

Dietary guide for people with a new ileostomy

Information for patients, relatives and carers

Introduction

This leaflet is a guide on what to eat and drink in the first 4-6 weeks after creation of a new ileostomy. We hope it will answer some of the questions that you or those important to you may have at this time. This leaflet is not meant to replace the discussion between you and your medical team but helps you to understand more about what is discussed. A pre-operative pack and booklet which explains the operation are provided by your stoma care nurse. Please ask for these from your stoma care nurse if you don't already have them.

Your ileostomy and bowel function

The large bowel or intestine is made up of the different colon sections and rectum. It acts as an absorption site for water, salt/sodium, transportation and storage. The small bowel or intestine (consisting of the duodenum, jejunum and ileum) is where most nutrients are digested and absorbed.

After ileostomy is created you will notice changes in your bowel motions. Digested food will not be passing through the large bowel (the different sections of the colon), causing a decrease in the absorption of water and electrolytes, such as sodium/salt. Although your bowel will slowly adapt to the alteration, your ileostomy output will always be watery/sloppy. This is normal.

Eating and drinking after surgery

Following your surgery, your ileostomy may take a couple of days to start working. This does not mean that anything is wrong. It simply means that the operation and medication you've had will be affecting your bowel function, making it less active.

Eating after a new ileostomy

- aim to eat around six small meals per day every 2-3 hours depending on your clinical situation. Do not leave long breaks in between meals as this will increase the ileostomy output after eating.
- eat slowly – chew small mouthfuls at a time
- chew your food well – this aids digestion and absorption and can reduce the risk of blockage of your ileostomy
- avoid pips, piths and skins of fruits and vegetables, as well as celery, sweetcorn, nuts, peas and coconut, as these are more likely to cause a blockage of your ileostomy
- avoid eating large amounts of fibre at any one time to avoid producing large volumes of stools
- everyone tolerates foods differently, so avoid those foods known to cause you problems

Drinking after a new ileostomy

- drinking 3-4 pints or (1.5–2 litres) of fluid per day is enough for most people (but you may need to drink more in hot weather or if you are exercising)
- if you have increased output from your ileostomy, you should take extra salt rather than water
- if you feel dehydrated, consult your GP, stoma care nurse or dietitian
- do not drink immediately before or during a meal – instead drink about half an hour before or after food (if you have a poor appetite then avoid soup before meals as this may fill you up too much)
- alcohol can be consumed in moderate amounts. Both men and women should not regularly drink more than 14 units of alcohol per week. This means you should not drink more than six glasses of 175 ml wine or six pints of lager or ale. Too much alcohol is not good for your health and can increase your urine and the output from your ileostomy.

Following your surgery, it is important to begin with a low-fibre diet and gradually reintroduce higher fibre food after six to eight weeks to match your level of tolerance. It is important to eat well in order to help with wound healing.

In the long term, the goal is a healthy balanced diet which includes foods from across different food groups.

Eating after a new ileostomy

In the first 6-8 weeks after surgery, you should choose low-fibre foods, and avoid foods which are high in fibre. Some examples are provided below:

Fruits:

Choose from:

- ripe bananas
- peeled apples/pears
- tinned/stewed fruit
- melon (without pips)

Avoid:

- berry fruits, e.g. blackberries and strawberries
- fruits with piths and pips, e.g. oranges and grapes
- dried fruit
- stringy fruits, e.g. pineapple
- coconut

Vegetables

Choose from:

- tinned tomatoes
- peeled vegetables which are well-cooked, e.g. carrots, parsnips and squash

Avoid:

- salad vegetables

- all unpeeled/raw vegetables
- peas, beans, lentils, pulses, sweetcorn
- stringy vegetables, e.g. runner beans and celery

Carbohydrates

Choose from:

- boiled or baked potatoes/yam/cassava with the skin removed
- white rice or pasta
- white bread
- sago/ tapioca

Avoid:

- potatoes/ yam with the skin
- wholemeal/ brown rice or pasta
- wholemeal/ brown flour or bread
- pearl barley

Breakfast cereals

Choose from low-fibre breakfast cereals such as:

- Cornflakes
- Rice Crispies™
- Frosties™
- Sugar Puffs™

Avoid high-fibre breakfast cereals such as:

- Muesli
- Bran
- Weetabix™
- Shredded wheat™

Biscuits/cakes

Choose from:

- cream crackers
- rich tea biscuits
- custard creams
- sweet/ plain biscuits

Avoid:

- Ryvita™
- digestive biscuits
- fruit cake

Proteins

Choose from:

- eggs

- plain cheese
- soft, cooked chicken without the skin
- meat or vegetable protein cooked soft

Avoid:

- Hard boiled/ roasted chicken or meat

Common problems of ileostomies

Some common problems with ileostomies have been linked to certain foods. This does not mean that you cannot have these foods. Try all foods and avoid those which repeatedly cause problems for you.

