

Diet and nutrition when you have an ileostomy

When you have an ileostomy it is important that you follow a healthy diet. You need to continue to eat a variety of foods to make sure you get the right amount of nutrients and fluid in your diet.

When you have an ileostomy:

- the food you eat and drink no longer travels through all of your bowel
- this means that there is less time to absorb the nutrients
- this also means there is less time to absorb fluid and make the bowel movement called 'stool' solid
- it is also common to produce more gas

Remember:

After surgery your body needs time to heal. You also need time to learn how to prepare your food and ways to eat it to help you manage your lifestyle at home.

1 to 6 weeks after surgery:

The dietitian will meet with you before you go home. It is important to continue to have a variety of healthy foods and drink enough fluid to stay well hydrated.

Right after surgery, you have an increased chance of having a blockage if you eat larger amounts of high residue foods. High residue foods are not easily digested as they do not break down in the bowel. They are 'fibrous' or 'stringy' foods. You need to be cautious when eating these types of foods.

Examples of high residue foods:

Fruit	Vegetables	Meat	Other
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • dried fruit, raisins • citrus skins • pineapple 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • bean sprouts • celery • coleslaw • corn • mushrooms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • meat in casings such as sausage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • coconut • coarse wheat bran such as All Bran, Bran Buds • nuts, peanuts, seeds, popcorn

Around 6 weeks after surgery:

- Start introducing high residue foods into your diet. You can do this one by one or in combinations and decide how you feel.
- **Continue to eat slowly, chew food well and relax when eating.**

Why is fluid important?

Fluid is very important to keep all of the cells in your body healthy and well hydrated. Fluid helps you digest food and keep your bowels moving. Remember not all of the fluid you drink travels through the whole bowel, so you need to drink more fluid than you did before surgery.

Examples of fluid include water, juice, pop, milk, soup, broth, jello, ice cream, popsicles and frozen flavoured iced products, tea and coffee:

- Each day, you need to have 2 to 2½ litres (8 to 10 cups) of fluids.
- Sip this amount throughout the day.
- Carry water with you when you do your daily activities.

You may need to meet with a dietitian to plan a healthy diet that meets your needs especially if you have other health problems such as heart or kidney disease.

How do I know if I am getting enough fluid?

When you get enough fluid you are not thirsty, your mouth, tongue and skin are not dry, your urine is light yellow, and you feel good. This is called being well hydrated.

When you do not have enough fluid you are dehydrated. Signs of dehydration are:

- feeling dizzy or lightheaded
- feeling thirsty
- having dry mouth, tongue and skin
- peeing less often, urine is dark, urine has a strong smell
- feeling restless or agitated
- If you have any of these feelings, you need to eat and drink more fluids.
- If you have any of these feelings more than 48 hours, contact your health care provider.

What else do I need to know?

When you have an ileostomy, you do not absorb as much salt and potassium from your diet. You need to eat more salt and potassium daily.

Sodium Foods	Potassium Foods
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• bacon• broth and canned or dried soups• cheese• cold cuts, deli meat• pizza• salty snack foods• table salt• vegetable cocktail, vegetable juice	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• bananas• potatoes• milk• orange juice• peaches• spinach• tomatoes• tomato juice

You may need to meet with a dietitian to plan a healthy diet that meets your needs especially if you have other health problems such as heart or kidney disease.

Other Guidelines

Foods that thicken stool and slow output:

- applesauce
- bagels
- bananas
- bread, toast
- cheese
- crackers
- marshmallows
- oatmeal
- peanut butter
- jello, gelatin
- potatoes
- pretzels
- rice
- tapioca
- yogurt

Foods that loosen stool and increase output:

- alcohol, beer, wine
- beans (baked)
- black licorice
- caffeinated drinks
- chocolate
- fried food
- prunes, prune juice
- spicy food

Foods that increase odour:

- asparagus
- brussel sprouts
- cauliflower
- cheese (strong)
- eggs
- fish
- garlic
- mushrooms
- onions

Remember:

Odour is normal. It is a result of digesting food. Before you stop any of these foods, try odour controlling products such as ostomy deodorant.

These products come in spray, liquid and tablet form.

Foods that reduce odour:

- buttermilk
- parsley (fresh)
- yogurt

Foods that cause gas:

- apple skins
- beans (baked, kidney, white)
- broccoli
- brussel sprouts
- cabbage
- carbonated drinks
- cauliflower
- cucumber
- eggs
- mushrooms
- beer
- onions
- peas
- spinach

Helpful hints to prevent excess gas:

- Avoid skipping meals. An empty stomach can cause more gas to form.
- Sip liquids during the day. Avoid gulping and drinking fast.
- Avoid using straws and chewing gum.

Remember:

- **It is important to eat a variety of foods to maintain good nutrition.**