

# Dietary advice after you have an ileostomy

Nutrition and Dietetics

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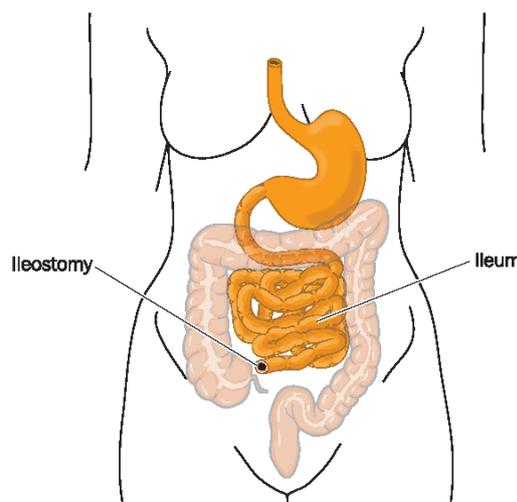
Information for Patients

Leaflet number: 1602 Version: 2

## What is an ileostomy?

An ileostomy is formed from a part of the small bowel called the ileum. The operation brings out the ileum onto the surface of the tummy (abdomen) to form a stoma (an opening). A stoma bag is then connected to the end of your small bowel. Ileostomies might be permanent or temporary. You may need it if your large bowel is not safe to use because of disease or injury. Here are some of the reasons for having an ileostomy:

- Cancer of the bowel
- Trauma (like injury from car accident)
- Ulcerative Colitis
- Crohns Disease
- Severe Diverticular Disease



Your body will continue to digest and take in nutrients normally in the small intestine (bowel). You will no longer use your large bowel which normally absorbs water and salts. The poo coming through your stoma will be quite watery in the beginning. Your ileostomy will usually start to function within 24 hours after your operation.

Your body will get use to it over time. Your body will begin to absorb the water and salts your body needs. It takes usually 6 to 8 weeks. You will need to make some dietary changes for a short time. This leaflet will tell you how to make changes to your diet. As your dietary intake increases and your body adapts, your stoma output will thicken, often described as similar to a 'porridge' consistency. The volume should reduce to around 400 to 800ml per day. This is the same as emptying your bag about 4 to 5 times a day.

**Health information and support is available at [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)  
or call 111 for non-emergency medical advice**

Visit [www.leicestershospitals.nhs.uk](http://www.leicestershospitals.nhs.uk) for maps and information about visiting Leicester's Hospitals  
To give feedback about this information sheet, contact [InformationForPatients@uhl-tr.nhs.uk](mailto:InformationForPatients@uhl-tr.nhs.uk)

## After surgery

For the first 6 to 8 weeks your bowel will be quite swollen and sensitive. This can affect your bowels ability to digest high fiber foods. We advise that you follow a low fiber diet to help avoid a blockage. It will also let your bowel time to adapt and heal.

In hospital we will give you a different menu: 'Option 2: Adult Low Fiber'. This will help you choose suitable low fiber options. On the right is an example of a menu we will give you.

Sometimes after major surgery, it can take some time for your appetite to return. If you struggle with eating or drinking enough, try the following tips:

- Eat small and frequent meals. Have snacks that are available on the menu between your meals.
- Try and choose high energy and high protein options. These options are shown on the menu with these icons:  
 For high protein.  For high energy.
- Take your time eating and chew well to help digestion.
- Try not to drink too much before or during meals. This is so you do not fill yourself up before a meal.

The ward staff can also make up nutritional milkshakes for you throughout the day. This is to help optimise your nutrition. They can also refer you to the ward Dietitian if needed.



**Option 2: Adult Low Fibre Menu** Estates and Facilities  
 May not be nutritionally adequate for all patients. This menu should only be used in patients with the following: High Output Stoma's/ Active Inflammatory Bowel Disease/ Newly Formed Ileostomy.

**Breakfast**

- Rice Krispies / Ciccoppo's / Cornflakes
- Whole-Milk / Semi-Skimmed Milk
- White Bread (vegan)
- Butter / Sunflower Spread (vegan)
- Jam (vegan) / Marmalade (vegan)
- Philadelphia Cheese Spread / Marmite (vegan)
- Light Yoghurt / Thick and Creamy Yoghurt

**Starter**

- Orange Juice / Apple Juice (vegan)
- Cream of Tomato Soup- Heinz
- Cream of Mushroom Soup- Heinz
- Cream of Chicken Soup- Heinz
- Crusty White Roll / Sliced White Bag with Sunflower Spread (vegan) / Butter

**Main Meal**

- Fish In Parsley Sauce with Mashed Potato and Root Vegetable Mash
- Tuna Pasta Bake / Creamy Chicken and Mushroom Pasta
- Beef Pasta Bolognese / Cottage Pie with Root Vegetable Mash
- Omelette Florentine / Cheese & Tomato Pasta

**Energy Dense Meals**

- Macaroni Cheese / Beef Stroganoff
- Corned Beef Hash

Low Fibre Menu 2 - V2 23.09.24 FINAL

## Eating fiber again

When we have advised you to begin eating fiber again, you should begin to slowly add this to your diet. This should be after your low fiber diet for 6 to 8 weeks.

