

OSTOMY
Nutrition Guide



Preventing Dehydration

What is a high ostomy output?

A high output is more than 1,200 mL (5 cups) of fluid from your ostomy in one day (24 hours). The output is usually very watery and needs to be emptied 8 to 10 times or more a day. The output may also be very difficult to contain and can cause a pouching leak.

Dehydration happens when your body loses more water than it absorbs. A high ostomy output can lead to dehydration because you can lose water and certain salts that are important for the body. Dehydration can damage your kidneys and will often require hospital readmission. If you begin to experience high outputs after discharge, please do not stop eating or drinking. Continue small, frequent meals and adequate hydration with appropriate beverage choices as described above, and contact your doctor.

It is very important to stay hydrated!

You need at least **8 cups of fluid each day** (64oz/2 liters), plus extra if you have high outputs (> 1200 mL/day) from your ostomy, in hot or dry conditions, if you are sweating, or if you are exercising.

What should you drink to prevent dehydration?

- Sip fluids slowly and frequently so they will be better absorbed
- Choose drinks with sodium, potassium, and a **small amount** of sugar
- Add extra salt to meals and choose salty foods to help absorb water
- Do not drink excess fluids while eating

Good beverage choices:

- Gatorade G2 or Gatorade Zero
- MVP2 - available at Wegmans
- Tomato juice and V8 Vegetable Juice
- Diluted juice (half juice, half water)
- Soups and broths
- If you are dehydrated, try drinking only oral rehydration solutions. See recipes below or ask your pharmacist for products available over the counter (e.g., Pedialyte or World Health Organization [WHO] mix)
- Ensure (high protein, 160 calories, low sugar)

Oral Rehydration Solution Recipes

WHO Home Solution

- 1 liter water
- ½ teaspoon table salt
- ¼ teaspoon Morton salt substitute
- ½ teaspoon baking soda
- 2 tablespoons sugar
- (add Crystal Light or Mio for flavor)
- Mix ingredients together and discard after 24 hours

Gatorade G2

- 4 cups Gatorade G2
- ½ teaspoon salt

Tomato Juice

- 2 ½ cups tomato juice
- 1 ½ cups water

Juice-based

- ¾ cup juice
- 3 ¼ cup water
- ¾ teaspoon salt



SIGNS YOU ARE DEHYDRATED:

Urinating less often

Dark, strong smelling urine

Dry, sticky feeling mouth or cracked lips

Increased thirst or muscle cramps

Feeling dizziness or weakness

Headache

Fast pulse

Excessive fatigue

Avoid alcohol and drinks high in sugar:

Beverages with a lot of sugar pull water into the intestines and increase your chance of dehydration.

- Juice (especially prune juice)
- Regular pop/soda (diet is okay), fruit drinks, and regular Gatorade
- Energy drinks
- Alcohol is dehydrating and mixed drinks can be especially high in sugar
- Excessive consumption of sugar-free items containing sorbitol, mannitol, or xylitol, can also worsen diarrhea. Be careful of high-protein drinks—choose the lowest sugar option.

Limit the following beverages:

When ostomy outputs are high, limit the following to no more than 2 cups each day.

- Beverages with caffeine, such as coffee, tea and soda
- Water
- Milk*

**If you feel unwell after drinking milk or eating dairy foods, try lactose-free products.*

Potassium and sodium

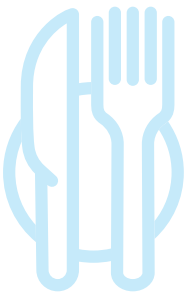
These two minerals are lost daily with the fluids that leave your body through your ileostomy. They can be replaced by adding foods high in potassium and sodium to your daily diet. Talk with your doctor if you follow a diet that restricts potassium or sodium. He or she will advise you of any special instructions for your condition.

General Information

Many individuals with ostomies can enjoy a normal diet within 6 weeks of surgery; however, food tolerances can vary from person to person. You may be able to tolerate different foods over time.

