

GI Surgery Advanced Diet Guidelines

Following a modified diet after gastrointestinal (GI) surgery will help reduce the amount of food that enters the stomach and/or small intestine. This diet can help reduce side effects and prevent cramping, bloating, nausea, diarrhea and/or feelings of low blood sugar.

Patients who have had their entire stomach removed may need to stay on this diet for the rest of their life. Other patients may be able to transition to a less restrictive diet starting a few weeks or months after surgery.

General Guidelines

- Eat a small meal or drink a meal replacement beverage every 2 to 3 hours. Do this 6 to 8 times per day.
- Chew food well and eat slowly.
- Avoid drinking more than 4 ounces (1/2 cup) of fluid with each small meal.
- Drink most fluids between meals and snacks. Drink additional fluids 30 to 60 minutes before and after meals.
- Include lean protein with every meal and snack. The best choices are poultry, fish, eggs, yogurt, milk, protein powder and tofu.

Guidelines for Choosing Foods and Preparing Meals

- Limit or avoid foods that are high in added sugar. Check the ingredients on the package nutrition label for sugar or related additives. Avoid products that list sugar (also known as sucrose, fructose or high-fructose corn syrup) in the first few ingredients.
- Limit or avoid foods that contain or are high in sugar alcohol. Check the ingredients on the package nutrition label for common sugar alcohols. These include: sorbitol, xylitol, erythritol, glycerol, maltitol, lactitol and mannitol. Sugar alcohols may be associated with increased GI problems such as gas, bloating and/or diarrhea.
- Avoid fried foods, cream sauces and large amounts of added fats.
- To prevent foods from sticking to pans, use cooking spray instead of butter, margarine or oil.
- Use low-fat cooking methods. These include baking, roasting, broiling and poaching.

Protein Foods

Food Group	Try These	Instead of...
Protein Foods and Beverages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poultry (chicken, turkey) without skin • Fish, shellfish • Lean/tender meats (extra-lean ground beef, pork tenderloin, bison, venison) • Eggs, egg whites or egg substitutes, such as egg beaters • Low-fat luncheon meats (nitrate free is preferred) • Tofu • Protein powder • Low sugar fruit smoothies (8-ounce serving should provide 45 grams of carbohydrates or less, 10 grams fat or less and 10 grams protein or more) • Low-fat or fat-free dairy products: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cottage cheese • Yogurt • Greek yogurt • Cheese (less than 3 grams fat per ounce (1 ounce equals about 28 grams)) • Low-fat or non-fat milk (and lactose-free milk)* • High protein, lactose-free milk* (Fairlife[®], H-E-B MooTopia[®]) • Soy milk* • Low-sugar oral supplements*: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Premier Protein[®] • Premier Protein Clear[®] • Boost Glucose Control[®] • Boost High Protein • Boost MAX • Ensure High Protein[®] • Ensure Clear[®] • Glucerna[®] • Carnation Breakfast Essentials No Sugar Added[®] • Isopure Zero Carb[®] <p>*Count as fluid. Avoid more than ½ cup at a meal.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High-fat meats • Fried chicken, fried meats • Duck, goose • Bologna, salami, sausage, bacon • Highly seasoned and spicy meats • Beans, lentils • Strongly flavored cheeses or cheese made with whole milk • Yogurt with more than 4 to 6 grams of added sugars • Sardines, anchovies • Chocolate milk • Whole milk • Whole condensed milk • Soy milk with added sugar

Other Foods and Fluids

Food Group	Try These	Instead of...
Breads, Cereals and Other Starches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • White, whole-grain or enriched breads and cereals (without seeds and hulls) • Oatmeal, cream of rice, cream of wheat • Cold cereal (low-fiber) such as corn flakes or puffed rice • English muffins, bagels • Tortilla • Low-fat crackers (saltines, pretzels, graham crackers, animal crackers) • White rice, noodles and other pasta • Potato (without skin) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Breads or cereals containing added fiber, seeds, nuts or dried fruit • High-fat breads and pastries such as quick breads, muffins, biscuits, croissants and doughnuts • Bran, shredded wheat or other high-fiber cold cereal • Potatoes with skin or fried • Popcorn • Products with more than 3 grams of fiber per serving /
Fruits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unsweetened canned fruits (canned in juice) • Fruits cooked without added sugar • Bananas • Orange sections (without membranes) • Mango, melon, papaya • Peeled fruits: apricots, peaches, pears, plums, apples • 100% fruit juice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dried fruits • Fruits canned in syrup • Sweetened fruit juice • Fresh berries, grapes and other fresh fruit not listed in the “Try These” column
Vegetables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All vegetable juices • All vegetables cooked until very tender without thick skins 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corn • Green peas • Dried peas and beans • Lettuce and all other raw vegetables
Fats May use up to 2 servings per meal/snack.	Serving examples (about 5 grams fat per serving): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 teaspoon: butter, margarine, oil, regular mayonnaise • 2 teaspoons: creamy peanut butter or other smooth nut butter • 1 tablespoon: salad dressing, light mayonnaise, sour cream, cream cheese, cream • ¼ cup: mildly seasoned low-fat gravies and sauces, avocado 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bacon • Highly seasoned sauces or salad dressing • Nuts, peanut butter with nuts (“chunky”) • Other fats in large amounts

