

# Esophageal Soft Eating Guidelines

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# Esophageal Soft Eating Guidelines

Follow these guidelines after your surgery or dilation to help lower your risk of complications (like irritation or a blockage).

**If you have an esophageal stent, you will need to follow Step 3: Esophageal soft diet (see page 5) while your stent is in place.**

## Eating guidelines

- Sit up when eating and drinking. Stay sitting up for at least 30 minutes (half an hour) after eating.
  - › **This is especially important if you have a stent.**
- For the first 2 days after your surgery, eat and drink slowly. **Do not** drink more than 1 cup (250 ml) of liquid an hour.
- Avoid food and drinks that are very hot or very cold.
- Stop eating and drinking when you start to feel full.
- Stop eating and drinking 3 hours before bedtime.

- To help prevent gas or bloating, **do not:**
  - › Use straws
  - › Chew gum
  - › Eat hard candies, mints, or lozenges
  - › Drink carbonated (bubbly) drinks (like pop)
- Starting on Day 3, eat 6 to 8 small meals and snacks a day.
  - › Limit portion size to 1 cup per meal.
  - › Use small plates, bowls, cups, and utensils to help with portion control.

### **To meet your nutritional needs for healing:**

- Drink 3 to 4 high-protein, high-calorie drinks (store-bought or homemade) a day (see recipes starting on page 10).
- **For extra calories**, choose nutrition supplement drinks with at least 350 calories and 14 grams of protein per serving, like:
  - › Ensure® Plus
  - › Ensure® Advance
  - › Boost® Plus Calories
  - › Boost® 2.24
- **For extra protein**, try mixing whey, skim milk powder, or vegetable protein powders in liquids, yogurts, fruit purees, or soups.
- Consider taking a daily, liquid multivitamin supplement to help with your healing.

### **Step 1: Full liquid diet**

- › For 14 days (2 weeks)

### **Step 2: Puree diet**

- › Your health care team **may** allow you to include puree foods along with full liquids before moving to the esophageal soft diet.
- › You can find more information about puree foods on page 4.

### **Step 3: Esophageal soft diet**

- › For 4 weeks, or until your follow-up appointment with your surgeon

### **Step 1: Full liquid diet**

- You will move to a full liquid diet once you can tolerate **clear liquids**.
- **Clear liquids include:**
  - › Water
  - › Vegetable and fruit juice (without pulp)
  - › Soup broth
  - › Clear nutrition supplement drinks (as needed)
  - › Jell-O® (soften to a liquid in your mouth before swallowing)
- A full liquid diet includes foods that are smooth, have no solid pieces, and can be poured. Continue to include items from the clear liquid diet as you move to full liquids.

- Choose foods that are high in calories and protein like:
  - › Milk, milkshakes, smoothies
  - › Smooth yogurts and puddings
  - › Cream soups and blended soups, strained
  - › Smooth fruit purees and cooked cereals (thinned with milk)
  - › Strained fruit smoothies without skins or seeds (smooth consistency)
  - › Ice cream, sherbets, and sorbets
  - › Nutrition supplement drinks (like Ensure<sup>®</sup>, Boost<sup>®</sup>, Glucerna<sup>®</sup>, or Sperry<sup>™</sup>)

## **Step 2: Puree diet**

- **Continue following the full liquid diet, and add smooth, strained, pureed foods, like:**
  - › Store-bought bottled, pureed meat, vegetables, or fruit (no chunks)
  - › Campbell's<sup>®</sup> Trepuree<sup>®</sup> frozen, pureed entrees or homemade strained, pureed foods
- You can buy Campbell's<sup>®</sup> Trepuree<sup>®</sup> frozen, pureed entrees from VON in some communities. For more information, visit:
  - › <https://von.ca/en/von-care/meals-wheels-frozen>

- Foods should be the consistency (thickness) of smooth applesauce or pudding. Use a wire mesh strainer to take out any chunks, strings, or seeds, if needed.
- For more information, ask your dietitian for pamphlet 0624, *How to Puree Foods*:
  - › [www.nshealth.ca/patient-education-resources/0624](http://www.nshealth.ca/patient-education-resources/0624)

### Step 3: Esophageal soft diet

- After following the full liquid diet for 14 days, you will move to the esophageal soft diet.
- Make sure all foods are soft and moist. Try adding sauces, gravies, margarine, or butter to wet your food.
- Cut food into very small pieces. Mince or grind boneless fish, chicken, and meat. Try adding sauces or gravies, or add it to soups or stews.
- Take small bites and chew solid foods very well.
- **Do not** swallow hard chunks, or foods that are dry or crumbly.
- Take sips of liquid during and after each meal.
  - › **If you have a stent**, take a small sip after each bite.

Best choices	Foods to avoid
<p><b>Grain products</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cooked cereal (like oatmeal or Cream of Wheat®)</li> <li>• Dry cereal that softens easily with milk (like Rice Krispies® or Corn Flakes)</li> <li>• Pasta with sauce</li> <li>• Soft casseroles (like macaroni and cheese covered in sauce, without crumb topping)</li> <li>• Rice that is soft and moist, in soups or sauce</li> <li>• Crushed crackers or pieces of bread with crusts taken off, soaked in soup</li> <li>• Pancakes softened with margarine or butter and soaked in liquid (like syrup, milk, or tea)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All fresh, “doughy”, or crusty breads, muffins, biscuits, waffles, toast, and baked goods (including pie crusts)</li> <li>• Granola, shredded wheat</li> <li>• Breads and cereals with nuts, seeds, coconut, or dried fruit</li> </ul>

