

Ileostomy and Diet

Nutrition and Dietetics

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What is an ileostomy?

An ileostomy is a surgically created opening in the abdominal wall. The end of the ileum (the lowest portion of the small intestine) is brought through the abdominal wall to form a stoma.

An ileostomy can be permanent or temporary depending on the reason for surgery. It is usually performed when a diseased or injured colon cannot be treated by other methods.

The digestive contents pass out of the body through the stoma and are collected in an individually fitted drainable pouch which is worn at all times.

Should I be on a special diet?

Initially, you should follow a diet which is low in fibrous foods as they are difficult to digest and may cause blockage if not chewed properly - this is referred to as a low residue diet.

After your ileostomy has healed and is functioning normally you should be able to slowly return to a normal diet.

Only for the first **6-8** weeks after your operation you should avoid the following high fibre foods:

- | | |
|---------------|-------------------|
| - Celery | - Coconut |
| - Dried fruit | - Raw fruit |
| - Mango | - Mushrooms |
| - Nuts | - Peas |
| - Pineapple | - Piths |
| - Pips | - Raw vegetables |
| - Salad | - Vegetable skins |
| - Sweetcorn | |

Your dietitian or stoma nurse can provide you with additional information on low residue foods.

After 6-8 weeks, and if your stoma has settled, you can reintroduce some fibrous foods. Ensure that they are well cooked and chewed thoroughly to aid digestion and prevent wind.

Increase fibre gradually and introduce one food at a time.

What should my diet consist of?

Protein foods are essential for health and repair of body tissues. This is especially important following surgery. Aim to include 2-3 portions of these foods each day:

- Meat: beef, pork, bacon, lamb, liver, kidney
- Poultry: chicken, turkey
- Fish
- Eggs
- Nut products such as smooth peanut butter (not actual nuts)
- Meat alternatives – textured vegetable protein, Quorn, tofu

Dairy produce such as milk, cheese and yoghurt are good sources of calcium, which are important for healthy bones.

They are also a good source of protein and vitamins. Use full fat milk and cream instead of low fat alternatives.

Starchy foods should be the basis of our meals and they contain energy, vitamins and fibre. Aim to include a variety for example, bread, chapattis, breakfast cereals, oats, pasta, rice, potatoes, sweet potatoes, plantains, green bananas, yams.

The low fibre versions are better tolerated so try white versions e.g. white bread, rice krispies and cornflakes and avoid skins on potatoes.

Fruit and vegetables provide fibre, vitamins and minerals that are essential to good health. Aim to eat 5 portions per day.

Some fruits and vegetables may upset your output, try:

- Peeled fruits
- Tinned fruits in natural juices
- Stewed or pureed fruits (without skin)
- Fruit juices (unsweetened and without bits)
- Well cooked root vegetables e.g. carrots and parsnips

Alcohol drunk in excessive amount is bad for your health. Government recommendations advise no more than 14 units/week with at least 2 alcohol free days. Be mindful that some types may increase your ileostomy output.

What causes wind?

Immediately after your surgery you may pass more wind but this usually reduces quite soon after.

Wind is a normal by-product of digestion but can be increased by swallowed air whilst eating or by eating fibrous foods.

How can I reduce the wind from my bag?

- Eat regular meals in a relaxed environment. Sit down to eat, preferably at a table.
- Eat slowly and chew foods carefully.
- Let fizzy drinks go flat.
- Avoid drinking through a straw.
- Avoid chewing gum.
- Avoid long periods without food.
- Avoid smoking.
- Avoid talking or drinking when eating.
- Go for low fibre alternatives such as white bread, rice and pasta.
- Reduce your intake of pulses (peas, beans, lentils) and vegetables (cabbage, broccoli, cauliflower, sprouts, onions, leeks or asparagus), fruits with skins or piths, hard or dried fruit, nuts and seeds.
- Peppermint water, tea or capsules may help.

What foods may increase wind?

- Alcohol
- Beans
- Broccoli
- Sprouts
- Cabbage
- Carbonated drinks
- Cauliflower
- Cucumber
- Eggs
- Fruit
- Mushrooms
- Nuts
- Onions
- Peas and sweetcorn
- Spinach
- Green vegetables
- Fatty foods
- Rich cream foods

Some foods that disagree with one person may be fine for another therefore try all and only avoid those that affect you.

How can I reduce the odour?

Certain foods cause more odour than others (asparagus, baked beans, broccoli, sprouts, cabbage, cauliflower, cucumber, eggs, fish, garlic, green vegetables, onions, peanut butter, some spices e.g. curry or chilli and strong cheese).

You may wish to omit some of these foods. Vinegar added to fish dishes may help eliminate the traditional fishy odour and parsley is a natural odour eater. You can also try ostomy deodorant sprays and drops – ask your stoma nurse about this.

Why is my output more liquid?

Certain foods can make your stoma output more liquid especially when eaten in large quantities e.g. high fibre foods (wholemeal bread, wholegrain cereals, pulses, leafy green vegetables), raw vegetables, sweetcorn, fruits and nuts, spicy foods, alcohol, drinks containing caffeine (tea, coffee, cola) fruit juices, fried foods and excess sweeteners e.g. sugar free fizzy drinks and squashes.

How can I thicken the output?

Your output should be a porridge consistency. You can reduce the quantities of foods that cause more liquid output (see above).

Certain foods may help thicken up your bag:

- Cheese
- Smooth/creamy peanut butter
- White rice
- Tapioca
- Marshmallows/jelly babies
- Bananas
- Pasta
- White bread or mashed potatoes

Is it normal to see food particles in my bag?

Yes, sometimes food passes through unaltered, particularly foods such as sweetcorn. Chew your food well to avoid this.

What should I do if my output increases?

Increased output can be a result of a variety of things, such as a stomach bug, stress, antibiotics or spicy foods.

After an ileostomy, you no longer have a working colon and this may cause you to lose water and electrolytes and become dehydrated.

It is necessary for you to drink 8-10 glasses of fluids each day to prevent dehydration, unless instructed otherwise by your doctor or dietitian. Note that during periods of hot weather or exercise you will require additional fluids.

If your output has increased, you will be losing additional salt. Therefore, it may also be necessary to add extra salt to meals or have salty snacks (e.g. salty crisps or biscuits) until your ileostomy adapts and your stoma output becomes thicker.

Signs and Symptoms of Dehydration

- Dark-coloured urine
- Decreased urine output
- Dry mouth and increased thirst
- Muscle cramps (abdominal or leg)
- Tiredness

If your stoma output increases to more than 750mls over a 24 hour period this should be closely monitored.

If your output increases to 1 litre repeatedly for 48 hours you may have an high output ileostomy, therefore should seek medical advice from you GP, stoma nurse or dietitian.

Contacts and support:

Dietitian: 0151 529 3473

Stoma nurses: 0151 529 3736

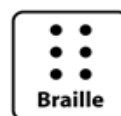
The ileostomy and internal pouch support association:

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www.C3Life.com

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