These general guidelines will help make caring for your ostomy easier:

- **Eat meals regularly.** You should eat small frequent meals/snacks (4 to 6 meals/day). Keeping a regular schedule of meals and snacks can help reduce gas and result in better absorption of nutrients from foods.
- **Watch for signs/symptoms of dehydration.** *Ileostomy patients are more at risk for dehydration. See above regarding information on preventing and recognizing dehydration.
- **Chew your food well.** Chewing food well will help to avoid blockages at your stoma site. Be especially careful when chewing foods that may be hard to digest or foods that have a high fiber content.
- **Try new foods one at a time.** Learn which foods may give you annoying side effects such as excess gas, constipation, looser stool, or odor. If a new food seems to give you problems, eliminate it temporarily and try it again in 2 to 3 weeks. You may find something else was causing your problem. Keeping a food journal may be helpful.



Eating is one of life's great pleasures. Having an ostomy should not change your enjoyment of food.

- **Fiber.** You should have less than 8 grams of fiber per day when you move from liquids to solid foods and then transition to less than 13 grams of fiber per day for the next few days as your symptoms decrease. Most patients begin to eat normally 6 weeks after surgery. Add foods containing fiber gradually to your diet, but avoid those that can cause blockages initially.
- **Stool bulking.** Eat foods that may thicken stool several times a day. (see below)
- **Avoid gaining excess weight.** Once you're on the road to recovery, you should avoid gaining excess weight. Extra weight can add additional stress to your ostomy or cause you to develop a hernia.
- **Medications.** It is important to discuss your medication list with your provider. Extended-release tablets should not be taken as they won't have the chance to be properly absorbed. Some capsules may come out your stoma whole which is not desirable. Fast-acting or liquid medications are always preferred.
- **Multivitamin.** Recommend taking a chewable (non-gummy) multivitamin daily for best absorption.
- Above all, remember that **no two people will react the same to foods.** You will learn through experience which foods, if any, you should avoid. It may be helpful to keep a list of foods that you try and write down how they make you feel.

**General information as outlined above applies to both colostomy and ileostomy patients. Note that ileostomy patients are at a greater risk for dehydration.*

A note on fiber:

After surgery, your bowel is swollen, and you should avoid high fiber foods which are harder to digest. Lower fat choices and foods lower in sugar are also recommended while following this diet.

- Choose well-cooked vegetables and canned fruits or fruits with skins and peels removed during this time to limit fiber intake.
- A high fiber diet, 20-25 grams daily for women and 25-35 grams daily for men, is recommended once you are able to tolerate a regular diet (6+ weeks after surgery). Add foods containing fiber gradually to your diet, but avoid those that can cause blockages initially. When you add those foods, eat very small portions, and chew your food very well.
- These foods may need to be limited at any time if symptoms occur (looser, more frequent outputs).

After surgery, avoid high fiber foods for six weeks, including:

- Whole grains
- Seeds
- Skins
- Whole nuts
- Dried beans
- Most raw vegetables and fruit



DRY to WET eating

Only take **SIPS** of fluid while eating to get food down, then wait 30 minutes after the meal before you restart drinking.

There are no real restrictions to your diet, *unless* you experience a problem with a particular food.



Preventing Blockage

Certain foods, if eaten in large amounts or not chewed well, may cause a blockage at the stoma opening.

For the first 4 to 6 weeks after your surgery, your diet should be soft, low in fiber and easy to digest to prevent blockages. Use caution when eating the following foods, because they are not completely digestible and could cause blockage:

- Nuts and seeds
- Popcorn
- Dried fruit
- Coconut
- Raisins
- Corn
- Peas
- Chinese vegetables
- Vegetable and fruit skins
- Salad greens
- Celery
- Whole grains
- Coleslaw
- Raw pineapple
- Mushrooms
- Relishes
- Tough, fibrous meats (e.g. grilled steak)
- Casing on sausage

You do not need to avoid these foods. Just eat small amounts and be sure to chew them well. Recommend chew foods very well, to an ‘apple sauce-like’ consistency, this will also help with digestion of your food to increase absorption of nutrients.

Signs and Symptoms of Intestinal Blockage

Abdominal cramping, no or limited “projectile diarrhea” stool output, nausea, vomiting. If these occur, change your dietary intake to liquids only, and contact your surgeon’s office. If you are unable to reach your surgeon, go to the emergency department or call 911.

