



Nutrition & Dietary Advice

**For People with a
Colostomy, Ileostomy, Urostomy
or Internal Pouch**



Preamble

This booklet has been prepared to advise Ostomates who have had Bowel or Bladder surgery of the best advice to follow post surgery.

It is most important that you understand what is best for you to eat and to advise you how you need to change or adapt your dietary intake to help you to manage your stoma and maintain a healthy nutritional balance.

After the Operation

In the majority of cases people with a stoma can return to their usual eating and drinking habits very quickly after their operation. The introduction of solid food helps the gut to begin to work as normal and allows the stool to thicken and become less watery. It is important to eat as well as possible as soon as your surgeon allows, as this will help to establish a normal stoma output.

With your new Colostomy or Ileostomy you may have some questions around, what food you should or should not eat. Where possible, it is best to eat a low fibre diet and stick to bland foods at the beginning. You can start to reintroduce your normal diet routine slowly. If you think a particular food is causing problems, try avoiding it for a couple of weeks, and then try it again and see if you are still encountering problems with your diet. Which foods affect you depends very much on your current diet and your own digestive system. Experiment and enjoy.

Most people with a Urostomy can enjoy a completely normal diet. It is helpful to maintain an acidic urine pH, which helps to prevent infection. To assist this process cranberry juice or cranberry capsules and bio or live yoghurt are excellent. You should not take cranberry juice or capsules if you are taking warfarin. The Top Tip, however is to drink lots of water.

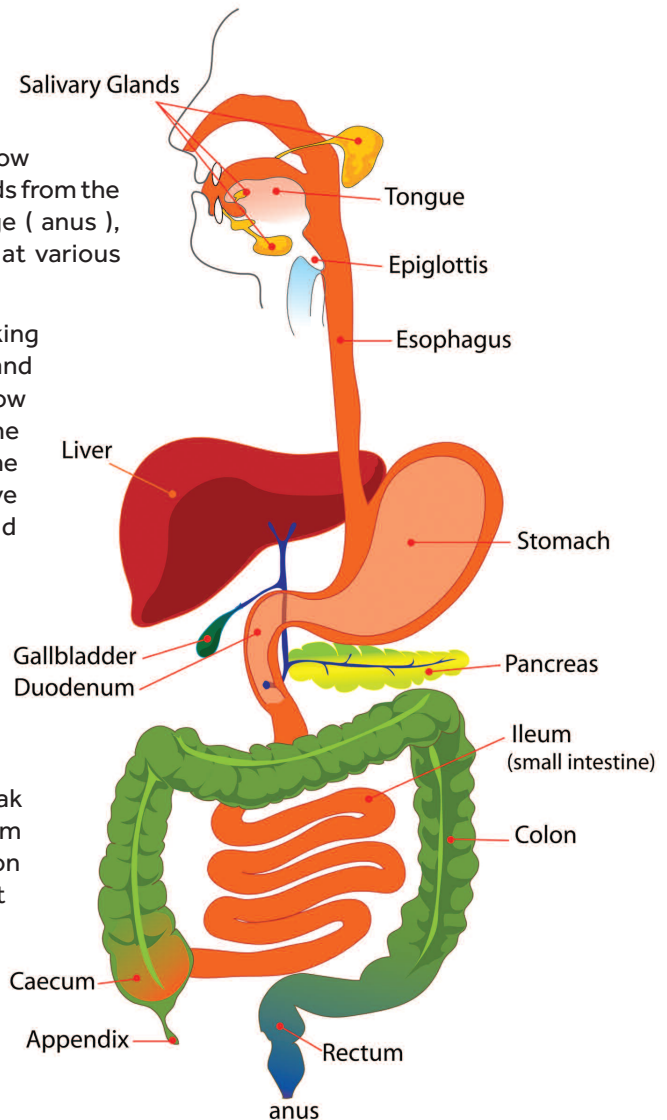
How Does the Digestion Process Work ?

The whole digestive tract is composed of mucous tissue, which is similar to the tissue inside your mouth. The digestive tract is basically a long hollow muscular tube which extends from the mouth to the back passage (anus), and has special functions at various points along its route.

