

Dietary Advice for Patients with an Ileostomy

Nutrition & Dietetics

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Information for Patients

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What is an Ileostomy?

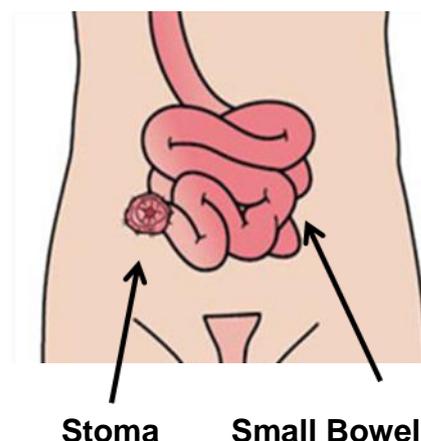
An ileostomy is formed from a part of the small bowel- the ileum. The ileum is brought out, via a surgical procedure onto the surface of the abdomen to form a stoma (an opening). A stoma bag is then connected to the end of your small bowel.

Even with an ileostomy your body will continue to digest and absorb nutrients normally in the small bowel. However your large bowel normally absorbs water and salts and as this is no longer in use, the stool coming through your stoma will initially be quite watery.

Your body will adapt over time (6-8 weeks) and begin to absorb the water and salts your body needs however in the short term you will need to make some dietary changes (see below). As your dietary intake increases and your body adapts your stoma output will thicken.

After Surgery:

It is important to eat a well-balanced diet after surgery to promote healing however for the first 6-8 weeks following the formation of your ileostomy your bowel will be quite swollen and sensitive. This can affect your bowels ability to digest high fibre foods. It is therefore encouraged that during this time you follow a low fibre diet to help avoid a blockage and allow your bowel time to adapt. Below is a list of foods you should avoid during this time.



Foods to Avoid

Skins, pips, piths and seeds on your fruits and vegetables

Dried fruit

Coconut

Nuts & seeds

Raw vegetables

Salad vegetables

Peas

Mushroom

Sweetcorn

Following the initial 6-8 weeks after surgery you should begin to reintroduce higher fibre foods as it is important you return to a well-balanced diet long term. Please refer to the reintroducing fibre diet sheet. As your ileostomy adapts and you become used to what is normal for you, you should feel more confident in introducing new foods. Many patients find they can enjoy a full and varied diet with their ileostomy.

If your stoma blocks- **STOP** eating. Continue to drink plenty of fluids as this will help the blockage to pass. If the symptoms persist for more than 12 hours, call your GP or stoma nurse.

Signs of a Blockage/Obstruction

Lack of stool

Watery stools

Abdominal pain

Nausea & vomiting

Bloating

Fluid & Salt

The main job of your large bowel is to reabsorb water and salts. As you have an ileostomy your large bowel is no longer in use therefore you will need to ensure you drink plenty of fluids to avoid dehydration. You should aim to drink 6-8 cups of fluid each day however you may need more during hot weather or when exercising.

You will need to ensure you have some salt in your diet. This can come from including salty/processed foods in your diet, sprinkling some salt on your meals or including a salty snack daily such as a packet of ready salted crisps

If your ileostomy output is greater than 2 litres per day this can lead to dehydration. If the output remains high you may need to drink less and have a drink called St Marks or WHO solution which will help to rehydrate you. You will need to speak to your GP, Consultant or Dietitian about this.

Signs of Dehydration

Low urine output

Dark urine

Feeling thirsty

Dry mouth or skin

Long Term

Once your ileostomy has settled down you can return to your normal diet following fibre reintroduction. It is important that you:

- Eat a balanced diet
- Eat regular meals
- Chew your foods well
- Only continue to avoid foods that cause symptoms

A balanced diet includes foods from all of the five food groups below; this will ensure your body gets all of the nutrients it needs.



Source: Public Health England in association with the Welsh government, Food Standards Scotland and the Food Standards Agency in Northern Ireland

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Trouble Shooting

You may notice that some foods can cause your ileostomy output to be looser, increased wind in your bag or an unpleasant odour. Below are some foods that you may find problematic and the ways in which you can help to reduce these symptoms.

Foods that may cause loose stools	High fibre foods (e.g. wholemeal/wholegrains, raw fruit and vegetables) High fat foods Alcohol Caffeinated drinks Fruit juice Spicy foods
Foods that may cause odour	Brassica vegetables e.g. cauliflower, broccoli, cabbage Garlic and onions Beans, peas and pulses Eggs Fish Alcohol Fizzy drinks
Foods that may cause wind	Brassica vegetables e.g. cauliflower, broccoli, cabbage Garlic and onions Beans, peas and pulses Fizzy drinks Chewing gum To help reduce wind you should eat slowly, and chew your food well. Avoid talking whilst eating. Also avoid smoking, chewing gum and drinking with a straw as this will minimise swallowed air which can cause wind.
Foods that can thicken stoma output	Ripe banana Boiled rice or pasta Marshmallows or jelly babies Smooth peanut butter Apple sauce

If you would like more information, please speak with your UHL Consultant or GP for a referral to a Dietitian.

Health information and support is available at www.nhs.uk
 or call 111 for non-emergency medical advice

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 Access our website at www.lnds.nhs.uk.

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