing address is:

Goodfellow Unit
Bldg 730, Tamaki Innovation Campus
261, Morrin Road, St Johns
Auckland, Auckland 1072 New Zealand