Odour:

Potential dietary causes:

- onions and garlic
- brussel sprouts
- cabbage
- cauliflower
- broccoli
- beans
- fish
- eggs
- spices
- asparagus and other green vegetables
- strong cheeses

Wind:

Potential dietary causes:

- onions and garlic
- brassica vegetables, e.g. brussel sprouts and cabbage
- legumes, e.g. beans, lentils and peas (green/garden peas)
- fizzy drinks, beer or lager

Loose stools:

Potential dietary causes:

- spicy foods
- high fibre foods
- alcohol
- fried foods
- fruit juices
- excessive fluid intake
- excessive fruit or fruit juice intake

Thickening your ileostomy output

If you find that your ileostomy output remains loose or liquid, introducing the following foods

may help to thicken your output:

- low fibre starchy foods (e.g. white rice/pasta/noodles/bread/chapattis/tapioca)
- marshmallows, jelly babies and other products containing gelatine
- peanut butter (smooth not crunchy)

If you notice the volume of your ileostomy output has increased and you are emptying or changing your stoma bag more often, you may be at risk of dehydration.

Dehydration

The average daily output for those with an ileostomy is 1000- 1200 ml over 24hours (approximately four to five half-full stoma bags). You should drink at least 1.5 litres (unless on fluid restriction) of fluid to combat water loss.

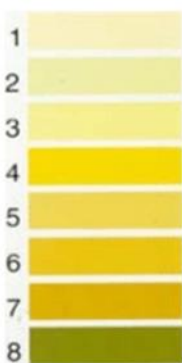
Signs and symptoms of dehydration:

- dry mouth with an unquenchable thirst
- pins and needles in your fingers or toes
- blurred vision
- dizzy spells
- fainting
- fatigue (feeling tired)
- reduced volume of urine or absence of urine

If you have any of these signs and symptoms, speak to your stoma care nurse or ward you were discharged from.

Urine chart

You should aim for light coloured urine (numbers 1-3). If you notice your urine getting darker than this then try to drink more fluids. See 'Choosing the right fluid' section below.



Check your urine
against this chart

Preventing dehydration

Every day, salt is lost through the fluids produced by your ileostomy. The salt needs to be replaced to maintain a healthy body. If it is not replaced then you may be more at risk of dehydration, especially in hot weather or when exercising.

We usually advise that you consume a small amount of salt every day. You may increase your salt intake slightly by:

- adding salt to your food whilst cooking
- adding salt to your food at the table

- choosing salt-rich foods such as crisps, Marmite™, cheese, pretzels, kippers, beef extracts such as Bovril™ and Oxo™

If you suffer from high blood pressure, heart failure or kidney disease, speak with your stoma nurse or dietitian before making changes to your salt intake.

Choosing the right fluid

Choosing the right fluid is also an important part of staying hydrated and your dietitian /stoma nurse will discuss this with you. Fluids such as water, coffee, tea, plain squash are generally fine.

If the volume of your ileostomy is higher than usual and/or the colour of your urine is darker than usual, you may need to change the type of fluid you are drinking in order to stay well-hydrated.

Please discuss this with your stoma care nurse or GP regarding alternative fluids.

Use of loperamide (Imodium)

Loperamide is a medication used to slow down the output and thickening down before it passes through the ileostomy. It comes as a 2 mg capsule, a white pill or a liquid and can be prescribed when, despite a good intake of food, the ileostomy output remains loose and watery and does not reach the desired thick porridge-like consistency.

Loperamide should be taken 10-15 minutes before main meals and once before bed to reduce gut transit. Loperamide is taken with only enough water to swallow it. If you drink too much water then the pill will have no effect as it will be working with the fluid you have drunk and not with the food you are about to eat.

Most people start with one tablet (2 mg) two to four times a day and increase the dose as instructed (by their GP or surgeon) to reach the desired effect.