Digestion begins by breaking up food in the mouth and propelling it down the narrow oesophagus (gullet) into the stomach. The stomach is the widest part of the digestive tract and stores, mixes and breaks food down in readiness for the next digestion process.

The broken down food then passes the pancreas, liver and gall bladder, which secrete enzymes to further break down the food, into the ileum (small bowel). The digestion and absorption of most substances takes place in the ileum (small bowel).

Once this is complete, the food is then moved on again into the wider colon (large bowel). When it reaches this part of the bowel, it is now mostly liquid waste. The colon then re-absorbs some of the salt and water as the waste passes round its route, leaving the semi-solid waste matter (faeces). The faeces then passes into the rectum (back passage) and the sphincter muscles contract to let it leave the body through the anus.



Diet after Surgery

In the majority of cases, people with stomas can return to their usual eating and drinking habits very quickly after their surgery. The introduction of solid food helps the gut to begin the work as normal and allows the stool to thicken and become less watery. It is important to eat as well as possible as soon as your surgeon allows, as this will help to establish a normal stoma output.

In most hospitals, the re-introduction of food after your surgery will be as follows :

Stage One : Clear fluids – black tea/coffee, jelly, clear soup, water cordial

Stage Two : Free fluids – any liquids including nutritional supplements and ice cream.

Stage Three : Light Diet – this is very subjective but would usually include soft, moist foods which are easy to digest and avoiding fried, spicy and high fibre foods.

Stage Four : Normal Diet No Restrictions.

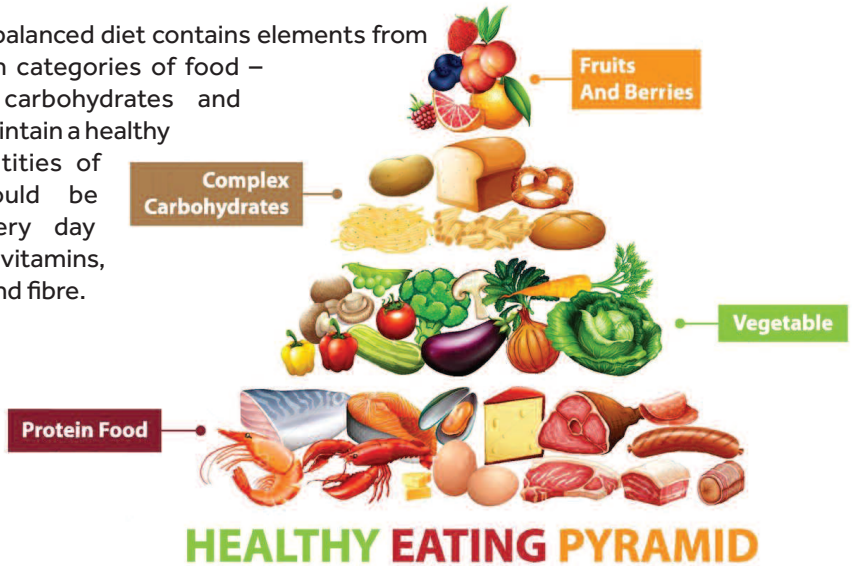
The time it takes to progress through these stages will depend on the hospital and your individual recovery.

You must remember that during the first 6 – 8 weeks following your surgery, your body is working hard to heal itself and this will require you to take in sufficient proteins to help with tissue repair, and calories to help with increased metabolism during the healing process.



What is a Healthy Balanced Diet ?

A healthy balanced diet contains elements from three main categories of food – proteins, carbohydrates and fats. To maintain a healthy diet, quantities of each should be eaten every day along with vitamins, minerals and fibre.



A healthy, balanced and nutritional diet should include the following :

- Fresh Fruit and Vegetables
- Protein (meat, fish, cheese, eggs and pulses)
- Carbohydrates
- Reduced alcohol intake
- Reduced saturated (animal) fats
- Low salt and sugar

An easy way to remember the ingredients for a healthy diet is to think of a traffic light system :

GREEN go for it!

AMBER proceed with Caution – not too many Foods from these groups.

RED Stop! Avoid a lot Of foods from this group; Eat only in moderation.



Why Do I Need Proteins ?

Proteins are necessary for the repair of body tissue (which happens continually), growth and regulating body processes. After Stoma Surgery therefore, proteins can help you on the road to recovery.



