

PATIENT INFORMATION

Dietary Advice for People with Colostomies

This leaflet will provide you with advice regarding your diet now you have a colostomy.

The majority of nutrients are absorbed in your small bowel. The job of your colon is to absorb water and salts. Depending on the position of your colostomy, you may find your stools are more watery and loose than normal, particularly in the early stages. As your bowel adapts, this should settle.

Now that you have a colostomy, you should aim to return to a healthy balanced diet as quickly as possible. Eating well will help your colostomy output to settle and help you recover.

New colostomies usually work within 2-5 days after your operation. The output is likely to be watery at first, settling to between 200-600ml daily of semi solid stool. For the first few weeks after surgery you may find your output is a little unpredictable while your bowel adapts.

What should I eat after my operation?

After your operation, you should gradually build up your intake. This may be called a "light diet" and includes foods such as:

Soup	Chicken	Scrambled egg
White bread/toast	Mashed potato	Fish in sauce
Soup	Milk puddings	Ice cream
Omelette	Custard	Jelly
Mousse	Yoghurt	

It is important that you drink as you would usually, 6-8 cups or glasses (1500–2000ml) per day.

What should I eat next?

For the majority of patients once things have settled there is no reason why you cannot return to a normal healthy balanced diet.

Eat regularly, avoid missing meals and chew your food well. If your appetite is poor, take smaller meals with snacks in-between. Talk to your team if you are losing weight.

Aim to drink 6-8 glasses (1500-2000ml) of fluid per day.

Trouble shooting

Some people may experience problems with their colostomy. This may be caused by food.

It is important that you don't alter the output from your colostomy by reducing your fluid intake or missing meals, this may make you dehydrated. Your colostomy will work best if you eat regularly.

Only avoid foods if they are causing a problem, or if the consequences such as odour or wind, are bothering you.

It is important that if you exclude some foods from your diet, that you try them again every couple of weeks, to see if you can re-introduce them. Remember the aim is to eat as wide a variety of foods as possible.

Problem	Advice
Loose stools	You may need to adjust the fibre in your diet in the short term. Ask your stoma nurse for a "Low Fibre/Low Residue" patient information leaflet. If you think your loose stools is due to an illness, stomach upset, food poisoning, if you are passing less urine than usual or it continues for more than 24 hours contact your stoma team.
Constipation	Constipation can be a problem for people with colostomies. Signs of this are hard pellet like stools or stool which collects at the top of the bag which can cause leaks, the following advice may help to alleviate these symptoms. Increasing your fluid intake – approximately 6-8 glasses (1500-2000ml) per day Increasing the fibre in your diet by including oats and wholegrains, fruit (particularly kiwi fruits), vegetables, nuts, seeds and pulses. Try exercising regularly If constipation continues to be a problem please contact your stoma nurse or GP for advice
Wind	Avoid drinking at the same time as eating. Avoid chewing gum. Some people find peppermint tea helpful. There are some foods that may cause wind through your stoma, this is more likely with foods that caused wind from before you had a colostomy. You will experience some wind initially but if it persists the following tips should help -Chew your food well -Reduce fizzy drinks -Try and avoid swallowing a lot of air while you eat -Eat regularly/avoid long gaps between meals -Reducing the following foods have been helpful for some people; lentils, peas, beans, sprouts and cabbage.
Odour	Speak to your stoma team about sprays that can help.
Blockage	If your output stops or slows down considerably you may have a blockage, you should contact your GP or stoma nurse immediately. If you have been told that you have strictures or adhesions in your

Problem	Advice
	bowel, it is recommended that you continue to avoid high fibre foods in the long term. You can speak to your stoma nurse if you need further advice about diets for strictures or adhesions
Dehydration	Hot weather, or a holiday in a hot climate, or strenuous exercise can all lead to dehydration, so fluid intake should be increased.
Changes in weight	If you experience problems with weight loss or gain please discuss with your stoma team or GP.

Contact details:

Team	Number
Stoma Care Team	01803 654816 Or bleep using 252 via the Torbay hospital switchboard
Torbay Hospital Switchboard	01803 614567

Given by _____

Contact Number _____

Produced by the department of Nutrition and Dietetics, Torbay hospital

Further copies are available from the intranet (Nutrition and Dietetics website) and iCare.

For further assistance or to receive this information in a different format, please contact the department which created this leaflet.