

## Nutrition post gastrectomy

### What is a gastrectomy?

A gastrectomy is an operation that removes all or part of the stomach. As a result, the stomach is smaller with less room for food to be held. It may also mean that you will feel full more quickly, and food will pass through into your gut sooner after eating. You should still be able to enjoy most of the foods you ate before your operation; however, you may have to make some changes to your eating habits.

### Eating after surgery

Following your surgery your diet will be progressed back to normal over time. The steps below explain how your diet might change over the next several days. After your surgery, you may only be allowed sips of water or clear fluids under the direction of the surgeon.

#### 1. *FREE FLUIDS*

This diet is usually followed for 1-2 days if clear fluids have been well tolerated. Options should include liquids only.

#### 2. *PUREED DIET*

Your surgeon may move you to a pureed diet if you have no pain or discomfort with drinking free fluids

#### 3. *SOFT DIET*

If liquids have been well tolerated, your surgeon may move you directly to a soft diet.

#### 4. *NORMAL DIET*

You may find it easier to have soft foods for some time. You will be able to gradually increase to a normal textured diet over time.

If you can't manage a lot of food throughout the day, it is important to make the most of what you do eat.

**The following table shows you what foods to have during this time.**

FOOD GROUP	FREE FLUID DIET	PUREED DIET	SOFT DIET
<b>Bread, cereals, rice, pasta, noodles</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strained porridge or semolina made on milk</li> <li>• Add pasta and rice to soups and blend to a smooth fluid consistency</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Smooth lump-free cereals (e.g. semolina, pureed porridge)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Porridge or cereal softened with milk</li> <li>• Well-cooked pasta and rice</li> <li>• Bread with crust removed, softened with spread</li> </ul>
<b>Vegetables, legumes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vegetable juice</li> <li>• Add vegetables and legumes to soups and blend to a smooth fluid consistency</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pureed or mashed vegetables (using milk, butter, oil or cheese)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mashed or soft-cooked vegetables (using milk, butter, oil or cheese.)</li> </ul>
<b>Fruit</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fruit juice</li> <li>• Add fruit to milkshakes and blend to a smooth fluid consistency</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pureed or mashed canned/ stewed fruit</li> <li>• Pureed or mashed soft fresh fruit e.g. banana, paw paw, pear</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fruit juice</li> <li>• Canned or stewed fruit</li> <li>• Soft fresh fruit e.g. banana, paw paw, mango, pear, watermelon</li> </ul>
<b>Milk, yoghurt, cheese</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Milk</li> <li>• Drinking yoghurt</li> <li>• Custard</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Milk</li> <li>• Plain yoghurt (no fruit /nuts)</li> <li>• Custard</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Milk</li> <li>• Fruit yoghurt</li> <li>• Custard</li> </ul>
<b>Meat, fish, poultry, tofu, eggs, nuts, legumes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Add meat, fish, poultry and legumes to soups and blend to a smooth fluid consistency</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pureed meat, fish, poultry and legumes with gravy/sauce e.g. pureed casserole – add cream or cheese for added nutrition.</li> <li>• Silken tofu - mashed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Soft cooked meat, fish, and poultry with gravy/sauce e.g. casseroles, mince</li> <li>• Omelette, or scrambled, poached or boiled eggs</li> <li>• Baked beans, lentils</li> </ul>
<b>Extra foods</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thin custards, plain ice cream, jelly, cordial, Milo, flavoured milk</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mousse, crème caramel, butter, baked egg custard</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creamed rice, biscuits dunked to soften, cake served with ice cream or custard, chocolate</li> </ul>

## Common problems and management

A gastrectomy can cause problems as described below. However not everyone will get these symptoms. See below for how to manage these issues.

### 1. *Feeling full early*

- Eat small meals every few hours, aiming for six or more meals each day.
- Eat nutritious snacks between meals.
- Have drinks at least 30 minutes before or after meals, not with meals, as this may fill you up too quickly.

### 2. *Diarrhoea*

- Drink plenty of liquids between meals.
- If diarrhoea occurs 15 to 30 minutes after eating, you may be experiencing “dumping syndrome”. See point 4. If diarrhoea persists, seek medical advice.