What Foods contain Proteins ?

Good sources of animal protein are :

- Milk and Dairy products
- Eggs
- Lean Meat
- Poultry
- Fish

Good sources of vegetable protein are :

- Peas
- Beans
- Lentils
- Grains
- Nuts
- Seeds
- Sprouted seeds
- Potatoes
- Meat alternatives – Quorn, Tofu



How much Protein should I eat ?

Try to include two portions from the lists above each day.

Why Do I Need Carbohydrates ?

Carbohydrates are needed for energy and should form approximately a third of the daily calorific intake.

Carbohydrates are reported to help thicken the stool and reduce frequency for Ostomates.

What foods contain Carbohydrates ?

- Bread
- Potatoes
- Pasta and Rice
- Cereal
- Cakes and Biscuits
- Sweets
- Surgery Drinks

Healthy Carbs

Vegetables



Fruits



Whole Grains



Seeds



Nuts



Beans



Why Do I Need Fats?

Fats provide insulation for your body and important organs, builds cells and facilitates metabolism.

There are two types of fat – saturated and unsaturated.

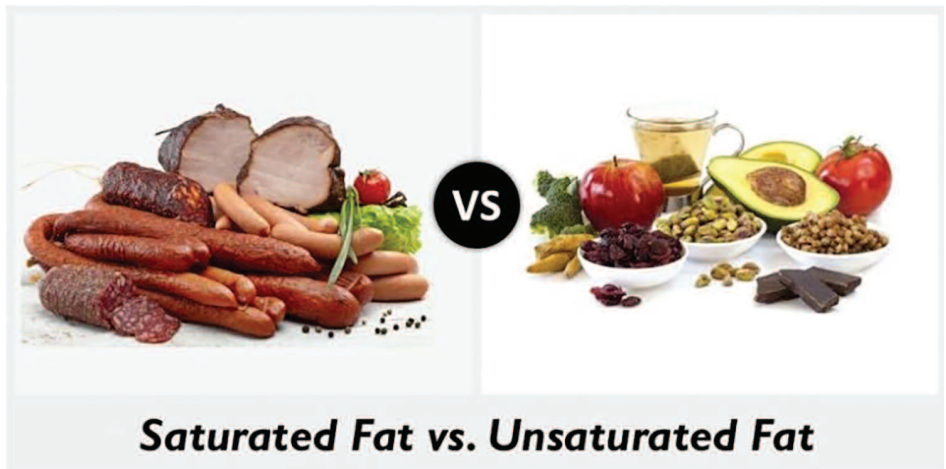
In a healthy diet the daily intake should be made up of approximately 30% Fat – 20% unsaturated fat and 10% saturated fat.

What is the difference between Saturated and Unsaturated Fat?

Saturated fats are mostly found in animal foods and eaten in excess can cause an increase in cholesterol levels (this may contribute to angina, heart attacks and strokes). Saturated fats are important for some bodily functions and form part of a healthy diet, providing you do not exceed the recommended intakes.

Unsaturated fats are mostly found in oily fish, vegetable oil and margarine and has been reported to reduce cholesterol levels.

By eating less saturated fats the proportion of unsaturated fats usually increases naturally.



Which Foods contain Unsaturated Fats ?

- Vegetable Oils
- Soft Margarines
- Oily Fish
- Nuts and Seeds

Which Foods contain Saturated Fats ?

- Meat
- Eggs
- Milk
- Hard Margarines
- Cooking Fats
- Cheese
- Yoghurt
- Butter
- Suet
- Lard

What is Fibre and why is it important ?

There are several kinds of Fibre in the diet, but it is in the fibre which cannot be digested that has most effect on the intestine. Fibre increases the action of the natural bacteria. This adds bulk and speeds the passage of food through the intestines. Fibre works as a natural laxative – so it should only be taken in moderation.



What Foods contain Fibre ?

- Wholemeal Breads and Pasta
- Wholewheat flour
- Wholegrain breakfast cereals eg. Allbran, Weetabix, Porridge, Muesli
- Brown Rice
- Fruits and Green Vegetables
- Jacket Potatoes
- Peas, beans and pulses



What Foods are low in Fibre ?