Best choices	Foods to avoid
<p><b>Vegetables and fruit</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Soft, very well-cooked vegetables with skins taken off, chopped fine and used in soups, sauces, and stews</li> <li>• Soft, moist, mashed white or sweet potatoes, turnips, carrots, squash, or parsnips, with peels taken off, with gravy or sauce</li> <li>• Soft scalloped potatoes with sauce</li> <li>• Canned, ground, or crushed tomatoes, tomato juice, and tomato soup</li> <li>• Minced yellow or green beans, and minced, soft peas with gravy or sauce</li> <li>• Canned and cooked fruit with peels taken off</li> <li>• Fruit and vegetable juice</li> <li>• Ripe bananas, mashed or chewed well</li> <li>• Melons, mango, or peaches without skins, mashed or blended in a smoothie</li> <li>• Applesauce blends</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Raw or stir-fried vegetables, salads, coleslaw</li> <li>• Tough or stringy cooked vegetables, like: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Spinach</li> <li>› Celery</li> <li>› Whole peas</li> <li>› Whole green and yellow beans</li> <li>› Brussels sprouts</li> <li>› Stewed and diced tomatoes</li> <li>› Asparagus</li> <li>› Corn</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Raw fruit (bananas are OK)</li> <li>• Pineapple, grapes, kiwis, grapefruits, oranges, clementines, rhubarb, berries</li> <li>• Dried or candied fruit, like: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Raisins</li> <li>› Currants</li> <li>› Dates</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

<b>Best choices</b>	<b>Foods to avoid</b>
<p><b>Milk products</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Milk and milk substitutes (like cow's, chocolate, almond, soy, oat)</li> <li>• Smooth yogurt, pudding, ice cream, frozen yogurt, mousse, custard, sherbet</li> <li>• Cottage cheese with liquid, chewed well</li> <li>• Thin cheese sauce</li> <li>• Ricotta cheese used in a sauce, or with milk</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stringy, cooked cheese (like melted cheddar or mozzarella)</li> <li>• Hard cheese</li> <li>• Yogurt, ice cream, and frozen yogurt with nuts, granola, or chunks of fruit</li> <li>• Dry cottage cheese</li> </ul>
<p><b>Meat and alternative proteins</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minced, tender meat or poultry, or soft, boneless fish with gravy, sauce, or broth</li> <li>• Scrambled, poached, or soft-boiled eggs, chopped and topped with melted margarine or sauce</li> <li>• Well-cooked, tender or mashed legumes and lentils in soups or sauces (like soft, baked beans, mashed with sauce)</li> <li>• Soft tofu in soup or sauce</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dry, tough, stringy or gristly (chewy) meats</li> <li>• Fish with bones or batter</li> <li>• Bacon</li> <li>• Nuts and seeds</li> <li>• Hard-boiled and fried eggs</li> <li>• Peanut butter (unless it is blended in a smoothie or pudding to make it less sticky)</li> <li>• Firm tofu (unless it is blended)</li> </ul>

Best choices	Foods to avoid
<p><b>Other</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nutrition supplement drinks (like Ensure<sup>®</sup>, Boost<sup>®</sup>)</li> <li>• Milkshakes</li> <li>• Store-bought eggnog, sherbet, Jell-O<sup>®</sup></li> <li>• Smooth pie filling (like banana cream, butterscotch, or pumpkin) with whipped cream, and without chunks or pieces of coconut (soft pieces of banana chewed well are OK)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Popcorn, chips, taco chips</li> <li>• Foods with nuts, seeds, coconut, or dried fruit</li> <li>• Pickles, olives</li> <li>• Candies with gelatin (like gum drops, jelly beans)</li> <li>• Cake, pie, pastry</li> <li>• Toffee</li> </ul>

# High-Protein, High-Calorie Drink Recipes

## High-Protein Milk

Makes: 1 serving

Energy: 260 calories

Protein: 19 grams

1 cup (250 ml) whole milk

¼ cup (60 ml) skim milk powder, or other whey or vegetable protein powder

1. Add powder to milk.
2. Mix until dissolved.
3. Keep in the fridge for up to 24 hours (1 day).

Can be used:

- › As a drink, in milkshakes
- › On cereal, and with cooked or pureed fruit
- › In soups, puddings, cream sauces, and mashed potatoes

## High-Protein Milkshake

Makes: 1 serving

Energy: 345 calories

Protein: 22 grams

1 cup (250 ml) whole milk

½ cup (125 ml) smooth ice cream or frozen yogurt

¼ cup (60 ml) skim milk powder, or other whey or vegetable protein powder

½ cup (125 ml) fruit (try bananas or peaches)

1. Put ingredients in a blender.
2. Blend until smooth.
3. Keep in the fridge for up to 24 hours.

## To use homemade drinks safely:

- Keep drinks in the fridge and throw them out after 24 hours.
- **Do not** keep drinks at room temperature for more than 2 hours.
- **Do not** add raw eggs to blended drinks.
  - › Try an egg substitute (like Egg beaters® or Naturegg™ Simply Egg Whites™ 100% Pure Liquid Egg Whites). These can be found in the cold or frozen sections at the grocery store.



This pamphlet is for educational purposes only. It is not intended to replace the advice or professional judgment of a health care provider. The information may not apply to all situations. If you have any questions, please ask your health care provider.

Find all patient education resources here:  
[www.nshealth.ca/patient-education-resources](http://www.nshealth.ca/patient-education-resources)

Connect with a registered nurse in Nova Scotia any time:  
Call 811 or visit: <https://811.novascotia.ca>

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