### 3. *Weight loss*

- Eat nutritious snacks between meals e.g. cheese and crackers, sandwiches, yoghurt, dairy desserts.
- Include foods that contain fat and protein at each meal e.g. eggs, meat, chicken, fish, tofu, baked beans,

cheese, milk, olive oil, avocado or nuts (including peanut butter).

- Choose nourishing drinks – select milkshakes, *Milo*, *Sustagen*, or *Ensure* rather than tea and coffee.
- Monitor your weight weekly and let your dietitian or GP know if you keep losing weight.

### 4. *“Dumping syndrome”*

Normally there is a muscle at the bottom of the stomach that controls the amount of food the stomach lets into the small bowel. This muscle is often taken out or doesn't work as well following a gastrectomy, causing food to move too quickly from the stomach into the small bowel.

You may have:

- Nausea and vomiting
- Bloating, cramping or diarrhoea
- Palpitations, sweating or shakiness
- Fullness
- Lack of concentration or tiredness

Most people experience symptoms 10 to 30 minutes after eating (early dumping syndrome), others have symptoms one to four hours after eating (late dumping syndrome).

To help prevent these symptoms:

- Follow the steps in points 1 and 2.
- Avoid food and drinks that contain a lot of sugar e.g. regular cordial, soft drink, mixed alcoholic beverages.
- Include high fibre foods or trial a fibre supplement (e.g. *Benefibre*, *ProNourish*) if you have late dumping symptoms. High fibre foods include: lentils, baked beans, oat bran, wholegrain breads and cereals, skins on fruit and vegetables.
- Lying down after eating may help if you experience severe symptoms.
- Taking a starchy snack (e.g. slice of bread, banana, oatmeal biscuit) may help symptoms.

## 5. Vitamins and minerals

When all or part of your stomach is removed, your body may be unable to absorb **vitamin B12** and **iron** as easily from your food. These nutrients are required for healthy blood. Your doctor should regularly check these levels and can give you recommendations and/or treatment for this.

You may also be at increased risk of low **calcium** and **vitamin D**. Try to include 2 serves of dairy foods each day (see table above). You may need to take a supplement if your levels are low or you cannot meet this with diet alone. A multivitamin can help if you are unable to manage a wide variety of foods from the different food groups

## Suggested meal plan

FLUID DIET	PUREED DIET	SOFT DIET
<b>BREAKFAST</b>		
Strained porridge or semolina made on milk OR Fruit smoothie based on milk – blend to a smooth fluid consistency.	Pureed porridge or semolina. Pureed or mashed fruit – choose from canned, stewed or soft fresh fruit varieties (e.g. banana, paw paw, well-ripened pear).	Porridge or cereal softened with milk (e.g. <i>Corn Flakes/Weet-Bix</i> ) OR Bread softened with spread Omelette, or scrambled, poached or boiled eggs OR Baked beans
<b>LUNCH</b>		
Canned or home-made vegetable soup – can add cheese, cream, or choose varieties containing meat and/or legumes and blend to a smooth fluid consistency.	As for fluid diet OR Pureed meat, fish, poultry or legumes with gravy/sauce and pureed or mashed vegetables (using milk/ butter/ cheese).	White bread crust-less sandwich with tender meat/chicken/fish/egg/cheese and softened with margarine/butter. Canned, stewed or soft fresh fruits (e.g. banana, chopped melon, well-ripened pear).
<b>DINNER</b>		
As for lunch	As for lunch	Soft cooked meat, fish, or poultry with gravy/sauce e.g. casseroles. Mince with mashed/soft cooked vegetables and well-cooked rice/pasta.
<b>SNACKS</b>		
Milkshake/fruit smoothie Plain or flavoured milk <i>Sustagen/Up &amp; Go</i> Drinking yoghurt Plain ice cream Thin custard	As for fluid diet + Thick yoghurt / custard / mousse Pureed or mashed fruit	As for pureed diet + Canned or soft fresh fruit Creamed rice Biscuits dunked to soften Cake served with ice cream or custard

Things I can do to improve my nutrition post gastrectomy:

1.

2.

3.

4.

**For further information contact your dietitian or nutritionist:** \_\_\_\_\_