- White Bread.
- White Pasta.
- Dairy Products (Cheese, Milk, Eggs).
- Meat and Fish.

Why are Vitamins and Minerals important ?

There are 14 different types of vitamins which are essential for the normal growth and health of humans. There are two types of minerals – major minerals such as sodium, potassium and calcium and trace elements such as zinc, iron and copper. Minerals are continually used by the body and therefore need to be replaced regularly (eg Calcium for healthy bones and teeth, Sodium and Potassium for the nervous system).

Vitamins and minerals can be found in fruit and vegetables you should try to eat at least 5 small portions a day.



What Can / Cannot I Eat ?

With a Colostomy there is no need for dietary restriction. A healthy diet with plenty of water is recommended.

People with a Colostomy may be prone to constipation.

Management / Prevention of Constipation

- Drink plenty of fluids.
- Eat regular meals, slowly increasing the amount of fruit and vegetables.
- Ensure wholegrain foods such as bread and cereals are included.
- Exercise regularly.
- Check medications which may cause constipation.

With an Ileostomy you will need to avoid things like Nuts, Mushrooms, Sweetcorn and Coconut, as they might result in a blockage if not properly digested.

Food Blockages

Some food can swell in the bowel and may cause a blockage. This will cause your ileostomy to stop working. You should seek urgent advice from your GP or Stoma Nurse if you think you are experiencing a blockage.

How to know if you have a Blockage ?

- Your stoma will stop working or you will only produce very loose liquid output.
- You might get cramps in your stomach or you may be sick.

What to do if you think you have a Blockage ?

- Lie down, relax, stop eating but continue to drink.
- If it is food obstruction it could pass within a number of Hrs.
- If after 8-12 hours you have not had any normal bowel motion and are continuing to experience abdominal pain or sickness you should visit A&E at your nearest hospital.

With a Urostomy your diet will not be restricted but what you eat and drink can affect the smell and colour of your urine.

If your urine is dark, this is generally an indication that you are dehydrated, and you need to drink more fluids, drink 6-8 glasses of water or other fluids each day.

Foods such as Radishes, Fish, Beetroot, Spinach and Spices may cause your urine to have an unusual odour and colour, but it is not anything to worry about.

Medication

Some medication can also affect the colour and odour of urine. Odour can be reduced by eating / drinking Cranberry juice, Yoghurt, Buttermilk and Parsley / Mint.



Keeping Hydrated

Keeping hydrated is an important aspect of living for all Ostomates. For many people it is just making sure you are drinking plenty of fluids throughout the day. You should try to drink 6-8 glasses of water each day along with any other drinks such as tea or coffee.

Top Tips to keep hydrated if you have a Colostomy or Ileostomy would be :

- In warmer weather if you are perspiring more you will need to drink more water.
- Fizzy drinks can cause wind, so a good tip would be to open the bottle or can letting some of the fizz go out before drinking it.

If you have an Ileostomy you may experience diarrhoea, try to measure your output over 24 hours and within that time try and replace as much as you are losing. If diarrhoea continues for more than 24 hours or you are not able to drink enough to replace the amount of fluid you are losing, seek advice from your GP or Stoma Nurse.