Dealing with ileostomy blockage

Signs and symptoms of an ileostomy blockage include:

- absence of, or change in, consistency of output (very watery)
- a feeling of bloating or fullness
- loss of appetite
- nausea
- abdominal discomfort or cramping

If you have any of these symptoms, contact your stoma nurse. If you suspect you have a blockage then restrict food intake and consume fluids only for 24 hours. This may resolve the blockage. If the symptoms worsen or you develop new symptoms contact your stoma nurse or attend your nearest A&E department.

If you are losing weight or you are underweight

Many people find they lose weight after surgery. If this applies to you, speak to your stoma care nurse or dietitian.

How you can increase your calories

Milk or any other alternative e.g. Oat Milk

Milk can be enriched by adding milk powder. Mix four tablespoons of milk powder with a little milk to form a paste. Then stir in a pint of cold full-fat milk. Keep the enriched milk in the fridge and use it as you would normal milk or water to make drinks, soups, custards, jellies and puddings.

Cream

Using cream is an easy way to add calories to soup and casseroles.

Dressings

These include mayonnaise, salad cream, vinaigrette – use freely and as often as possible.

Cheese

Cheese is versatile and can be added to many foods. Try putting cheese in sandwiches and omelettes as well as serving with meat. Melt cheese on potatoes and in pasta dishes or shepherds' pies. Have cheese and biscuits as a snack. Use cheese sauce on vegetables, pasta and potatoes.

Butter/margarine

This includes olive, rapeseed and sunflower spreads. Add to your food whenever possible. Use oil as dressings on salads. Add at least a tablespoon of oil to pasta before serving. Spread butter and margarine thickly on bread. Serve vegetables with butter or margarine.

Sauces

All sauces add extra nutrition to meals. Use whenever possible and make both homemade and packet sauces using enriched milk (see above section on milk).

Notes and questions

Please use the space below to write down any questions that you would like to ask, or to make notes.

Please do not hesitate to contact your stoma nurse or dietitian on the following numbers if you have any questions or concerns, between 09.00 and 17.00, Monday to Friday.

Your stoma nurse is:

Department of stoma care

Charing Cross Hospital

Fulham Palace Road, London, W6 8RF

Telephone: 020 3313 0862

St Mary's Hospital

Praed Street, London, W2 1NY

Telephone: 020 3312 1306

Other useful sources of support and information

The Ileostomy & Internal Pouch Support Group

Telephone: 0800 0184 724 (Freephone)

Website: iasupport.org

Bowel Cancer UK

Telephone: 020 7940 1760

Website: www.bowelcancer.org

Email - admin@bowelcanceruk.org.uk

Macmillan Cancer Support

Telephone: 0808 808 0000

Website: www.macmillan.org.uk

Macmillan cancer information and support service at Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust (ICHT)

The Macmillan cancer information and support service offers free support and information to anyone affected by cancer, including family and loved ones. The service has physical centres at Charing Cross and Hammersmith Hospitals, and also offers virtual and telephone support.

When you call or visit you can speak to one of the Macmillan cancer team one-on-one about whatever matters most to you. You can sign up to a range of weekly virtual groups that provide the opportunity to connect with other people with cancer in a relaxed environment. You can also speak to our Macmillan welfare and benefits adviser, who can offer ICHT patients tailored advice on additional financial support.

The service is open Monday-Thursday (excluding bank holidays), with various drop-ins available within our physical centres.

For more information please call us on **020 3313 5170** or email imperial.macmillansupportservice@nhs.net

How do I make a comment about my visit?

We aim to provide the best possible service and staff will be happy to answer any of the questions you may have. If you have any **suggestions** or **comments** about your visit, please either speak to a member of staff or contact the patient advice and liaison service (**PALS**) on **020 3313 0088** (Charing Cross, Hammersmith and Queen Charlotte's & Chelsea hospitals), or **020 3312 7777** (St Mary's and Western Eye hospitals). You can email PALS at pals@imperial.nhs.uk. The PALS team will listen to your concerns, suggestions or queries and is often able to help solve problems on your behalf. Alternatively, you may wish to express your concerns in **writing** to: Complaints department, Fourth floor, Salton House, St Mary's Hospital, Praed Street London W2 1NY.

Alternative formats

This leaflet can be provided on request in large print, as a sound recording, in Braille, or in alternative languages. Please contact the communications team on **020 3312 5592**.

Wi-fi

We have a free wi-fi service (for basic filtered browsing) and a premium wi-fi service (requiring payment) at each of our five hospitals. Look for WiFiSPARK_FREE or WiFiSPARK_PREMIUM

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