

Nutrition Guidelines Following Esophagectomy

Why do I need a special diet?

After your surgery, you need a diet designed to reduce foods and beverages that could make swallowing difficult or irritate your esophagus. This diet will also help you get enough calories and protein to help you heal and recover.

How long will I have to follow this diet?

When you leave the hospital you will likely be on a full liquid diet for a week or two before moving onto this diet described below. You will need to follow this soft foods diet for 3-4 weeks after surgery. At your first follow-up appointment after surgery, your surgeon or nurse will let you know if you can start eating different foods. It is likely you will always need to eat small, frequent meals.

What should I do while following this diet?

- Eat 6-8 **small meals** a day.
- **Chew** your food well.
- **Eat slowly** and take small bites.
- **Sit upright** while eating and for 30-60 minutes after eating.
- Prepare foods so they are **moist, soft,** and **easily swallowed.**
- Do **not** drink **soda** or any other carbonated beverages for two weeks after surgery.
- If you notice you are having diarrhea after you eat, **limit foods and drinks high in sugar,** such as candy, cookies, juice, syrup, and ice cream.
- You may need to drink **nutritional supplements** or homemade milkshakes if you are having trouble getting enough calories and protein. If you are having diarrhea, try using **sugar-free** versions of these supplements or milkshakes.

<i>Food Group</i>	<i>Better Tolerated Foods</i>	<i>Less Tolerated Foods</i>
Grains	Unsweetened hot cereals or dry cereals softened in milk, moist rice, pasta	Sweetened cereals, donuts, cakes, pastries
Meat & Protein	Soft eggs, tofu, moist fish, beans	Meat, poultry, peanut butter, nuts
Milk and Dairy	Milk, yogurt, cheese, cottage cheese, sugar-free ice cream	Chocolate milk, flavored milk, ice cream
Fruits	Peeled soft fresh fruit, canned fruit without heavy syrup/added sugar, soft frozen fruit without added sugar	Dried fruit, fruit canned in sugar/heavy syrup, juice, canned pie fillings
Vegetables	Soft cooked canned, fresh, or frozen vegetables	Hard or raw vegetables
Drinks	Water, tea, coffee, sugar-free beverages such as Crystal Light and "light" juices	Soda, chocolate milk, Kool-Aid, fruit drinks, juice