You should do this in small, well chewed portions over the next few weeks. Try 1 'new' food at a time and see you tolerate it. If tolerated well, you can try and increase the portion size and continue with adding other foods. If not tolerated, leave and try other foods. You can always try it again in the future.

To help you, please read 'Advice to modify the fiber content of your diet' leaflet for a more detailed breakdown of what foods have low, moderate, and high fiber. This is available on YourHealth at [yourhealth.leicestershospitals.nhs.uk/](http://yourhealth.leicestershospitals.nhs.uk/)

You will become used to what is normal for you. You will feel more confident in adding new foods back to your diet. We use a trial and error approach to see if any food will cause unwanted side effects with your poo. You should try not to restrict your diet too much. Many people find they can enjoy a full and varied diet with their ileostomy.

## Foods you should not eat:

You should avoid eating these foods during the first 6 to 8 weeks:

|  |                    |                   |
|--|--------------------|-------------------|
| • Dried fruit*   | • Coconut*         | • Nuts and seeds* |
| • Raw vegetables   | • Salad vegetables | • Peas            |
| • Mushrooms*   | • Sweetcorn*       | • Popcorn         |
| • Skins, pips, piths and seeds on your fruits and vegetables |                    |                   |

\*May cause blockages if you eat a lot of these

## Blockage and obstruction

Sometimes a stoma can block from undigested food, especially if your stoma is tight.

If your stoma blocks, you must **stop** eating. Drink plenty of clear fluids. This will help the blockage to pass. If the symptoms continue for more than 12 hours, call your GP or stoma nurse.

You should chew your food well to reduce risk of blockages. Make sure fiber foods are introduced 1 at a time. You should slowly increase the amount.

## Signs of blockage

|                 |                     |            |                  |
|-----------------|---------------------|------------|------------------|
| • Lack of stool | • Nausea & vomiting | • Bloating | • Abdominal pain |
|-----------------|---------------------|------------|------------------|

## Fluids and salt

The main job of your large bowel is to soak up water and salts. Your large bowel is no longer in use so you must drink plenty of fluids to avoid dehydration. You should aim to drink 6 to 8 cups of fluid, including water, each day. You may need more during hot weather or when exercising.

You will need to make sure you have some salt in your diet. This can come from adding salty/processed foods in your diet. You can sprinkle some salt on your meals or have a salty snack daily such as a packet of salted crisps. You can have meat extract drinks like Oxo cubes or Bovril.

## Signs of dehydration

|                  |            |                   |                     |
|------------------|------------|-------------------|---------------------|
| • Not enough pee | • Dark pee | • Feeling thirsty | • Dry mouth or skin |
|------------------|------------|-------------------|---------------------|

## High stoma output

If your ileostomy output is often over 1 litre a day we may need to look at what could be causing this. It could be your food intake or medications. If your ileostomy output is more than 2 litres a day this can lead to severe dehydration and electrolyte disturbance. If the output is still high, you may need to drink less and have a drink called St Marks or WHO solution. This will help to rehydrate you. You may also need to take anti-diarrhoeal medications.

