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Ostomists Dietary Advice



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Opening Hours:

8 am to 8 pm Monday to Friday
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National: 0800 378 846
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Dietary Advice for Ostomists

Giving dietary advice is always difficult. What you can and cannot eat is very individual and foods that disagree with one person seem to have no effect on others. This leaflet has been designed to give some helpful hints and tips.

Giving dietary advice

The normal recommended 'healthy diet' is high fibre, low salt and low fat. However, for people who have had an ostomy, this may not be the ideal diet for their condition.

Our first piece of advice is always ask your stoma care nurse what is best for you, they can explain why you should avoid some foods and eat more of others.

The second piece of general advice is to let your stoma settle and then to just try small portions of each food and see what effect they have.

Good eating habits

A disciplined approach to a diet can help make you more regular in both timings and in stool consistency.

A good guide is:

- Don't overeat
- Eat at least 3 meals a day
- Eat at regular times
- Identify foods that have a laxative or constipative effect on you and try to balance the intake
- Some foods will give you wind. Work out which ones these are and then eat them in moderation
- Keep a food diary
- Chew food well



Vitamins

Vitamins are found in fruit, fruit juices and fresh vegetables. Extra vitamins are not really necessary if you have a healthy varied diet. Cranberry juice is useful for urostomists as it can help clear mucus.

Fats

These are essential for the health of cells, to protect vital organs and to regulate body temperature. Too much fat however can be harmful and you should aim to keep fat intake to below one third of your daily food consumption.

Proteins

Proteins are another essential element in a healthy diet and help to build body tissue and muscle. They can be found in meats, dairy products, eggs and fish.

Carbohydrates

This is the food group that provides energy. Carbohydrates are found in starchy foods like bread, potatoes, pasta and cereals. Short term energy comes from sugars contained in sweet foods like fruits, cakes and biscuits.

Alcohol

This is better in moderation as it increases dehydration and fluid loss, especially in hot weather.

Dehydration

A spell of hot weather, a holiday in a hot climate, strenuous exercise can all lead to dehydration. If this should happen, fluid intake **MUST** be increased. Isotonic sports drinks are very good as they replace the essential salts and glucose lost through sweating. You can make your own and it can be kept in the fridge for a day.

Here is the recipe:

3/4 pint water
4 heaped teaspoons sugar
1/2 teaspoon salt
5oz fruit juice (to taste)



Specific advice for your condition

While your stoma care nurse can give advice specific to your condition, over the years it has been observed that certain foods have some common effects.

These will be different for each person depending on your stoma.

Colostomy

- **Causes of wind (flatus):**
 - Green leafy vegetables e.g. cabbage, brussel sprouts and cauliflower
 - Green beans and peas
 - Onions
 - Nuts
 - Fruit
 - Beer and carbonated drinks
- **Causes of odour:**
 - Onions and garlic
 - Green leafy vegetables e.g. cabbage
 - Eggs
 - Baked beans
 - Asparagus
- **To reduce odour, try:**
 - Natural yoghurt
 - Parsley
- **Causes of diarrhoea:**
 - Raw fruit and fruit juices
 - Green leafy vegetables
 - Hot and spicy food
 - Beer and alcohol
- **To reduce liquidity of stools, try:**
 - Ripe bananas
 - Boiled rice and tapioca
 - Peanut butter
 - Instant mashed potato



Cranberry juice may affect the efficacy of Warfarin, a blood thinning agent. Please consult your specialist nurse if you are taking this medicine before making any changes.



Ileostomy

- **Causes of wind (flatus):**
 - Green leafy vegetables e.g. cabbage, brussel sprouts and cauliflower
 - Baked beans
 - Onions
 - Milk and milk products
 - Carbonated drinks
- **Foods which may cause blockages:**
 - Popcorn
 - Nuts
 - Sweetcorn
 - Celery
 - Coconut
 - Dried fruit

- **Causes of odour:**
 - Onions and garlic
 - Green leafy vegetables e.g. cabbage
 - Eggs
 - Baked beans
 - Asparagus
- **To reduce odour, try:**
 - Natural yoghurt
 - Parsley
- **Causes of liquid stools:**
 - Fruit and fruit juices
 - Green leafy vegetables
 - Fats
 - Fish
- **To reduce liquidity of stools, try:**
 - Ripe bananas
 - Boiled rice and tapioca
 - Smooth peanut butter
 - Instant mashed potato
 - Pasta and cheese
 - Jelly babies and marshmallows

Urostomy

For most people a urostomy has little effect on the diet.

Tips include:

- Drinking plenty of water each day is the best way to prevent urine infections
- Eat a balanced diet
- Eating beetroot will turn your urine a reddish colour temporarily but there is no cause for alarm
- Asparagus and seafood may cause odour



Alleviating constipation and blockages

Constipation is an issue that you may suffer from time to time. It can be eased by drinking more liquids, especially coffee and fruit juices.

As well as drinking more, try increasing the levels of fibre in your diet. This can be done very easily by eating whole grain cereals, wholemeal bread and pasta, and particularly by eating more fresh fruit.

Too many eggs, boiled rice or corn in your diet may be a cause of your constipation.

For an ileostomist, constipation is not really a problem however you have to eat carefully to avoid blockages.

Chewing food well will always help but you should also avoid, or at least be very careful, when eating food that is small and difficult to digest such as nuts and sweetcorn.

Red staining in the stool

When you have had bowel problems, the last thing you will want to see is red staining in your stool. More often than not, there is no need to worry as it will be due to something you have eaten causing the strong red colour.

The sort of foods that can cause this to happen are beetroot, red wine and even tomato skins that have not digested completely. If you have any doubts on this consult your specialist nurse.





High fibre diets

Dietary fibre is the indigestible part of cereals, vegetables and fruit. Many foods have part or all of the fibre removed during processing and are very 'refined' – white flour is a good example.

Fibre is very important as it assists the passage of food and fluids through the digestive tract. It helps prevent many bowel problems including constipation. For fibre to be effective, you must also drink plenty of fluids.

Unprocessed bran or porridge can be used to increase fibre levels and can be added to many meals.

Other ways to increase fibre in your diet are:

- Have wholemeal or granary rather than white bread
- Eat bran or wholegrain cereals rather than sugar coated cereals
- Use wholemeal flour rather than white flour in baking
- Have 5 servings a day of fruit or vegetables, cooked, raw or dried; eat the skins of baked potatoes and try some raisins, figs or prunes
- Use nuts in salads or cooking whenever possible

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