

Colostomy Diet

When the colon is unable to function normally because of disease or an obstruction, the body must have another way to eliminate waste (stool). A colostomy is an opening, called a stoma, that connects the colon to the surface of the abdomen. This provides a new path for stool and gas to leave the body.

The location of the stoma and what you eat and drink can affect how firm or soft the stool is. This information will help you manage how your colostomy and stoma function and what changes your body may go through.

General Guidelines

- Try to eat your meals and snacks around the same time every day.
- To decrease night time stool output, eat your largest meals earlier in the day.
- Chew your food well.
- Drink at least eight to 10 glasses, 8-ounce size each, of non-alcoholic fluids each day. You may need to drink more during hot weather and other times when you lose extra fluid.
- After healing is complete and the ostomy is functioning normally, most people with colostomies can return to a regular diet. At this time, reintroduce foods one at a time in small amounts. If these foods cause problems for you, stop these for about three weeks and try again.
- A regular, well-balanced-diet will help to establish and maintain good nutrition and bowel function.

Tips for Colostomy Issues

The consistency of stool is determined by what you eat and drink. Timing and frequency of meals, emotional wellbeing, medicine and illness also play a role.

Blockage (obstruction)

Your intestines could be blocked (obstructed) if you have:

- cramps, vomiting and/or nausea;
- swelling in your belly or the opening to the ostomy; and
- little or no output or gas.

Try these suggestions to help move stool through your colostomy:

- Avoid high-residue foods (foods high in fiber) because they can cause obstruction.

- Drink at least eight to 10 glasses, 8-ounce size each, of non-alcoholic fluid each day. Caffeinated beverages should make up no more than 50 percent of your total daily fluid intake.
- Sometimes changing your position, such as drawing your knees up to your chest, may help move along the contents in your gut.
- Do **not** take a laxative.

Gas

- To help prevent excess gas, eat slowly and chew food well. This will help decrease the amount of air you swallow.
- Avoid foods that can cause gas: beans, peas, onions, garlic, leeks, milk, cheese and vegetables from the cabbage family (broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower and Brussels sprouts) and carbonated beverages.
- Skipping meals to avoid gas or colostomy output is not recommended. Some people find it best to eat smaller amounts of food four to five times a day.

Odor

- Many factors can cause odor: foods, normal bacterial in the intestine, illness, antibiotics and vitamins.
- Avoid foods that can cause odor: beans, peas, cucumber, onion, garlic, leeks, asparagus, eggs, cheese, fish, cabbage family vegetables (broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower and Brussels sprouts), alcohol and coffee.
- Eat foods that can prevent odor: yogurt, kefir (yogurt drink), buttermilk and cranberry juice.

Loose Stools and Diarrhea

- There is a difference between loose stools and diarrhea. Some people with colostomies have loose stools because their colon was shortened during surgery.
- Adjust your fluid and fiber intake to help maintain normal bowel function.
- If you have liquid stool,
 - avoid high-fiber foods, prune juice and possibly dairy products that contain lactose, such as milk; and
 - try eating foods to help thicken your stool. These include white rice, white flour/bread, white pasta, potatoes, applesauce, bananas, cheese, creamy peanut butter or yogurt.
- Avoid spicy or fried foods and foods that are high in sugar (candy, cake, pies and cookies). All of these foods can cause diarrhea.
- Recording what you eat and your stool output in a journal can help identify foods and liquids that cause problems for you. This will help you make adjustments to your diet and find what fluids and foods work best for you. Use a chart such as the one on Page 3.

	Time	Food (include amount)	Beverage (include amount)	Stool Output (include amount and consistency)	Medicines
Day 1					
Day 2					
Day 3					

Sample Menu for the Colostomy Patient

Breakfast

½ cup orange juice
 ½ cup oatmeal
 ½ banana
 1 slice toast
 2 teaspoons margarine
 1 Tablespoon jam or jelly
 1 cup 2 percent milk
 Coffee or tea

Snack

½ cup yogurt
 ½ cup mandarin oranges

Lunch

1 cup potato soup
 4 saltine crackers
 3 ounces lean beef patty
 1 hamburger bun
 1 ounce sliced cheese
 1 Tablespoon each mayonnaise, ketchup

½ cup canned peaches
 1 cup iced tea

Snack

1 slice white bread
 1 Tablespoon peanut butter
 1/2 banana

Dinner

½ cup tomato soup
 3 ounces baked, skinless chicken breast
 ½ cup steamed white rice
 ½ cup green beans seasoned with herbs
 1 dinner roll
 2 teaspoons margarine
 ½ cup applesauce
 ½ cup low-fat frozen yogurt
 1 cup iced water with lemon

Snack

1 ounce cheese
 ½ cup canned pears

This Sample Menu Provides the Following:

Calories2080 Kcal
 Proteins76 grams
 Fat50 grams

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