Patient & Family Guide
2016

Eating After Stomach Surgery

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Eating After Stomach Surgery

After having surgery to remove all or part of your stomach, 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** after surgery, which happens when food enters the intestine too quickly. This can cause cramping and diarrhea. Other symptoms can be:

› Nausea
› Vomiting
› Weakness
› Dizziness

Dumping syndrome can happen as soon as 10-30 minutes after eating or as late as 1-3 hours after eating. Dumping syndrome often gets better with time.

The guidelines on the following pages can help you prevent or lessen dumping syndrome and keep you healthy after surgery.
Diet guidelines

1. **Eat 3 small meals and at least 3 snacks daily.** This will help you get enough food, even if your stomach is smaller or gone. A sample meal plan is listed at the end of this booklet.

2. **Eat slowly and chew your food very well.**

3. **Have protein with each meal and snack.** Protein will help you to heal and may help to prevent diarrhea. Good sources include meat, fish, poultry, eggs, soy, peanut butter, cheese, and unsweetened yogurts, custards, and puddings.

4. **Choose soft foods.** Soft foods may be easier to digest for the first few weeks after surgery. Avoid foods such as tough meats or gristle, nuts and seeds, and fruit skins and peels.

5. **Drink your liquids separate from eating your solid food.**
   › Stop drinking 30 minutes before your next meal.
   › Wait 30 minutes after your meals before drinking anything.
› Be sure to drink 6-8 cups (1500-2000 ml) of liquid daily, **between your meals**.

› Best choices are liquids that do not have caffeine or alcohol, such as water, milk, unsweetened juice, and decaffeinated coffee or tea.

› If you have problems with not drinking anything at meals, try drinking no more than ½ cup (125 ml) with your meal.

6. **Limit sweet foods such as:**
   - Table 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

7. **Limit gas-forming foods such as:**
   - 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 signs of dumping, slowly return to your regular diet 4 weeks after surgery. You will need to keep eating smaller meals more often.

What can I do if I am losing weight?

- **Try low-sugar nutritional supplements** such as Glucerna®, no sugar added Carnation Breakfast Essentials®, or Diabetic Boost®.

- **Drink liquids with calories**, such as milk, eggnog, and unsweetened juices.

- **Eat protein foods first**. If you can’t eat everything during your meal or snack, leave the lower-calorie foods.

- **Make every bite count**. Use full-fat dairy products; add butter, oils, gravy, and sauces to foods.

- **Talk about your weight loss with your healthcare provider**.
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, such as B12, folate, iron, vitamin D, and calcium.

• Take a **chewable multivitamin with minerals** daily.

• **Eat 3-4 servings of milk and alternatives** each day to keep bones strong. Examples include:
  › 1 cup (250 ml) milk, or a fortified soy or rice drink
  › 1½ oz (50 g) hard cheese
  › ¾ cup (175 g) yogurt
  › 1 cup (250 ml) calcium-fortified orange juice
  › 2 cheese slices

If you are not able to eat 3 servings of milk and alternatives daily, you will need to take a supplement. See below:
  › Take an 800 IU **vitamin D** supplement daily.
  › Take a 500 mg **calcium** supplement daily.

• Have your healthcare provider check your levels of **B12, vitamin D, iron, and folic acid** every 6-12 months.
Sample Meal Plan

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Breakfast</td>
<td>1 scrambled egg, 1 slice toast, 2 tsp. margarine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 minutes later</td>
<td>1 cup decaffeinated coffee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Snack</td>
<td>1½ oz cheddar cheese, 6 crackers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 minutes later</td>
<td>1 cup milk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lunch</td>
<td>½ cup tuna salad, 2 slices bread, ½ cup applesauce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 minutes later</td>
<td>1 cup unsweetened beverage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Snack</td>
<td>¾ cup yogurt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 minutes later</td>
<td>1 cup unsweetened beverage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supper</td>
<td>5 oz meatloaf, ½ cup mashed potatoes, ½ cup spinach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 minutes later</td>
<td>1 cup unsweetened beverage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Snack</td>
<td>1 oz cream cheese, ½ bagel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 minutes later</td>
<td>1 cup milk</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If you have any questions, please ask.
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The information in this pamphlet is to be updated every 3 years or as needed.