

NUTRITION AND THE OSTOMATE

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The nutritional needs of the ostomate are the same as for other individuals, so that good normal nutrition is the best recommendation. The focus of this article, therefore, is aimed toward helping you understand normal physiology, metabolism and nutrition so that you will be better equipped to assess your own individual needs.

Always remember:

- Be Open-Minded
- Don't be afraid to try new things
- Never forget how to laugh (at and with yourself)
- Inner peace and relaxation can be your best allies

Some General Guide Lines:

- Good normal nutrition is recommended for stoma patients who have no other problems that require management by a special diet. (Your prior dietary restrictions for high blood pressure, diabetes, heart and kidney disease, and others should be continued unless advised otherwise by your physician). Very few foods need to be eliminated from the diet of the patient who has undergone an ostomy operation.

First:

- Chew food carefully and slowly
- Introduce new foods gradually and in small amounts
- Keep written records if helpful to keep track of offending foods
- Don't be afraid to try foods again if ill-effects were seen the first time
- Gas ordinarily comes from swallowing excess air. Be sure to eat leisurely in a relaxed atmosphere. Chew with a closed mouth and avoid talking while eating
- Regular meals are stressed since an empty stomach can generate gas
- The ostomate should have an adequate breakfast; this aids in regulating stoma discharge and stimulate the gastric colic reflex.
- Bowel upsets can be caused by emotional pressure; many outside forces such as travel and strange surroundings can have a dramatic effect on the colon.
- Try problem foods again in a week or so to make sure the food was what really caused the upset.

Specific Guidelines:

- The Ileostomy patient should increase dietary intake of water and salt unless other conditions contraindicate (as directed by your physician). This is especially important in the summer and during hard work. Liberal use of table salt or Gatorade can accomplish this.

- The ostomate should use caution when eating fibrous foods or foods with a high fiber content which may lead to blockage. Some of these foods include coconut, celery, coleslaw, grapefruit, nuts, popcorn, corn, Chinese vegetables.
- Intestinal gas and feces can be odorous, especially with a transverse colostomy. Foods which may cause odors include baked beans, onions, alcohol, fish, cheese, cabbage family, prunes, eggs, and asparagus. Odors can be controlled through personal hygiene and diet.

Suggestions:

- A cup of buttermilk in irrigating water can help decrease odor
- Cranberry juice is a one-fold remedy for fecal and urinary odor
- Yogurt may be helpful in preventing odors
- Parsley and green leafy vegetables contain chlorophyll which decreases fecal and gas odors.
- Foods which produce gas include cabbage family, onions, beans, asparagus, cucumbers, fish, radishes, beer, carbonated drinks, eggs, peas.
- Always keep in mind that foods that caused gastrointestinal problems prior to surgery may continue to be troublesome.
- Mild constipation may be alleviated with cereal fiber, increasing fluid intake, especially fruit juices and by cooked fruits and vegetables.
- Diarrhea may be a problem to you whether you have a colostomy or an ileostomy. Ileostomates should be especially careful because of increased danger of dehydration. If your diarrhea persists, contact your doctor.
- Foods which may cause loose stools are beans, broccoli, spinach, tomatoes, milk and milk products, raw fruits, beer, and highly spiced foods.
- Foods which may help control mild diarrhea are applesauce or scraped apples, boiled milk, boiled rice, tapioca, peanut butter, strained bananas, gelatin, powdered pectin.

Specialized Needs

- Your physician will periodically assess your general health status, and will make recommendations if you should show a clinical need for vitamins, minerals, or other form of nutritional support. If you feel well, are not expressing any obvious problems, and feel energetic, then RELAX.

From the Metro Maryland & Youth Group Chapter