





*This booklet has been produced
in collaboration with*



Nutrition & Dietary Advice

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


This Booklet Nutrition and Dietary Advice for people with a Colostomy, Ileostomy, Urostomy or Internal Pouch has been written by the Ostomy Association of Ireland in collaboration with  **Coloplast** who are one of the world leaders in Ostomy Care and the production of Ostomy Products worldwide.

 **Coloplast** are proud to be Social Corporate Partnership Sponsors of the OAI and are delighted to have been involved in the production of this booklet. Coloplast engaged the professional advice of Marie Sheahan, HSE Senior Dietitian in gastrointestinal surgery and critical care at Cork University Hospital who has provided valuable advice and guidance for Ostomates in this booklet on how to have a balanced and healthy diet.

For many Ostomates diet is a struggle especially in those early days after surgery adjusting to changes needed in their diet after bowel or bladder surgery. After surgery, food is slowly reintroduced, but some ostomates may not get to see a dietitian.

Marie, in collaboration with OAI and Coloplast have prepared this booklet for ostomates who have a colostomy, ileostomy, urostomy or internal pouch.


If you have already received personalised advice from your team, please continue to follow this.


 **Coloplast** share with the OAI their primary objective to develop a **Partnership of Service** which involves Ostomy Companies and Medical Professionals working together to empower Ostomates to enjoy an improved **Quality of Life** and to be able to **Live Life to the Full** with a Stoma or Internal Pouch. Having a Diet which suits your Stoma is so important for Ostomates to be able to enjoy life and to be able to participate in many sporting and recreational activities.


 **Coloplast Mission and Values Statement** is about :


Making life easier for people with intimate healthcare needs.


 **Coloplast** seeks to have a close relationship with Ostomates which makes this possible.


 **Coloplast** seeks to listen to better understand needs and respond by finding new ways to do things better together.

 **Coloplast** lead the way by bringing the best ideas first and fast to market in the form of medical devices and service solutions.

 **Coloplast** talk to thousands of ostomates and healthcare professionals worldwide each day and are committed to providing the best possible solutions.

 **Coloplast** Ireland Team is led by Alice Murphy who is supported by a team of 10 Nurses who provide Ostomy Care in the 32 counties of Ireland and an Administration/Sales Team of 6 people, who together endeavour to provide a quality service which meets the needs of Ostomates in Ireland.

 **Coloplast** in being Proud Sponsors of this booklet wish all Ostomates a healthy Lifestyle supported by a diet which is suitable for them.

The Ostomy Association of Ireland wish to acknowledge the collaborative support we received from  **Coloplast** in producing this booklet and thank them for sponsoring this publication and hope we have more opportunities in the future to collaborate again together.

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.

How Does the Digestion Process Work ?

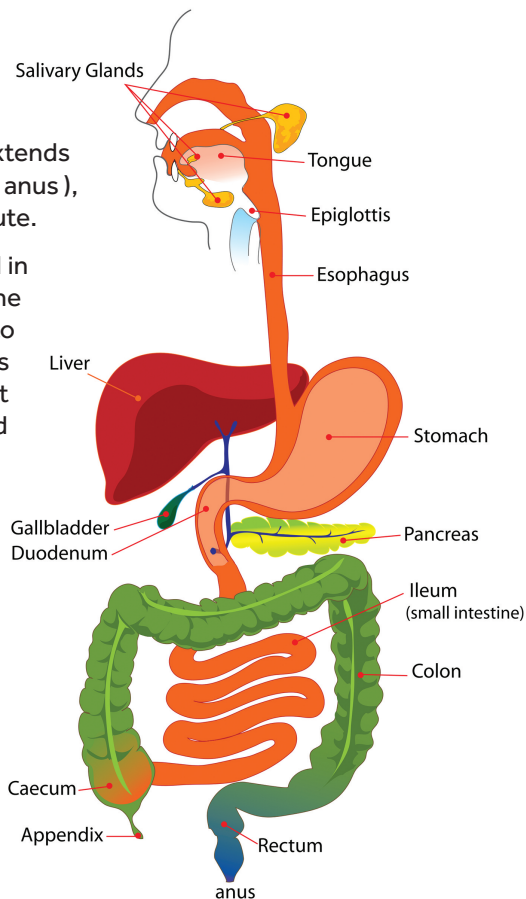
The whole digestive tract is composed of mucous tissue, which is similar to the tissue inside your mouth. The digestive tract is a long hollow muscular tube which extends from the mouth to the back passage (anus), and has special functions along its route.

