



POST-SURGERY SOFT FOOD DIET

Dietary Advice

Following surgery, swallowing may be difficult as a result of swelling around the esophagus (food pipe). It may take a month or more for swallowing to feel normal again with all foods.

Four stages of diet are advised. In each stage, when swallowing feels normal, you can move on to the next stage.

Most Importantly

- Have small frequent meals and snacks, rather than large meals
- Eat slowly and chew foods well
- Eat moist foods
- If any food is sticking in the esophagus, stop eating, relax and allow time for food to clear

Try drinking water to wash the food down; if that fails, try soda water. If food remains stuck, contact the surgeon's office or go to the local Emergency Room if you feel it is necessary.

Avoid the following until swallowing is easy:

- Fresh bread
- Rice
- Cake
- Hard biscuits
- Grilled and fried meat
- Aerated drinks (soft drinks, milkshakes—unless soda water is used to relieve blockage)
- Highly spiced foods

Stage 1:

- Fluid and semi-fluid items only—these should be smooth with no lumps.
- Water, juice, (not soft drinks)
- Milk—plain, flavored (not milkshake)
- Tea, coffee (not too hot)
- Soups (strained or finely pureed)
- Ice cream, custard, jelly
- Yogurt (plain, vanilla or honey—none with seeds or pieces of fruit)
- Potato, pumpkin (finely mashed)
- Gravy, white sauce (no lumps)
- Food pureed to a thin consistency (no lumps)

Stage 2:

Mashed and very soft foods only—soft lumps able to be mashed with a fork.

Add in:

- Porridge, breakfast cereals such as Cornflakes, rice crispies, well softened with milk or hot water
- Fruit—fresh fruit (soft, well ripened) stewed or tinned fruit (soft or pureed)
- Vegetables—well cooked, soft, mashed, or pureed
- Pasta (spaghetti noodles) well cooked, soft
- Pureed meats, pureed chicken—can be with gravy in a thick soup, or served with mashed/pureed vegetables

- Fish-fresh (be sure to remove all bones) or canned tuna, salmon (mashed, no bones)
- Eggs-soft boiled, scrambles, poached

Stage 3:

Light foods with more texture-chew well

Add in:

- Tender meats, mince, stews
- Chicken-minced or finely chopped
- Salads
- Toast
- Biscuits

Stage 4: gradual return to normal eating

Gradually add in firmer foods. Try the food in the avoid list in small amounts one by one. Chew these foods very well.

After about four weeks, you should be able to eat a full range of foods. However, you are advised to:

- Continue with small meals and between-meal snack if need to satisfy your appetite rather than large meals
- Continue to chew all foods well

If you have any questions, please call our office: 816-525-2840.