



Ostomy Diet Guidelines

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This family education sheet can help you decide which foods may be best for your child with an ostomy.

- Most children with ostomies can return to a normal diet soon after the operation.
- You can start to give your child most foods slowly (unless there is an allergy).
- Talk with your child's doctor or nurse about specific foods.

How should my child eat after surgery?

- Your child may be more comfortable eating many small meals and snacks for the first few weeks after surgery instead of larger meals.
- Add new foods to your child's diet 1 at a time. After they get used to that food, add another.
- Be sure that your child chews their food very well.
- Some foods can change the smell and thickness of the stool (poop) and cause gas. You'll find a list of foods in this handout. If a food seems to cause a bad smell or gas, you don't need to stop giving your child the food. You can try giving it to your child several times.

How much should my child drink?

- If your child has an ileostomy (a type of ostomy that connects the small intestine to the belly), it's very important for them to drink lots of fluids. Your child needs extra fluids to avoid becoming dehydrated.
- Children can also get dehydrated from being in the sun or in hot temperatures, lots of exercise (like playing sports) and taking some medications. It's important for your child to drink extra fluids in these situations.
- Talk with your doctor or nurse about exactly how much your child needs to drink.

What are the signs and symptoms of dehydration?

- Extremely thirsty
- Dry mouth and dry skin
- Less urine (pee) or urine that is darker in color
- Nausea or belly cramping
- General feeling of achiness
- Lightheadedness or feeling dizzy

What is a food blockage?

- Your child may develop a food blockage, especially if they have an ileostomy. Undigested fibrous foods can build up and block the flow of stool through the bowel.

- Your child should chew foods well to avoid blockages.
- Call your child's doctor or nurse if your child has belly pain, very little or no stool for more than 4 hours, a large increase in the amount of stool or if they are vomiting (throwing up).

What foods can cause blockages?

- Fibrous uncooked vegetables (celery, broccoli, beans)
- Coconut
- Coleslaw
- Corn on the cob
- Dried fruits
- Nuts and seeds
- Meats in casings, like hot dogs, sausage, kielbasa
- Peas
- Pineapple
- Popcorn
- Raisins
- Skins from fruits and vegetables

How can I tell if there is a blockage?

Your child may have:

- Crampy belly pain
- Belly swelling
- Stoma swelling
- Large amount of watery stool (usually with a bad smell)
- The inability to eat or drink
- Nausea and vomiting
- Irritability and crankiness
- Very little or no stool for more than four hours

What foods can cause a bad odor?

- Asparagus
- Beans
- Brussels sprouts
- Cabbage
- Coffee
- Cucumber
- Eggs
- Fish
- Garlic
- Green peppers
- Milk
- Onions
- Prunes
- Radishes
- Turnips
- Vitamins



What foods help with bad odor?

- Buttermilk
- Parsley
- Yogurt
- Cranberry juice
- Spinach

What foods might cause gas?

- Apples (raw)
- Chewing gum
- Nuts
- Asparagus
- Corn
- Onions
- Beans
- Cucumber
- Melon
- Broccoli
- Dairy foods
- Peas
- Cabbage
- Eggs
- Spicy foods
- Carbonated drinks
- Melon
- Spinach
- Mushrooms
- Cauliflower

Note: Chewing gum, or drinking straws, causes you to swallow more air and increase gas ("air in the pouch"). This may create a noisy stoma!

What foods thicken stool?

- Applesauce
- Marshmallows
- Starchy foods (rice, pasta, potatoes, tapioca)
- Bananas
- Milk
- Breads
- Peanut butter (creamy)
- Yogurt
- Cheeses

What foods thin stool?

- Apple juice
- Fried foods
- Foods with lots of seasoning
- Chocolate
- Grape juice
- Prune juice
- Fresh fruits
- Green beans

What foods change the color of stool?

- Beets
- Red Jell-O

Contact us

Monday—Friday, 8:30am— 5pm:

Contact General Surgery at (617) 355-7800. Ask for your specialty clinic and for the General Surgery senior resident on call.

Weeknights 5pm—8:30am and weekends/holidays:

Call (617) 355-6000 and ask for surgeon on call.

For more information

The United Ostomy Associations of America:

UOAA
P.O. Box 2293
Biddeford, ME 04005-2293
(800) 826-0826

This family education sheet is available in Arabic, Haitian Creole, Simplified Chinese (China PRC, Singapore and Malaysia), Spanish and Traditional Chinese (Hong Kong and Taiwan).