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, getting it ready for the next part of the 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 then moves on again into the wider colon (large bowel). When it reaches this part of the bowel, it is now mostly liquid waste. The colon 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.


Depending on the location of your stoma, your stoma output will range from liquid to semi solid or paste consistency.



After the Operation

With your new Colostomy or Ileostomy you may have some questions around, what food you should or should not eat.

Most people will need to follow a low fibre diet for four to six weeks after bowel surgery. After this, you can slowly start to reintroduce some fibre containing foods. If you are unsure if it is safe for you to try fibre containing foods, contact your dietitian /stoma nurse / doctor.

Where possible, your food choices should be in line with the national healthy food for life guidelines and the eatwell plate guide. 

After formation of a pouch, you may experience loose frequent stools. Sometimes it can take several weeks for the bowels to settle. Once the pouch has adapted, you can follow a healthy balanced diet by choosing a variety of foods from each food group.

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 most important thing however, is to drink lots of water.

Key Messages for long term health:

- Gradually reintroduce a healthy balanced diet
- Eat regularly, avoiding long periods without eating
- Eat slowly and chew your food well
- Stay hydrated, aiming for 8-10 glasses /cups per day.

Diet after Surgery

Your surgeon will inform you when it is safe to start drinking fluids and eating after your operation.

Once you are allowed eat, it is important to try to have a regular meal pattern. This will help to establish a regular stoma output.

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

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

Stage Two : Free fluids – any liquids including milk, nutritional supplements, soup, broth, ice cream and jelly;

Stage Three : Light Diet – A light diet is usually low in fibre, fat and food known to cause wind. It usually contains foods that are easily digested.

Stage Four: Low fibre diet.

The time it takes to progress through these stages will depend on the hospital and your individual recovery. The introduction of solid food after surgery can help the stoma output to thicken.

In the majority of cases, people with stomas can gradually return a balanced diet four to six weeks after their surgery.

After surgery, your body has to work hard to heal and recover, the foods you eat and drink are important to help you to recover.

Sometimes after surgery, it can take a while for your appetite to return to normal. If you feel you are eating less than normal or you notice you are losing weight, ask your surgical team or GP to refer you to a dietitian. If you have lost weight or have had a poor appetite, you may be advised to take a high protein high calorie diet.



This image demonstrates food choices which are high in fibre

What is Fibre and why is it important for your long term health ?

There are different types of fibre, fibre is important for health. Fibre can be divided into two main groups known as soluble and insoluble fibre.

Soluble fibre is found in foods such as beans, lentils, carrots, parsnips, potatoes, blueberries, bananas strawberries and apples. Grains such as oats barley rye are also good sources of soluble fibre. Soluble fibre dissolves in water and forms a gel in the gut and this helps to keep stools soft.

Insoluble fibre is found in high fibre breakfast cereals, wholemeal breads, grains, potato skins, wholemeal pasta, rice, vegetables and fruits with skins, pips, nuts and seeds.

Insoluble fibre is great for making you feel fuller for longer and helps to form bulkier stools.

What Foods are high and low in Fibre ?

Food Group and Foods	High Fibre	Low Fibre
Vegetable, Salads and fruit group	<p>Corn, Pips, tough skins on vegetables. Vegetables with tough stalks such as: celery, brussels sprouts, leeks, mushrooms, onions, beansprouts</p> <p>Stringy vegetables such as runner beans, salad vegetables, kale, peas, beans, lentils</p> <p>Dried fruit, smoothies, rhubarb, pineapple, prune juice</p>	<p>Peeled and deseeded vegetables, remove tough skins.</p> <p>Cook vegetables until soft and easy to mash or puree: carrots, turnips, parsnip, squash peeled cucumber</p> <p>Well cooked cauliflower or broccoli (no stalks)</p> <p>Small portion stewed apple, melon, tinned pear/pineapple/fruit cocktail</p>
Bread/Potatoes/Pasta/ Rice/Cereals	<p>Potatoes skins, granary, seeded, wholemeal or wholegrain breads/pasta /rice. Muesli, cereal bars, high fibre breakfast cereals, quinoa</p>	<p>White bread, crackers, rolls. Potatoes without skins (peeled and boiled), white rice, white pasta, porridge, low fibre breakfast cereals, cornflakes™, krispies, rice noodles, rice cakes</p>
Dairy Products	Yoghurts containing nuts or seeds	Milk, cheese, yoghurts
Meat/fish/chicken/nuts/ seeds	All nuts and seeds	Meat, fish, chicken, eggs, quorn, tofu, maximum 2 tablespoons hummus
Snacks	popcorn	White breadsticks, tuc biscuits™, smooth dips