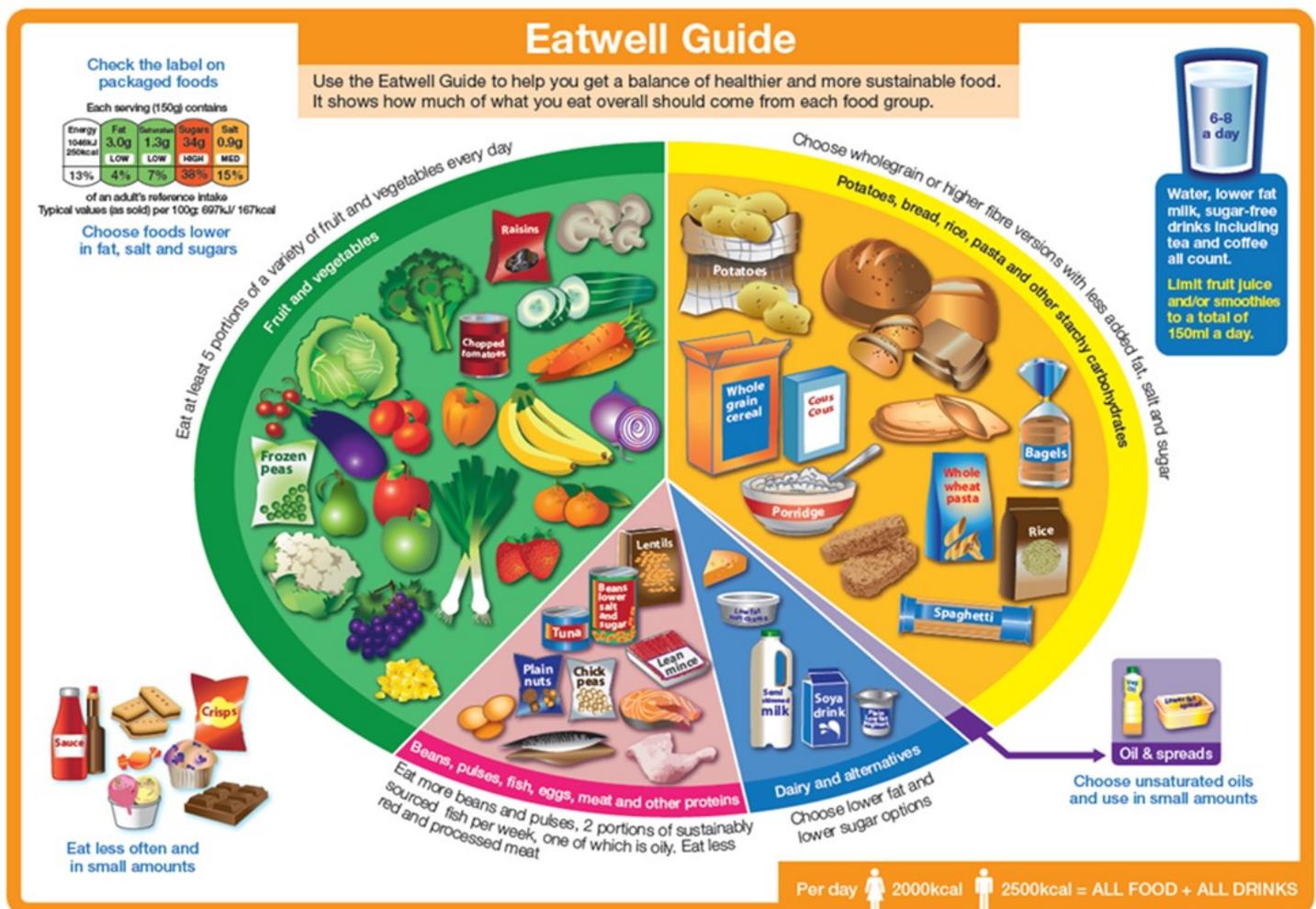
Please speak with your GP, consultant or dietitian if your stoma output is consistently high.

## Long term

Once your ileostomy has settled down and your appetite has returned, it is important that you:

- Eat a balanced diet.
- Eat regular meals throughout the day.
- Take your time and chew your foods well.
- Only continue to avoid foods that cause symptoms.

A balanced diet includes foods from all of the 5 food groups as shown below. This will make sure your body gets all of the nutrients it needs.



## What about alcohol?

Alcohol in moderation is fine. It is important to know that it may mean emptying your stoma bag more often and may cause more wind.

## What about spicy food?

Spicy foods are fine to eat. But it can cause looser poo or mild diarrhoea. Unless severe, there is no cause for concern. You might just have to empty your bag a bit more often.

## How do I take care of problems with my stoma bag?

You may notice that some foods can cause your ileostomy output to be looser, increase the wind in your bag or have an unpleasant smell. Below are some foods that may cause this and how you can help to reduce these symptoms:

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>Foods that may cause smell</b>          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brassica vegetables like cauliflower, broccoli, cabbage</li> <li>• Asparagus, turnips, garlic, onions</li> <li>• Beans, peas and pulses</li> <li>• Eggs, fish</li> <li>• Alcohol or fizzy drinks</li> </ul> <p>To help reduce odour, try chewing fresh parsley or having 'live' yoghurt in your diet. These can act as natural deodorisers. Peppermint oil capsules inside the bag can also be useful.</p>   |
| <b>Foods that may cause wind</b>           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brassica vegetables like cauliflower, broccoli, cabbage</li> <li>• Garlic and onions</li> <li>• Beans, peas and pulses</li> <li>• Fizzy drinks</li> <li>• Chewing gum</li> </ul> <p>To help reduce wind you should eat slowly, and chew your food well. Avoid talking whilst eating, smoking, or try drinking with a straw to minimise swallowed air which can cause wind. Some people have found eating yoghurt can help. You may also try chewing charcoal tablets or drinking peppermint tea.</p> |
| <b>Foods that may cause loose poo</b>      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High fiber foods such as wholemeal/wholegrains, or raw fruits and vegetables</li> <li>• High fat foods/ spicy foods</li> <li>• Alcohol / caffeinated drinks / fruit juice</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Foods that can thicken stoma output</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ripe banana, apple sauce</li> <li>• Boiled rice or pasta</li> <li>• Marshmallows or jelly babies</li> <li>• Smooth peanut butter</li> </ul>  |

**Dietitians Office: 0116 258 5400**

**Dietitian name:** \_\_\_\_\_

اگر آپ کو یہ معلومات کسی اور زبان میں درکار ہیں، تو براہ کرم مندرجہ ذیل نمبر پر ٹیلی فون کریں۔  
على هذه المعلومات بلغةٍ أخرى، الرجاء الاتصال على رقم الهاتف الذي يظهر في الأسفل

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