Reducing Odor

If you experience a problem with odor, you may try making some changes in your diet. Cleanliness and odor-resistant appliances also play a big part in controlling odor. The following foods are known to produce odor:

- Alcohol
- Cauliflower
- Asparagus
- Broccoli
- Fish
- Brussels sprouts
- Cabbage
- Onions
- Baked beans
- Strong cheese
- Eggs

If you experience odor after eating one of these foods, try a small amount again in a few weeks. Always experiment before cutting out your favorite foods.

****Buttermilk, parsley, kefir, cranberry juice, and yogurt with active cultures may help reduce odor.*** Try including them in your daily diet.

Certain vitamins and drugs can cause odor, so remind your doctor providers you have an ostomy when they are prescribing medication for you.

Reducing Gas

Everyone produces gas along with bowel movements. Some gas is normal and should be expected. If excess gas becomes a problem for you, it can be controlled to some degree by your diet. Factors such as when and how you eat certain foods can help reduce gas production.

Try following these tips:

- Eat regularly. Skipping meals is likely to produce gas.
- Avoid swallowing air while eating. You can do this by taking your time when eating. Relax and don't talk with your mouth full.
- Avoid chewing gum or drinking through a straw.

The following foods and beverages may cause excess gas. If you are bothered by gas, you can try eliminating these foods altogether or avoid having more than one of them at a meal. Again, do not eliminate these foods unless you are sure they are really responsible for the unpleasant side effects.

- | | | |
|--------------------|------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| ■ Asparagus | ■ Dried peas and beans | ■ Onions |
| ■ Beer | ■ Fish | ■ Radishes |
| ■ Broccoli | ■ Melons | ■ Dairy products |
| ■ Brussels sprouts | ■ Milk | ■ Sweets |
| ■ Cabbage | ■ Soy | ■ Carbonated beverages |
| ■ Cauliflower | ■ Nuts | ■ Blended drinks, smoothies or shakes |
| ■ Cucumbers | | |

Diarrhea (looser, more frequent stool)

The consistency of your stools is determined to a certain extent by the location of your stoma in your gastrointestinal (GI) tract. Normally, when the stoma is higher up in the GI tract, the stools tend to be looser. In some cases, loose stool may be the result of eating certain foods. Remember, high-potassium foods are needed more to offset the effects of diarrhea.

The following foods can cause looser, more frequent stools:

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|---------------|---------------|------------------------|
| ■ Baked beans | ■ Dried beans | ■ Red wine |
| ■ Beer | ■ Licorice | ■ Hot beverages |
| ■ Broccoli | ■ Prune juice | ■ Heavily spiced foods |
| ■ Chocolate | ■ Soup | ■ Very large meals |

Remember to try a small amount of a suspected food again in a few weeks to be sure it really does trouble you.

Any food that gave you loose stools before your ostomy may continue to do so.





There are a number of factors that may contribute to loose stool.

Stool Bulking

The following foods may help increase stool bulk:

- Applesauce
- Bananas
- Cheese
- Crackers
- White bread (not high fiber)
- Cream of rice
- Creamy peanut butter
- Marshmallows
- Oatmeal (when fiber OK)
- Potatoes, no skin
- Yogurt
- Pretzels
- Tapioca
- Weak tea
- White pasta (no sauce)
- White rice

Loose stools can also result from emotional upset, traveling, and impure water (which can be a problem if you travel abroad). Diarrhea can also be caused by illnesses like the flu. If you are losing a lot of fluid through your ostomy because of the flu or other problems, be sure to drink plenty of liquids (see Preventing Dehydration section). If diarrhea continues for more than 24 hours, call your doctor.

Foods That May Discolor Stool/Red Spots

Some ostomy patients have mistakenly thought they were bleeding when they noticed red spots in their stool. Certain foods such as red peppers, pimientos, and beets may show up as red particles in your stool. If you are unsure this is the case, call your doctor. Colored drinks like Gatorade and V8 Juice can turn stools different colors if you are an ileostomy patient.

URNS STOOL RED

- Beets
- Foods with red dye
- Red sauces, marinara

DARKENS STOOL

- Asparagus
- Broccoli
- Spinach

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