When your team are happy for you to reintroduce fibre foods, start with small quantities and chew your foods well.

Slowly reintroduce one fibre containing foods every 2 – 3 days.

If you feel unwell or notice your stoma output has increased, do not introduce a new food for a few days.

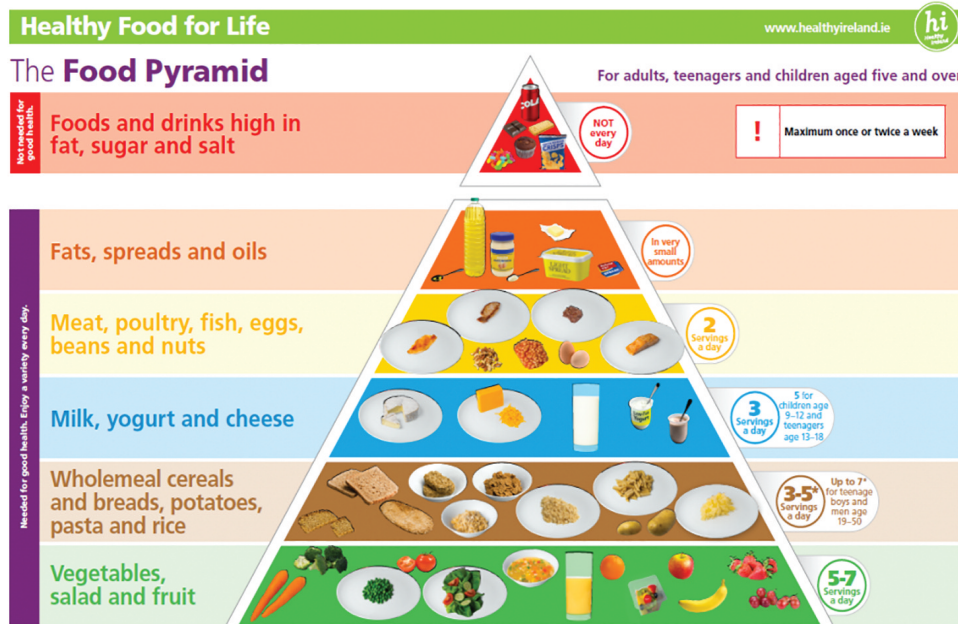
If you need to follow a special diet for any other medical condition, you should contact your dietitian after your surgery. They will be able to review your diet and advise you on what foods are suitable.

What is a Healthy Balanced Diet ?

Once you have recovered from your operation, you should gradually return to eating a healthy diet.

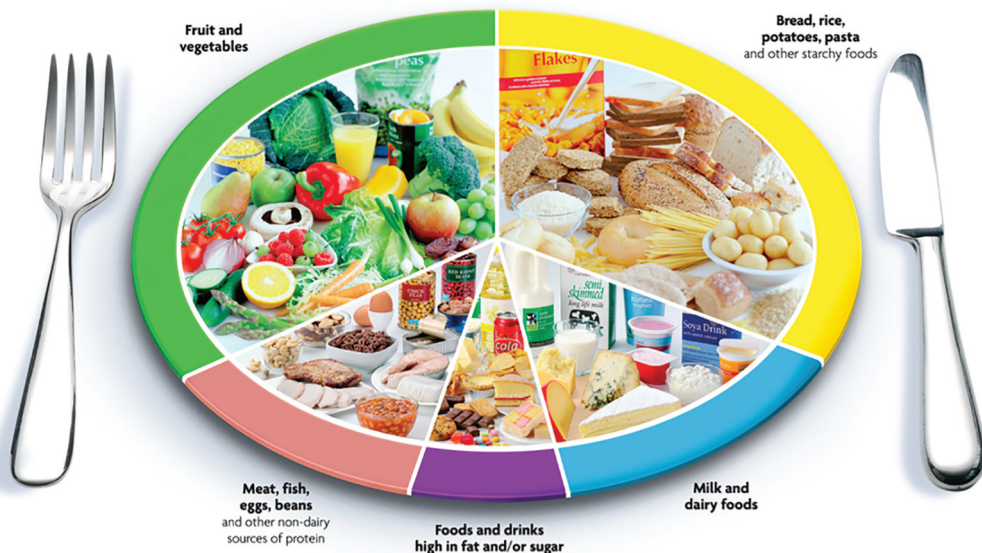
Eating a healthy balanced diet means eating the right amount of foods from each food group. Your local healthy eating guidelines will be based on the food pyramid or the eat well plate model.