Food Group	Try These	Instead of...
Miscellaneous	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sugar-free gelatin* • Sugar-free sorbet* • Low-sugar, low-fat ice cream* • Low-sugar, low-fat pudding or custard (*Count as fluid; avoid more than ½ cup at a meal)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All sweets and desserts containing sugar, nuts, coconut or fruit • Regular ice cream
Other Fluids	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tea and decaffeinated tea • Coffee and decaffeinated coffee • Unsweetened rice or almond milk • Low-sugar hot chocolate • Low-fat soups • Low-sugar sports drinks: G2, Gatorade®, Powerade Zero® • Flavored sugar-free waters • Oral rehydration solutions: Pedialyte®, Drip Drop®, Cerelyte 70® 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alcoholic beverages • All other beverages high in sugar
Seasonings and Toppings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Salt, black pepper • Garlic powder, dill, oregano • Parmesan cheese • Stevia®, cinnamon, allspice • No-sugar added fruit preserves • Mildly flavored low-fat sauces 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Horseradish, chili peppers • Barbecue sauce, hot sauce, ketchup • Relish • Olives, nuts, pickles • Coconut

Sample Menu 1 (Approximately 1350 Calories, 80 grams protein, 35 grams fat)

Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ½ cup low-fat cottage cheese • ½ cup melon • ½ toasted English muffin • 1 teaspoon butter 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tuna salad: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ½ cup tuna • 1 tablespoon light mayonnaise • salt and pepper to taste • 6 saltine crackers • ½ cup sliced mango 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ½ cup sliced grilled tofu • ½ cup white rice • ½ cup soft cooked carrots • ½ cup sugar-free gelatin with canned pears in natural juice
Mid-Morning Snack	Mid-Afternoon Snack	Evening Snack
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ½ cup cream of rice • ½ cup low-fat milk or soy milk • ½ canned pears 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 teaspoons creamy peanut butter • 1 sheet graham crackers • ½ medium banana 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ½ cup low-fat Greek yogurt • ½ cup apple sauce • ½ bagel • 2 teaspoons smooth almond butter

Sample Menu 2 (Approximately 1500 Calories, 100 grams protein, 45 grams fat)

Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• ½ cup low-fat high protein milk• ½ cup Cheerios™ cereal• ½ sliced banana• 1 slice nitrate-free Canadian bacon	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 2 ounces broiled salmon• ½ cup mashed potato (without skin)• 1 teaspoon butter• ½ cup steamed broccoli	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 3 ounces grilled, skinless, chicken breast• ½ cup cooked white pasta• 1 teaspoon butter• ½ cup cooked green beans
Mid-Morning Snack	Mid-Afternoon Snack	Evening Snack
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 1 piece mozzarella string cheese• 4 saltine crackers• 1 small apple, peeled• 2 teaspoons creamy peanut butter	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 1 hard-boiled egg• 20 mini pretzels• ½ cup canned mandarin oranges (in juice)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• ½ cup low-fat cottage cheese• ½ cup canned pears (in juice)• ½ English muffin• 2 teaspoons smooth cashew butter

Sample Menu 3 (Approximately 1700 Calories, 115 grams protein, 60 grams fat)

Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Omelet:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 3 egg whites• 1/4 cup cooked spinach• 1/4 cup cooked mushrooms• 1 oz. low-fat Swiss cheese• 1 slice toast• 1 teaspoon butter	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Peanut butter and jelly sandwich:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 2 slices bread• 2 teaspoons of creamy peanut butter• 1 teaspoon no sugar-added fruit preserves• 1/2 cup low-fat high protein milk	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Turkey burger:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 3 ounce ground turkey patty• 1/4 cup avocado• 1 small bun• 1/2 cup cooked cauliflower
Mid-Morning Snack	Mid-Afternoon Snack	Evening Snack
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Low-sugar oral supplement	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Low-sugar oral supplement	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Low-sugar oral supplement

Sample Menu 4 (Approximately 1700 Calories, 115 grams protein, 55 g fat)

Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 2 scrambled eggs• 1 slice toast• 2 teaspoon creamy peanut butter• 1 tablespoon no sugar-added fruit preserves• ½ cup orange slices	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Turkey sandwich:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 2 ounces turkey breast lunch meat• 1 ounce low-fat Swiss cheese• 2 slices bread• 1 tablespoon light mayonnaise• ½ cup vegetable soup	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 2 ounces grilled shrimp• ½ cup plain cooked spaghetti noodles• ½ cup cooked asparagus tips• 1 slice French bread• 1 teaspoon butter
Mid-Morning Snack	Mid-Afternoon Snack	Evening Snack
<p>Fruit smoothie:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• ½ cup frozen, peeled peaches• ½ cup low-fat milk or soy milk• ½ scoop whey protein powder• 2 teaspoons smooth almond butter	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 2 ounces low-fat cheddar cheese• 4 saltine crackers• 1/2 cup fresh melon	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• ½ cup low-fat milk or soy milk• ¾ cup cornflakes• ½ cup sliced banana

If you have any questions about your diet, talk with your registered dietician at Baptist MD Anderson Cancer Center.

References

The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics Nutrition Care Manual. 2014.

The Complete Resource Kit for Oncology Nutrition. Elliott et al. 2013.