

## Nutritional Guidelines for an Ileostomy

After surgery the intestine is swollen and sensitive to food. Once the doctor allows you to begin eating, you will start with liquids and progress to a low fiber diet for the first 6 weeks after surgery. This will allow the bowel to heal from the recent surgery. Eat food that is tender and cooked well. Food is tender when you can cut it with the side of your fork. After six weeks try one high fiber food at a time to see how your body accepts it. If your body does not tolerate the food, wait a week and try it again.

Points to remember when eating:

- Sit upright to eat.

- Eat slowly and chew your food well.

- Drink 7 to 8 glasses of fluid a day, unless restricted by your doctor.

- Eat 5-6 small meals each day.

- Add new food to your diet one at a time to allow you to monitor how your body responds to the new food. When abdominal cramping and/or diarrhea occur after eating a new food, you may need to avoid this food.

If you experience **diarrhea**:

- Identify the cause, such as viral or bacterial infection, antibiotics, radiation therapy, medication or food intolerance. When you have more than 1000 cc output per day, call your doctor.

- Eat foods that thicken the stool such as: rice, pasta, cheese, bananas, applesauce, smooth peanut butter, pretzels, yogurt, and marshmallows.

- Drink 2 or 3 glasses of fluid that will replace electrolytes like sports drinks, fruit or vegetable juice and broth but limit these items. Too much sugar drinks can produce diarrhea. You will need to replace the water lost so drink water or sugar free beverages.

- Antidiarrheal medicines (Lomotil, Imodium) are acceptable. If you are on radiation therapy, please contact your doctor.

Individuals who have an ileostomy are at high risk for dehydration when vomiting and diarrhea occur. Normal output should be around 1000 cc per day.

Signs of **dehydration** are:

- Thirst

- Weakness

- Dry mouth and tongue

- Urine is dark yellow or orange in color

- Abdominal cramping

- Dizziness when you stand up

Foods that **thicken output** or help bind stool:

- Creamy peanut butter
- Applesauce
- Rice
- Bananas
- Pretzels
- Yogurt
- Cheese
- Tapioca pudding
- Toast
- Potatoes
- Buttermilk

**Intestinal gas** may develop as a result of swallowed air or eating certain food.

Practices that cause an increase in swallowed air are:

- Drinking from a straw
- Smoking
- Talking while eating
- Chewing gum
- Skipping meals

Foods that **cause gas odors** are:

- Dried/ string beans
- Beer or carbonated beverages
- Cucumbers
- Dairy products
- Spinach
- Cabbage family: onions, brussel sprouts, broccoli and cauliflower
- Radishes

Foods that can **cause odor in stool** are:

- Fish
- Eggs
- Asparagus
- Garlic
- Some spices
- Beans
- Turnips
- Cabbage family (see above)

Foods that help **reduce odor** are yogurt, parsley, spearmint and buttermilk.

**High fiber foods** may cause a blockage, preventing stool from coming out of the stoma. You should always avoid high fiber food. The following foods can cause a blockage:

Corn and popcorn  
Nuts  
Large seeds e.g. squash, watermelon  
Stringy food e.g. celery, coconut, bean sprouts, bamboo shoots  
Dried fruit e.g. raisins, dried figs, apricots  
Non-digestible fibrous peels e.g. potato peeling, apple peeling, grapes  
Raw vegetables or fruit eaten in excess  
Citrus fruit membrane e.g. orange, grapefruit  
Mushrooms  
Sauerkraut  
Meat with casings e.g. sausage, wieners, deli bologna  
Course grain bread with seeds, fruit or nuts  
Bran cereal

In summary, you should follow a soft low fiber diet for easy digestion and optimal absorption of nutrients. Here is a short list of common food that is frequently questioned:

<b>Permitted</b>	<b>Avoid</b>
Cooked cereal without bran like cream of wheat and oatmeal. Corn flakes, puffed cereal, Wheat bread, white or brown rice.	Coarse grained bread or bread with fruit, nuts, and seeds. Wild rice.
Cooked or canned fruit, applesauce, fruit juice, smoothies, fresh fruit without peels.	Coconut, dried fruit, fresh pineapple melon seeds.
Vegetable and creamed soup with rice, potatoes <u>soft</u> cooked vegetables.	Corn, bean sprouts, celery, sauerkraut, Chinese or stir-fry vegetables, <u>uncooked</u> broccoli, cauliflower, carrots.
Baked, steamed, boiled, or stewed food.	French-fried food.
Peanut butter, pretzels, baked chips, crackers.	Nuts, popcorn, potato chips.