Both demonstrate the different food groups and what we need to eat to have a healthy diet.



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.



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.

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

- **Vegetables, salad and fruit** – These provide vitamins, minerals and fibre. Once your stoma output/bowel pattern has settled into a regular pattern, you should aim to eat five to seven servings per day.
- **Carbohydrate (Starchy) foods** – These provide energy, vitamins and fibre. Starchy white carbohydrates (white bread or pasta, potatoes) are lower in fibre and can often help to thicken your stoma output. Once your team are happy with your recovery, they will let you know when you can start to introduce some high fibre foods. You can gradually introduce high fibre varieties as tolerated . Over time you will be able to have wholemeal cereals and breads, potatoes, pasta or rice with each meal.

- **Dairy - Dairy foods** (milk, yoghurt and cheese) are good sources of calcium and protein. Choosing reduced-fat or low-fat will help maintain a healthy weight.
- **Meat and alternatives** – These foods are your main source of protein in your diet. They also provide vitamins and minerals which are body needs. Foods in this group include : meat, poultry, fish, eggs, beans and nuts. Choose lean options and have fish at least twice a week – one being oily. It is important to have some meat free days every week.
- **Fats, spreads and oils** – We all need to include some fat in our diet every day. Have small amounts and choose unsaturated or reduced-fat options. If you have lost a lot of weight, your dietitian may have advised you on suitable high fat foods to eat. This is to help you regain weight.
- **High fat, sugar and high salt foods** – If your stoma output is not high and you do not need to gain weight, food and drinks that are high in fat salt or sugar should not be taken every day.
- If you have a high output stoma, you may have been advised to include salty foods in your diet, your team will work closely with you and will advise you if you need to make any other changes to your diet.



Why Do I Need Proteins ?

Proteins are needed to help our bodies repair and grow. After surgery, it is important to make sure you are having enough protein every day.

If you previously have been advised to limit your protein intake due to an underlying condition, please contact your dietitian. After surgery, you should aim to have at least 2 portions of protein foods over the course of the day.

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 :

- Beans
- Lentils
- Chickpeas
- Tofu
- Quorn
- Soy
- Nuts



Some of these foods are high in fibre, so will need to be avoided for the first few weeks following surgery. Vegetarian protein sources can be high in fibre. If you are a vegetarian or vegan, please ensure you see a dietitian who will advise you on how to eat enough protein to help you recover from surgery.



Why Do I Need Carbohydrates ?

Carbohydrates are needed for energy.

What foods containing Carbohydrates should we include daily?

- Bread
- Potatoes
- Pasta and Rice
- Cereal



Healthy Carbs

Vegetables



Fruits



Whole Grains



Why are Vitamins and Minerals important ?

Vitamins and minerals are essential nutrients that our body needs in small amounts to work properly. Most people can get the amounts needed by eating a healthy balanced diet.



You may need to take a multivitamin while following a low fibre diet. Talk to your dietitian and they will assess your diet and inform you if a multivitamin is needed.

When you return to a healthy balanced diet, multivitamins are usually not needed. Some people will need to have their Vitamin B12 level measured throughout the year. You can discuss this with your GP.

Alcohol

Once your stoma output is well controlled, you do not have to avoid alcohol.

