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### **Diet after Esophageal/Gastric Surgery**

After surgery, normal post-operative swelling will prevent you from eating a regular diet. This may also cause you to swallow more air when you eat. ***Your diet will be advanced over 8 weeks, and at that point you will be able to eat most of the items in your regular diet.*** Careful adherence to this diet will minimize post-operative pain and maximize the likelihood of long term success after your operation.

- Your diet will progress slowly in stages, from just liquids to a normal diet. 2 weeks of full liquids, 2 weeks of pureed foods, 2 weeks soft diet, and finally 2 weeks of a regular diet, consisting of 6 small meals a day.
- You will be on a clear liquid diet while in the hospital. Clear liquids include: water, lemonade, apple, grape, or cranberry juice, Crystal-Lite, Kool-Aid, broth, popsicles, Jell-O, decaffeinated tea and decaffeinated coffee (without cream).
- You will probably lose weight for the first few weeks.
- Take liquid medications as prescribed. You may take a daily liquid multi-vitamin as well. You may use chewable or crushed medications after week two.
- Sit upright when eating or drinking. Remain in an upright position for 30 minutes after eating. Do not recline.
- Walking will improve digestion of food and help alleviate gas.
- Avoid swallowing air. This produces excess gas. Avoid drinking through a straw, don't chew gum or tobacco. Avoid smoking, caffeine, and carbonated beverages, alcohol, citrus and tomato products.
- As you progress through the stages, if discomfort occurs, go back to the previous stage for a few days. Not all patients progress at the same rate.

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**Week 1 and 2: Full Liquids** Regular milk, milkshakes, ice cream, custards, pudding, thin cream of wheat, thin cream of rice, strained creamed soups, smooth yogurt (no fruit pieces or chunks), flavored fruit drinks, fruit juice without pulp or seeds, vegetable juice. You can get extra calories and protein from high protein liquid supplements available in many health food stores. Ensure, Boost.

**Week 3 and 4: Pureed Foods** Hot cereals, cream of wheat, cooked oatmeal, pureed pasta, pureed or mashed vegetables, baby food, moist mashed potatoes, pureed fruit, smooth applesauce, cottage cheese, sherbet, pureed soups, canned tuna/salmon/chicken, scrambled eggs, smooth peanut butter. Foods can be pureed in a blender.

**Week 5 and 6: Soft Food** Cold cereals that soften with milk, crackers that soften with liquid, cooked and finely chopped pasta, rice, soft cooked and finely chopped vegetables, soft canned fruit (no pineapple), soft peeled ripe fruit (bananas), skinless baked potatoes, soft cooked canned fresh or frozen fish without bones, tender chicken, shredded soft cheeses.

**Week 7 and 8 to Regular Diet:**

- You should eat small, frequent meals (6 per day), or every 2 to 3 hours. Eat foods that are easy to swallow. Avoid gummy foods such as bread, bananas, sticky rice or undercooked pasta.
- Eat only until you feel full. This may occur after only a small meal is consumed.
- Drink plenty of fluids in-between meals. But limit fluids to 1/2 cup with meals to avoid stretching your stomach.
- Eat slowly and chew your food well. Avoid gulping. This prevents gas build-up and aids with swallowing.

**Foods to AVOID temporarily:** Tough meats like steak or pork, raw fruits/vegetable, chewy or crispy breads, nuts, seeds, fried and greasy foods, spicy foods and high fiber foods like grain breads and cereal. Avoid foods that may cause stomach gas and distention. Examples are corn, dried beans, peas, lentils, onions, broccoli, cauliflower, cabbage.

*Please call our office if you have questions.*