Alcohol

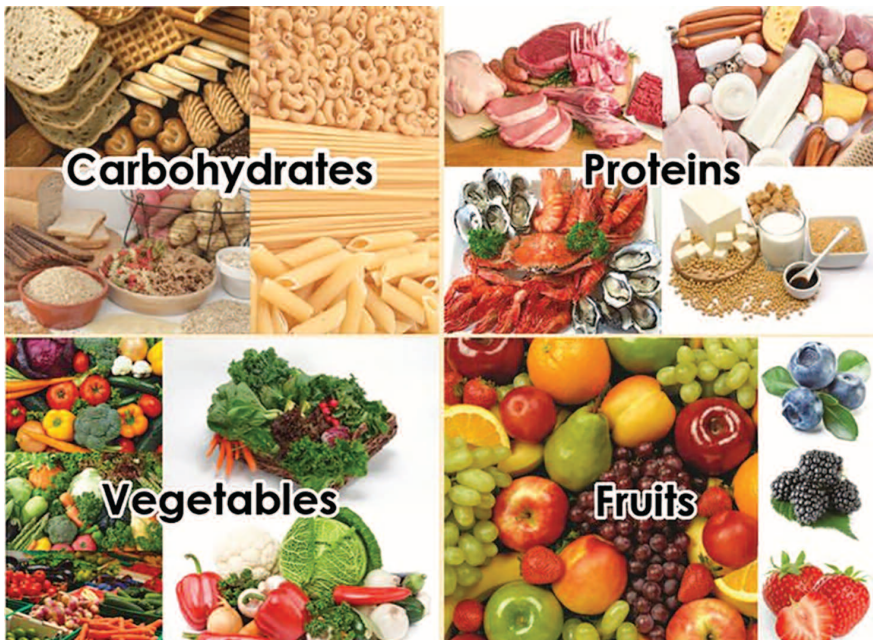
Even though you have a stoma, there is no reason why you cannot drink alcohol. Generally it is fine to drink alcohol in moderation – up to 28 units a week for men and 21 units a week for women. One unit is equal to a glass of wine, measure of spirits, or ½ glass of beer. Ideally you should spread your alcohol intake over a week with one or two free drink days.

However, things to note would be :

- Red wine can cause you to have slightly looser bowel motions.
- Some beers and lagers which are fizzy can cause you to have a lot more excess wind in your pouch.
- Drink in moderation and ensure you keep managing your stoma and pouch.
- If you are on other medication check it is compatible with alcohol.

What Should I Eat ?

Getting the balance right with your diet is as important for you as it is for the rest of the population. Following your surgery, and if you have been ill, it is even more important that you eat well to allow for a full recovery.



The Eat Well Plate shows the different food groups and the proportions in which you should try to include them in your diet. This 'plate' shows the overall proportions of your diet as opposed to each individual meal.

Carbohydrate Foods such as **bread, rice, potatoes and pasta** should make up a third of your diet. They provide energy and are also good for improving the consistency of a loose stool. Many patients will be advised to eat only white bread or pasta following surgery. This is not necessary for most people and you should be able to enjoy the bread you would usually have without a problem.

Fruit and Vegetables should make up another third of your diet.

Protein Foods such as **meat, fish, eggs and beans** are essential for healing and maintaining strength and immune function. These should make up a smaller portion of your diet and you should aim for two to three portions per day.

Milk and Dairy Foods are good sources of protein and calcium as well as other essential vitamins and minerals. You should include two portions of these per day. A portion of milk is 200ml.

The eatwell plate

Use the eatwell plate to help you get the balance right. It shows how much of what you eat should come from each food group.



If you are struggling to regain lost weight after an operation you may find that it helps to include more milk and add more cheese to your meals until your appetite is back to normal.

Fats and Sugary Foods do make up a part of everyone's diet and some fat is essential for cell function. Unless you are underweight, these foods should make up the smallest proportion of your diet. They include spread / butter on bread or toast and oil used in cooking.

Are there any foods Ostomates should avoid ?

We are all different. Some Ostomates can eat anything, while others have found by experience it is best to avoid certain foods.

Wind

Some foods we eat can cause you to have a problem with wind. Wind or gas in the bowel is quite normal and is as a result of the digestive process. Some people have more gas or wind than others, and some foods are renowned for producing wind. For example, Brussel Sprouts, Cabbage, Eggs etc. There is no reason why the amount of gas you produce after surgery should be any different. The main difference of course is that the wind will now come into the pouch and you may find that this is more noticeable and you become conscious of it. There are some changes you may want to make in your diet to see if it helps reduce the amount of wind.

- Do not drink fizzy drinks.
- Do not talk while eating.
- Sit down when eating.
- Drink slowly so that you do not take in gulps of air with your fluids.
- Eat meals slowly, and chew food well with your mouth closed.

Some foods which may cause an increase in wind :

Beans, peas, onions, leeks, unripe banana and potato which is cooked and then cooled (e.g. in potato salad and Shepherd's pie) contain a type of sugar and starch that can escape digestion and enter the colon where they are fermented to produce gas. It may also help to avoid foods which are high in fibre or contain unmilled grains and seeds.

Beer and Fizzy drinks may also increase the amount of wind.

