Dietary hints and tips for patients with a stoma (page 1 of 3)

Your stoma care nurse specialist (SCN) will discuss this with you at length and answer any diet related questions at each of your appointments. The majority of changes you need to make to your diet may only be necessary for the first 4-6 weeks after your operation. After this time it is generally down to your personal likes and dislikes, and if you have found something disagrees with ‘your’ stoma you may choose to leave it out for longer. Although it may not always seem helpful to hear that it is ‘trial and error’ it is important to remember that we all have personal preferences and foods can affect people in different ways.

What should I eat in the first few days after my operation?

Breakfast: Rice Krispies, cornflakes (children’s cereal), white toast, eggs and bacon, yoghurt, croissants, crumpets, small glass of fruit juice.

Lunch/supper: Roast dinners, shepherds pie, casseroles, fish dishes, omelettes, spaghetti Bolognaise, rice dishes, salads, soups, sandwiches, all types of potato (no jacket potato skins). Add a vegetable or two.

Pudding: Yoghurts, rice pudding, apple crumble, sponge puddings, jelly, ice cream, custard, cheese and biscuits.

Are there any foods I need to avoid with a stoma?

Foods that can cause blockages and are best avoided in the first 4-6 weeks while your bowel is still healing are:

- dried fruit
- nuts – including fruit cake, muesli, mince pies
- mushrooms
- sweetcorn
- celery
- jacket potato skins
- coconut
- popcorn
- stir fried vegetables
- coleslaw
- pineapple
- asparagus.

Can I eat fresh fruit and vegetables?

Yes of course and you should have some every day.
You will need to introduce fruit and vegetables with a little caution and learn the effects they may have on your system and your stoma.

If you have an ileostomy the effects may be more noticeable than if you have a colostomy. Certain foods can make the bowel motion more loose and produce more wind. However if this happens it does not mean that you cannot have them. It is often a matter of personal preference. Some fruit and vegetables are best eaten cooked rather than raw, for example onions and peppers.

**What is a balanced diet?**

A balanced diet needs to contain:

- **Protein** – such as meat, fish, eggs and cheese. If you are a vegetarian – quorn, tofu etc
- **Carbohydrates** – rice, bread and pasta – start with white and then, after 4-6 weeks, brown if you prefer. Make sure the pasta or rice is well cooked, not ‘al-dente’.
- **Fats** – butter, spreads, oils.
- **Fibre** – this will come from fruit and vegetables, brown bread, cereals and bran products.
- **Vitamins and minerals** – it is not necessary to take any supplements for vitamins unless it has been advised by your doctor; there should be enough in your diet if you are eating the correct types of food.

**How much fluid should I drink a day?**

Ideally we recommend 1.5 – 2 litres a day. This can be a combination of water i.e. squash and or tea/coffee/milk etc. Drink more water than tea or coffee as these are diuretics (make you pass more urine and risk dehydration).

**How much should I eat a day?**

This will vary between men and women. Men should aim to eat 2500 calories a day and women 2000 calories a day. It is best to eat small meals more frequently to start with. Try and have some foods from all of those mentioned above at each meal. If you have experienced some weight loss or poor appetite after surgery you will be encouraged to snack a little between meals until your weight has improved and your appetite has returned.

**What if my stool/poo is loose?**

Try eating a ripe banana or carbohydrates such as bread and pasta. You could try some marshmallows or jelly babies.

**What if I get constipated?**

An ileostomy should not get constipated. Please seek medical advice immediately.

A colostomy can get constipated. Make sure you are drinking enough. Remember the rule of 1.5 - 2 litres a day. Try drinking some fruit juice, or eating an orange or some chocolate. If the constipation has not resolved within 2 days then seek medical advice and request some Magnesium Hydroxide or Senokot.
Why does my stool/poo have a red stain?
This may be because you have eaten some beetroot or tomatoes, or drunk red wine.

Can I have alcohol?
Yes of course as long as you are not on medication such as antibiotics or pain killers. A glass of wine or sherry can often stimulate your appetite. If you like a fizzy drink like a gin and tonic, just pour it into a glass and let it stand for a while. It is better not to drink just fizzy drinks as they may make you ‘windy’.

We hope this advice is of help, but remember we are here for you and you can always phone us if you have any concerns or need advice.

Please telephone: Stoma Care Department 01722 429256