

Nutrition Guidelines After Stomach Surgery

Dietitian: _____

Phone: _____

Nutrition Guidelines After Stomach Surgery

- After having surgery, you will need to change the way you eat. You may find that you feel full quickly and are only able to eat small amounts at a time.
- Some people experience **dumping syndrome**. This happens when food enters the intestine too quickly. This can cause cramping and diarrhea (loose, watery poop). Other symptoms include:
 - › Nausea (upset stomach)
 - › Vomiting (throwing up)
 - › Weakness
 - › Dizziness
- Dumping syndrome can happen anywhere from 10 minutes to 3 hours after eating. Dumping syndrome often gets better over time.

Follow these guidelines to help prevent or lessen dumping syndrome and stay healthy after surgery:

Eat 3 small meals and at least 3 snacks a day. This will help you get enough food, even if your stomach is smaller or gone. See the sample meal plan on page 6.

Eat slowly and chew your food very well.

Have protein with each meal and snack.

Protein will help you heal and may help prevent diarrhea. Good sources include:

- › milk, meat, fish, poultry, eggs, soy, peanut butter, and cheese.
- › unsweetened yogurts, custards, and puddings.
- › low-sugar nutrition supplements (like Glucerna[®], Carnation Breakfast Essentials[®] Light Start[®], or Boost[®] Diabetic).

Choose soft foods. Soft foods may be easier to digest for the first few weeks after surgery.

Avoid foods like tough meats or gristle, nuts and seeds, and fruit skins and peels.

Drink liquids separately from eating solid food.

- Stop drinking 30 minutes before your next meal.
- Wait 30 minutes after a meal before drinking.
- Drink 6 to 8 cups (1500 to 2000 ml) of liquid a day, **between meals.**
 - › Best choices are liquids that do not have caffeine or alcohol (like water, milk, unsweetened juice, and decaffeinated coffee or tea).
 - › If you must drink with meals, do not drink more than ½ cup (125 ml).

Limit sweet foods like:

- › Sugar, honey, syrup, jams, and jellies
- › Iced or frosted cakes, cookies, and pastries
- › Candy
- › Dried fruit
- › Sweetened drinks, regular pop
- › Canned fruit in syrup
- › Sugar-coated cereal

Avoid sugar alcohols. These can be found in foods labelled “sugar-free” or “no sugar added”. Read the label and avoid foods with mannitol, xylitol, and sorbitol.

Limit gas-forming foods like:

- › Baked beans
 - › Broccoli
 - › Brussels sprouts
 - › Cabbage
 - › Cauliflower
 - › Corn
 - › Honeydew melon
 - › Watermelon
 - › Onions
 - › Turnips
 - › Raw vegetables, including salads
 - › Unpeeled apples
 - › Cantaloupe
- If you are not having symptoms of dumping, slowly return to your regular eating habits 4 weeks (1 month) after surgery. You will still need to eat smaller meals more often.

You may have trouble digesting dairy after surgery. Symptoms of lactose intolerance include:

- › Bloating
- › Diarrhea
- › Gas
- If you do not have these symptoms, you can keep eating dairy.
- If you do have symptoms, you will probably be able to handle a small amount of lactose. Foods like hard cheeses, yogurt, nutrition supplements, and butter have very small amounts. You can buy low lactose milk, cottage cheese, and ice cream at the grocery store.
- Lactose intolerance after surgery may get better over time, so try these foods again after about 1 month.

What should I do if I am losing weight?

- **Try low-sugar nutritional supplements** (like Glucerna®, Carnation Breakfast Essentials® Light Start®, or Boost® Diabetic).
- **Drink liquids with calories** (like milk, eggnog, and unsweetened juices).
- **Eat protein foods first.** If you cannot eat all of your meal or snack, leave the lower-calorie foods.

- **Make every bite count.** Use full-fat dairy products. Add butter, oil, gravy, and sauces to foods.
- **Talk to your health care provider about your weight loss.**

Do I need to take a vitamin and mineral supplement?

- Your body may not be able to use all of the nutrients from the food you eat (like vitamin B12, vitamin D, iron, folate, and calcium).
- Take a **complete chewable multivitamin with minerals** (not a gummy vitamin) each day.
- **Eat 3 to 4 servings of milk and milk alternatives** (like fortified soy milk, almond milk, or rice milk) each day to keep your bones strong. Examples include:
 - › 1 cup (250 ml) milk, or fortified soy drink
 - › 1½ oz (50 g) hard cheese
 - › ¾ cup (175 g) yogurt
 - › 1 cup (250 ml) calcium-fortified orange juice
 - › 2 slices of cheese
- If you are not able to eat 3 servings of milk and alternatives each day, you will need to take a supplement each day with:
 - › 800 IU **vitamin D** and 500 mg **calcium**.

- Have your primary health care provider check your levels of **vitamin B12**, **vitamin D**, **iron**, and **folic acid** every 6 to 12 months.

Sample Meal Plan

Breakfast	1 scrambled egg, 1 slice toast, 2 tsp margarine
30 minutes later	1 cup decaffeinated coffee
Snack	1½ oz cheddar cheese, 6 crackers
30 minutes later	1 cup milk (low lactose, if needed)
Lunch	1/2 cup tuna salad, 2 slices bread, 1/2 cup applesauce
30 minutes later	1 cup unsweetened drink
Snack	3/4 cup yogurt
30 minutes later	1 cup unsweetened drink
Supper	5 oz meatloaf, 1/2 cup mashed potatoes, 1/2 cup spinach
30 minutes later	1 cup unsweetened drink
Snack	1 oz cream cheese, 1/2 bagel
30 minutes later	1 cup milk (low lactose, if needed)

Notes:

It can be hard to make changes to your eating habits. If you have any questions, please ask to talk with a dietitian. We are here to help you.

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For more information, go to <http://library.novascotia.ca>

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The information in this pamphlet is to be updated every 3 years or as needed.