

What to Eat after Fundoplication and Esophagectomy Surgery

This handout offers information on what you can eat after fundoplication and esophagectomy surgery.

Your thoracic surgeon may advise you to follow a full fluid or pureed food diet before you begin a soft food diet. The dietitian will give you additional information if this applies to you.

A soft food diet can make it easier for you to swallow after your surgery. This diet will also help you eat enough calories and protein, which will promote healing and let you return you to your normal diet.

How long will I have to follow a soft food diet?

You need to follow a soft food diet for 2 to 4 weeks after your surgery. Ask your thoracic surgeon at your first follow-up appointment when you can return to eating your regular diet.

What foods can I eat?

A soft food diet includes foods that are both **soft** and **moist** (examples: bread is soft, but it is not moist).

Refer to the chart on the following pages for foods and drinks you can and cannot eat.

Eating guidelines

1. Eat while sitting up in a chair.
2. Stay sitting up for 30 to 60 minutes after you eat.
3. Eat 4 to 5 small meals during the day.
4. Take small bites, eat slowly and chew your food well.
5. Drink fluids with your meals.
6. Prepare foods so they are soft, moist and easy for you to swallow.
7. If you have problems eating enough protein and calories, you may need to drink a nutritional supplement or homemade milkshake as a meal or snack (examples: Ensure, Boost, Boost powder or a similar store brand). Ask for a copy of the [Options for Nutritional Supplements](#) handout. Drink these fluids slowly.
8. You may experience diarrhea when drinking sugary fluids (examples: juices, tea, lemonade, Ensure, Boost), or when eating foods that melt (example: ice cream). Reduce your intake of sugary fluids or add water to the fluid choice to dilute it.
9. Take a multivitamin, in liquid or chewable form.

Food choices	Eat these foods	Don't eat these foods
Milk and mild products	• Cheese, all types • Cottage cheese • Custard • Milk, all types • Milkshake • Smoothie • Pudding	• Yogurt and ice cream with nuts, pieces of dried fruit and/or granola (such as Heavenly Hash or Rum & Raisin ice cream, yogurt, parfait)

Food choices	Eat these foods	Don't eat these foods
	• Yogurt, smooth without skin/seeds • Ice cream, smooth	
Bread and grain products	• Cereal, cooked (such as oatmeal or cream of wheat) • Noodles, cooked • Dry cereal softened with milk • Rice, well cooked or in soup or sauce • Toast without crusts	• Bread, rolls, and bagels • Any grain products containing coconut, nuts, seeds or dried fruit • Muffins • Grains
Meat and alternatives	• Tender, minced, or stewed meat and poultry moistened with gravy, sauce or broth • Scrambled or poached eggs • Tofu • Fish, all types (except deep fried)	• Fried eggs • Deep-fried, battered meat • Legumes such as chickpeas, kidney beans and lentils • Luncheon meats, bacon • Nuts and seeds • Peanut butter
Fruits	• Applesauce • Berries (strawberry, blueberry, raspberry, blackberry) • Ripe fresh fruit, peeled (such as banana, melon, pears, peach) • Fruit juice • Canned fruits	• Apples • Any fruit with skins • Dried fruit • Hard or stringy fruit, such as rhubarb or pineapple
Vegetables	• Potatoes, well cooked, no skin • Sweet potatoes, well cooked, no skin • Canned vegetables • Vegetables, well cooked, no skin	• French Fries • Raw vegetables • Hard or stringy vegetables, such as celery
Soups and casseroles	• Soups and casseroles made with food from the "Foods you can eat" list, such as cream or broth soups, macaroni and cheese	
Sweets, deserts and snack foods	• Chocolate, no nuts • Gelato • Jelly, seedless jam • Jell-O • Marshmallows • Popsicle, fruit ice • Sorbet	• Cake, all types • Chocolate with nuts, dried fruit • Cookies • Muffins • Pastries • Deep fried food • Chips • Crackers • Popcorn

Food choices	Eat these foods	Don't eat these foods
		Pretzels

Dumping syndrome

You may experience dumping syndrome after your surgery. It happens when food moves too quickly from your stomach into your small intestine. Eating meals high in sugar can cause it to happen. It often happens within 10 to 30 minutes after you eat.

Symptoms of dumping syndrome include:

- Feeling bloated or too full
- Nausea and vomiting
- Abdominal cramps
- Diarrhea
- Flushing
- Dizziness
- Rapid heart rate

To help prevent dumping syndrome:

- Eat 6 small meals a day instead of 3 regular meals (eat ½ a normal meal each time).
- Do not drink fluids during your meals.
- Eat a diet higher in protein and complex carbohydrates (examples: whole grains, fiber-rich fruits and vegetables, and beans).
- Chew your food well.
- Sit in an upright position while you eat.

Call your thoracic surgeon's office if you experience symptoms of dumping syndrome.

If you had fundoplication surgery only:

It will be difficult or impossible for you to burp after surgery. To prevent gas and bloating in your stomach follow the suggestions below:

1. Do not use straws.
2. Sip drinks, do not gulp them.
3. Do not have carbonated drinks such as soda pop, sparkling water, beer or champagne.
4. Do not chew gum.
5. Do not talk while eating.

Go to the Emergency Department at the hospital closest to you If you are choking or have pain during swallowing,

Talk to a member of your healthcare team if you have questions or if do not understand any information in this handout. Call the nurse navigator at your thoracic surgeon's office from Monday to Friday from 8 am to 4 pm – except on holidays.

- Dr. Browne at 905-576-8711 or 1-866-338-1778 extension 32383.
- Dr. Dickie at 905-576-8711 or 1-866-338-1778 extension 36357.
- Dr. Trainor at 905-576-8711 or 1-866-338-1778 extension 34481.
- Dr. Sisson at 905-576-8711 or 1-866-338-1778 extension 36342.

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