



EATING AFTER YOUR ESOPHAGEAL SURGERY

After your esophageal surgery, you can expect some difficulty swallowing. If food sticks when you eat it is called "dysphagia". This is due to swelling around your surgery site and will most likely resolve within a few weeks.

To help you through this temporary phase, we start you out on a ***pureed*** diet. Your first meal in the hospital was clear liquids. You should have been given a ***pureed*** diet by the time you left the hospital. We ask patients to stay on ***pureed*** diet for the first two weeks to avoid anything getting stuck near your recent surgery. Below are some suggestions for your diet in the first few weeks after your surgery. Do not be alarmed if your ability to swallow does not progress according to this plan. Everyone is different, and some take longer or shorter to heal after surgery. Use common sense. If you are having trouble swallowing a particular food, then avoid it. If food is sticking when you advance your diet, go back to the previous diet for a day or two.

In general, some simple rules to follow are:

- Maintain an upright position (as near 90 degrees as possible) whenever eating or drinking
- Take small bites-less than 1 teaspoon at a time
- Eat slowly. It may also help to eat only one food at a time
- Avoid talking while eating. This increases the amount of air you swallow.
- Do not mix solid foods and liquids in the same mouthful and do not "wash foods down" with liquids.
- Eat in a relaxed atmosphere without distractions
- Avoid carbonated (bubbly) drinks
- If food does stick-do not panic. Try to relax and let the food pass on its own. Standing and placing your arms over your head can help. Sipping strong hot black tea can also help.

LEVEL 1

PUREED FOODS: 1st 2 WEEKS AFTER SURGERY

Foods in this group are pureed or blended to a smooth, mashed potato-like consistency. If necessary, the pureed foods can keep their shape with the addition of a thickening agent. Meat should be pureed to a smooth pasty consistency. Hot broth or hot gravy may be added to the pureed meat, approximately 1 oz. of liquid per 3 oz. serving of meat.

CAUTION: If any foods do not puree into a smooth consistency, it may make eating or swallowing more difficult. For example, zucchini seeds sometimes do not blend well.

| HOT FOODS | COLD FOODS |
|--|---------------------------------|
| Pureed scrambled eggs and cheese | Pureed cottage cheese |
| Baby cereals | Thickened juices and nectars |
| Thinned cooked cereals (no lumps) | Ensure |
| Pureed trench toast or pancakes | Thick milkshakes |
| Mashed potatoes | Ice cream |
| Pureed au gratin, scalloped potatoes or candied sweet potatoes | Fruit or Italian ice, sherbet |
| Pureed buttered or alfredo noodles | Plain yogurt |
| Pureed vegetables (no corn or peas) | Instant breakfast |
| Pureed and creamed soups | Smooth pudding, mousse, custard |
| Gravies | Whipped gelatin |
| Sauces: cheese, tomato, barbecue, creamed | Sugar, syrup, honey, jelly |
| Any baby food | Cream or creamers |
| Alcohol in moderation (not beer or champagne) | Margarine |
| Coffee or tea | Mayonnaise, ketchup, or mustard |

SAMPLE MENU: PUREED DIET

| BREAKFAST | LUNCH | DINNER |
|--------------------------------|--|-----------------------|
| Orange juice ½ cup | Pineapple juice ½ cup | Pureed turkey |
| Cream of Wheat ½ cup | Pureed chicken noodle soup ^¾ cup | Barley soup ¾ cup |
| Scrambled eggs w/ cheese ½ cup | Mashed potatoes ½ cup | Mashed potatoes ½ cup |
| Tea or coffee 1 cup | Pureed and cooled broccoli ½ cup | Pureed spinach ½ cup |
| Non-dairy creamer 2TBSP | Apple sauce ½ cup | Frozen yogurt ½ cup |
| Whole milk 1 cup | Coffee or tea | Coffee or tea |

LEVEL 2

After your first 2 weeks, you can advance to a soft diet.
Keep on this diet until everything goes down easily.

| HOT FOOD | COLD FOOD |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| White fish | Cottage cheese |
| Stuffed fish | Junior baby fruit |
| Baby food meats | Semi-thickened juices |
| Minced, soft cooked, scrambled/pouched | Nectars |
| Scuffle' and omelets | Canned fruit, Pineapple sauce, milk |
| Cooked cereals | Milkshake |
| Potatoes | Custard |
| Buttered or alfredo noodles | Puddings, including tapioca |
| Cooked and cooled vegetables | Yogurt |
| Soups | Fruit ice, Italian ice, Sherbet |

SAMPLE MENU: LEVEL 2

| BREAKFAST | LUNCH | DINNER |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------|
| Orange juice ½ cup | Pineapple juice ½ cup | Soup ¾ cup |
| Oatmeal ½ cup | Minced beef 3oz with gravy | Minced Hawaiian chicken 3 oz |
| Scrambled eggs with cheese ½ cup | Mashed potatoes ½ cup | Mashed potatoes ½ cup |
| Tea or coffee | Minced broccoli ½ cup | Cooked spinach ½ cup |
| Whole milk 1 cup | Applesauce ½ cup | Frozen yogurt ½ cup |

LEVEL 3

After all of the foods in level 2 (soft diet) are passing through well you should advance up to the next level. It is still important to cut these foods into small pieces and eat slowly.

| HOTFOODS | COLD FOODS |
|--|-----------------------------|
| Poultry | Cottage Cheese |
| Ground or flaked meat | Milk |
| Eggs | Milkshakes |
| French toast or pancakes | Juices |
| Noodles or pasta | Canned fruit |
| Cooked vegetables, no frozen corn, peas, or mixed vegetables | Pudding, mousse, or custard |
| Soup | Green salad |

LEVEL 4: REGULAR FOODS

Foods in this group are soft, moist, regularly textured foods. This level includes red meat and breads, which tend to be the hardest things to swallow. Eat very slowly, chew well, and continue to avoid carbonated drinks.

| HOTFOODS | COLD FOODS |
|-----------------|-------------------|
| Fish | Cheeses |
| Poultry | Fruits |
| Red Meat | Vegetables |
| Eggs | Dairy products |
| Bread and pasta | Cheeses |