The recommended weekly low-risk alcohol guidelines from the HSE are less than:

- 11 standard drinks for women
- 17 standard drinks for men

Drinks should be spread out over the week. It is recommended that people should have 2-3 alcohol free days per week and should not drink more than 6 standard drinks on any one occasion.

In Ireland a standard drink has about 10 grams of pure alcohol. In the UK a standard drink, also called a unit of alcohol, has about 8 grams of pure alcohol.

Some examples of a standard drink in Ireland are:

- a pub measure of spirits (35.5ml)
- a small glass of wine (12.5% volume)
- a half pint of normal beer
- an alcopop (275ml bottle)

A bottle of 12.5% alcohol wine has about seven standard drinks.

If you have had bowel surgery, it is important that you remember the following:

- 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
- If you have a high output stoma, alcohol may increase the output further, causing dehydration.



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 than normal, 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 and occasionally with a colostomy, you may experience diarrhoea.

If you are emptying your bag more often and the content is more watery than normal you should try to measure your output over 24 hours. If the volume is greater than 1500ml, you may need to take different fluids to prevent getting dehydrated. If you are experiencing a high output, contact your stoma nurse/dietitian or GP.

Troubleshooting

Management / Prevention of Constipation

- Drink plenty of fluids.
- Eat regular meals, slowly increasing your fruit and vegetable intake 4-6 weeks after your surgery.
- Ensure wholemeal foods such as bread and cereals are included
- Exercise regularly.
- Talk to your GP /pharmacist to see if you are on any medications which may cause constipation.



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 hours
- 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.

What Foods have been associated with blockage:

Foods such as sweetcorn, nuts, onions, mushrooms can block your stoma if not chewed thoroughly. It is important to chew these foods really well and not rush your meals. Occasionally, some ostomates will be advised to avoid these foods.

Medication

It is important to let your GP know if you notice any of your medications whole in your stoma bag.


If you have a urostomy, you will notice that some medications can also affect the colour and odour of urine. Odour can be reduced by eating / drinking Cranberry juice, Yoghurt, Buttermilk and Parsley / Mint.

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 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. Foods that can cause wind for some include : brussels sprouts, cabbage and eggs 

There is no reason why the amount of gas you produce after surgery should be any different. Your stoma nurse will have shown you how to let the air out of your stoma bag.

The main difference of course is that the wind will now come into the pouch or bag 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.

It may also help to avoid foods which are high in fibre or contain unmilled grains and seeds.

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 dietitian for advice.

If there are certain foods that would have given you wind before your surgery. They most likely will continue to do so.

Loose motions /Diarrhoea

Diarrhoea can occur for a variety of reasons, a stomach bug, stress, antibiotics or other medications.

Some foods and drinks may also cause diarrhoea if taken in large quantities:

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

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

If diarrhoea continues for more than 48 hours or you are not able to drink enough to replace the amount of fluid you are losing, seek advice from your stoma nurse, dietitian or 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, 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, 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 when :

- You are changing the pouch
- Or the pouch is leaking

You can use any room deodorant / air freshener 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 odour from your stoma: strong fish, garlic or eggs. Some foods can help reduce both odour and wind: probiotic yoghurt, parsley, mint or peppermint tea.



Diet and your Urostomy

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. If you are concerned about the colour of your urine, you can discuss this with your practice nurse or GP.

Odour can be reduced by eating or drinking cranberry juice, yoghurt, buttermilk and parsley or mint.

Ostomates who have a Urostomy may 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. If you feel unwell or think that you may have a urinary tract infection, contact your GP.



Eating After Pouch Formation

Long term, it is safe to follow a balanced diet as shown in the food pyramid or the eat well plate model after pouch formation.

Similar to those who have a stoma, a regular meal pattern will help improve pouch function. It is also important to take an adequate fluid and salt intake to prevent dehydration.

Occasionally, people may find certain foods do not agree with them and may experience symptoms such as bloating, loose stools, wind or anal irritation.

Foods that have been linked with these symptoms include mushrooms, chocolate, spicy foods, nuts, seeds, coffee, fizzy drinks and alcohol.

Remember, everyone will tolerate foods differently. If you feel a food is upsetting you, your tolerance may change over time so do not be afraid to try that food again at a later date.



DISCLAIMER

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