



Patient & Family Guide
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What to Eat After Whipple Surgery



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During Whipple surgery, parts of the stomach, small bowel, gallbladder, and pancreas are removed. These organs are important for digesting food. After surgery you may need to make some changes to your eating habits. Following the tips in this guide can help you:

- › get the nutrition you need to heal.
- › feel comfortable during the first 4 weeks (1 month) after surgery.
- › keep or gain weight after surgery.

Tips:

- **Eat at least 6 small meals or snacks a day.**
 - › After surgery, it is normal to feel full quickly. Eating smaller amounts more often may be better than 3 large meals.
- **Eat slowly. Chew your food well.**
- **Drink at least 6 to 8 cups (1500 to 2000 ml) of fluid a day.**
 - › Drink fluids 30 minutes before or after meals, instead of with meals. This may help you to not feel full as quickly.

- **Eat protein with each meal and snack.**
 - › Protein is important for healing. Some good sources are meat, poultry (like chicken and turkey), fish, eggs, milk products (like milk, cheese, yogurt, and cottage cheese), tofu, and smooth nut butters (like peanut or almond butter).
- **Limit high fat, fried, and greasy foods.**

Some foods may cause gas and discomfort for the first few weeks after surgery. Avoid the following foods for 4 weeks:

- › Raw vegetables (including salad and coleslaw)
- › Raw fruit (except for the “best tolerated” listed on the next page)
- › Baked beans
- › Broccoli
- › Brussels sprouts
- › Cabbage
- › Cauliflower
- › Corn
- › Dried fruits
- › Green peppers
- › Nuts
- › Onions
- › Popcorn
- › Pop
- › Seeds
- › Turnips

You can slowly start to add these foods back into your diet 4 weeks after surgery.

Foods best tolerated in the first 4 weeks include:

Grains:

- › Plain white grain products (like bread, pasta, rice, bagels, English muffins, crackers)
- › Cereals without seeds, coconut, dried fruit, or nuts

Milk products:

- › All milk products, except for those with nuts or seeds
- › Non-dairy beverages (like soy, almond, or rice milk)

Fruit and vegetables:

- › Canned or cooked fruit
- › Soft, ripe, peeled fruit (like bananas, peaches, plums)
- › Canned or cooked vegetables (like carrots, squash, string beans)
- › Fruit and vegetable juices
- › White or sweet potatoes (peeled)

Meat and alternatives:

- › Tender meat, fish, poultry
- › Eggs
- › Smooth nut butters
- › Tofu

Do I need to take pancreatic enzymes?

After Whipple surgery, your body makes less enzymes that help you digest food. You may need to take pancreatic enzymes prescribed by your doctor if you have:

- › Bowel movements (poops) that smell bad, and are loose, oily, and light-coloured
- › Pain, bloating, and/or gas
- › Weight loss

Talk with your primary health care provider if you have any of these symptoms.

What if my stomach is slow to empty?

Your stomach may take longer to empty after surgery. You may feel bloated or full for hours after a meal. This should get better within a few weeks. These tips may help you feel better if your stomach is slow to empty:

- **Do not** eat big meals. Eat small meals more often.
- Chew foods well, especially meats.
- Sit up during meals, and for at least 60 minutes (1 hour) after.

- Limit high fibre foods.
 - › Choose plain white grain products instead of whole wheat. Choose cereals with no more than 2 grams of fibre per serving.
- **Do not** eat raw fruits and vegetables, nuts, seeds, or popcorn.
- **Do not** eat high fat, greasy, or fried foods.

If you have tried these tips and do not feel better, you can try a liquid or puréed diet. Try liquids high in calories, like milkshakes or nutritional supplement drinks.

What if I get dumping syndrome?