Artificial sweeteners taken in tea or coffee, on cereal or as sweets or mints can cause problems with wind. If you are diabetic and rely on sweeteners but suffer with wind ask to be referred to a dietician for advice.

Loose motions

Very spicy foods and large amounts of beer or larger can irritate the lining of the digestive system and cause frequent loose motions.

However, their effects can be reduced by eating spicy dishes in small quantities with plenty of rice, pasta or potatoes and never drinking on an empty stomach.

Pure fruit juices and some fruit and vegetables may cause diarrhoea in some people.

Constipation

Eating more fibre-containing foods help to prevent constipation.

Try to increase the amount of fibre by choosing :

- Wholemeal (rather than white) bread or pasta

- Whole grain cereals e.g. Weetabix, porridge

- More fruit and vegetables

It is best to make these changes gradually to avoid problems with wind.

Fibre acts by absorbing water to make the stools softer, so it is very important to drink plenty of fluids : at least six to eight cups a day.

Do not forget that medications can also cause gastrointestinal problems. If you think this may be the case discuss an alternative with your GP.



The consistency of your stoma output does not only depend on the type of food you eat. Water is absorbed from undigested food as it passes along the colon. If a large section of the colon has been removed, then your stoma is likely to work more often and the output is usually fairly liquid or of a toothpaste consistency. If most of the colon is still intact then motions will be more formed and less frequent.

Odour

Stools / waste will always have an odour. The fact that you have to change a pouch which is now directly below your nose, will increase your awareness of any odour compared to before your surgery. If the pouch is correctly adhered to your abdomen, there should be no odour. An increase in odour should only occur if / when :

You are changing the pouch

Or the pouch is leaking

You can use any room deodorant / air freshner in your bathroom if you are conscious of the odour when changing your pouch. Pouch deodorants are available from many of the Ostomy companies which can be added directly into the pouch should you find that odour becomes a barrier to going out. Some of the Ostomy companies also produce a liquid that you can squeeze a few drops in to the toilet bowl before release the discharge when emptying your drainable pouch and will dispel any unpleasant odour.

Some foods can increase the strength of odour, so you may want to avoid these :

Strong fish

Garlic

Eggs

Some foods can help reduce both odour and wind :

Parsley

Mint / Peppermint Tea

Probiotic yoghurt



Ostomates who have a Urostomy make experience problems with urine odour as a result of having a urinary infection as well as being caused by foods such as fish and asparagus.

Do Not assume that food is to blame for the way your stoma behaves.

There may be some other reason :

- Eating in a hurry
- Meals at irregular times
- Going for long periods without food

Loose motions or diarrhoea may be the result of :

- A stomach Bug.
- Stress or an emotional upset.
- Antibiotics.

Constipation may be due to :

- Not drinking enough fluid.
- Not getting enough exercise.
- Some medicines e.g. certain painkillers or antidepressants
(check with your doctor or pharmacist)





**For information on where and when meetings will be held.
Please contact the following Group Co-ordinators.**

CARLOW / KILKENNY : Co-ordinator Jamie Alcock 087 698 3719

CASTLEBAR : Co-ordinator J.J. McLoughlin 087 2300580

CORK : Co-ordinator Rose Flynn 087 2953404

DROGHEDA : Co-ordinators Anthony Connolly 089 4418799 and Paul Hughes 085 7182405

DUBLIN : Co-ordinator Melissa Lyons 086 8099918

GOREY : Co-ordinator Frank Norris 087 6204533

LETTERKENNY : Co-ordinator Rita Marron 074 9188887

LIMERICK : Co-ordinator Miriam Canty 087 6741930

NEWBRIDGE : Co-ordinator Veronica Lynch 087 7940850

SLIGO : Co-ordinator Mary McLoughlin 086 3608798

TULLAMORE : Co-ordinators Ann Dold 086 3074846 and Mark Sheehy 087 3843412

WATERFORD : Co-ordinator Keith Drayton 087 0666668

**Ostomy Association of Ireland,
6 Marian Place, Tullamore, Co. Offaly R35 KD78 - Republic of Ireland
Email: info@ostomyireland.ie | Web: www.ostomyireland.ie
Mobile: 087 700 5966 | Landline: 057 9360 447**