Sometimes after Whipple surgery, the opposite can happen and food may empty too quickly from your stomach. This usually goes away in a couple of weeks. Symptoms that may happen soon after eating (within 10 to 30 minutes) include:

- › bloating
- › nausea (upset stomach)
- › stomach cramps
- › vomiting (throwing up)
- › diarrhea (loose, watery poops)

Symptoms that may happen later after eating (within 2 to 3 hours) include:

- › weakness
- › dizziness
- › hunger
- › sweating
- › fast heartbeat

These tips may help:

- Eat slowly and chew your food very well.
- Eat small meals often (at least 3 small meals and 3 snacks a day).
- Eat protein with each meal and snack.
- Avoid sweets.
- **Do not** eat fluids and solids together. **Do not** drink fluids for 30 minutes before and after meals. Have no more than 1/2 cup of fluids with meals, if needed.
- Be sure to drink enough fluids **between meals**, at least 6 to 8 cups (1500 to 2000 ml) a day. Best choices are drinks with no caffeine or alcohol (like water, milk, diluted (watered down) unsweetened fruit juice, and decaffeinated tea or coffee).
- Lay down after you eat.
- If you need nutritional supplements, use diabetic versions (like Boost[®] Diabetic, Glucerna[®], Resource[®] Diabetic).

Do I need to take vitamins after surgery?

- After surgery, it may be hard for your body to digest and use some nutrients. A **daily multivitamin with minerals** can help. Choose a product made for someone of your age and gender. Ask your pharmacist if you need help choosing a vitamin supplement.
- Ask your primary health care provider to check your levels of vitamin B12, folate, iron, and vitamin D once a year.

What if I am losing weight?

It is important to eat enough to keep up your weight and help with healing. If you are losing weight, try these **high calorie, high protein snack ideas**:

- › Hot or cold cereal with homogenized or 2% milk
- › Muffins, biscuits, scones, or bagels with cream cheese or peanut butter
- › Scrambled, poached, or hard cooked eggs with white toast
- › Cheese and crackers
- › Smooth peanut butter on crackers or white toast
- › Cold, sliced meat or poultry in a wrap or sandwich

- › Canned tuna or salmon with mayonnaise in a sandwich or on crackers
- › Pudding, yogurt, or cottage cheese with canned fruit or sliced banana
- › Custard
- › Ice cream, sherbet, or frozen yogurt
- › Smoothies, milkshakes, eggnog, floats (see recipes on page 9)
- › Whole milk, soy milk, chocolate milk, hot chocolate
- › Boost[®], Ensure[®], Carnation Breakfast Essentials[®], or other nutritional supplement drinks

Tell your primary health care provider if you are still losing weight more than 4 weeks after surgery.

High energy, high protein drinks

High energy, high protein drinks are a quick, easy, and tasty snack or meal supplement. They can be used instead of nutritional supplements like Boost[®] or Ensure[®]. It is easiest to make these recipes in a blender, but you can also use an electric or hand beater.

Recipes

High Protein Milk (“Double” Milk)

- › 1 cup (250 ml) homogenized milk
- › 1/4 cup (50 ml) skim milk powder
- Add milk powder to milk. Stir until dissolved. Refrigerate.

Double milk can be used:

- › as a drink.
- › in milkshakes.
- › on cereals and fruit.
- › in soups and puddings.
- › in cream sauces and mashed potatoes.

Milkshake

- › 1/2 cup (125 ml) homogenized milk
- › 1/4 cup (50 ml) ice cream
- › 1/2 tsp (2 ml) vanilla extract
- Combine all ingredients in a blender. Mix well. Serve chilled.

Chocolate Banana Shake

- › 1/3 cup (75 ml) chocolate milk
- › 1/3 cup (75 ml) evaporated skim milk
- › 2 tbsp (30 ml) skim milk powder
- › 1/2 banana, medium
- Combine all ingredients in a blender. Mix well. Serve chilled.

Orange Pro Frost

- › 1/2 cup (125 ml) orange juice
- › 1/2 cup (125 ml) ice cream
- › 2 tbsp (30 ml) skim milk powder
- Combine all ingredients in a blender. Mix well. Serve chilled.

Yogurt Smoothie

- › 1 cup (250 ml) fruit (like banana or canned peaches)
- › 1/3 cup (80 ml) Greek yogurt
- › 1 cup (250 ml) whole milk
- › 1 to 2 tbsp (15 to 30 ml) skim milk powder
- › 2 ice cubes
- Combine all ingredients in a blender. Mix well. Serve chilled.

