



Patient Education

# **What to eat and drink when you have a High Output Ostomy**

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## What is an ostomy?

An ostomy is a surgically created opening, which connects part of a person's bowel to the outside of their body. The purpose of this opening is to get rid of stool, also called output. There are different types of ostomies depending on the location in the bowel.

You have a:

- jejunostomy – located in the jejunum
- ileostomy – located in the ileum
- colostomy – located in the colon

## What is a high output ostomy?

A high output ostomy is when you have more than 2 litres (8 cups) of fluid from your ostomy in a 24 hour period. The output is usually very watery and needs to be emptied 8 to 10 times or more a day. The output may also be very difficult to pouch and often leaks.

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A high output ostomy can increase your risk of dehydration and malnutrition.

**Signs of malnutrition:**

- sleepiness or tiredness
- dizziness
- losing weight without trying to
- wounds may heal more slowly
- you may bruise more easily

**Signs of dehydration:**

- dry, sticky mouth and increased thirst
- lightheadedness or fainting
- tiredness
- irritability
- headache
- flushed skin
- dark, strong smelling urine
- muscle cramps
- fast heart rate

## **What does this mean to me?**

- Making changes to the types of foods you eat and fluids you drink, and when you eat and drink will help control your stool output.
  - Your gastrointestinal tract is too short to absorb enough nutrition` and fluid from the foods you eat and fluids you drink. You may need additional IV (intravenous) nutrition and fluid, in addition to making changes to your diet.
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## Food – things to try ...

| What to try  | Reason  |
|--|---|
| Eat meals regularly. This means eating small meals every 2 to 3 hours or 6 to 8 times a day.   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prevents you from becoming bloated.</li> <li>• Helps you to absorb your meals better.</li> <li>• Helps you meet your nutritional needs and eat enough calories.</li> </ul> |
| Chew your food very well.  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Helps you to digest or breakdown your food.</li> </ul>   |
| Include foods in your diet that may help thicken your stools. See the list of foods in the chart on page 5 that may decrease the number of stools.   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• These foods pass through your intestine more slowly or form a gel-like substance. Helps to thicken stool or decrease output. See list on page 5.</li> </ul>                |
| <p>At each meal and snack try to eat a starchy food and protein food.</p> <p><b>Starchy foods</b> include bread, cereal, rice, pasta and potatoes.</p> <p><b>Protein foods</b> include meat, fish, cheese, peanut butter and eggs.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• These foods slow the movement of food through your intestines giving your body more time to digest them.</li> </ul>  |
| Add extra salt to your meals or include salty snacks such as crackers, chips or cheezies.  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Helps you to absorb fluids better.</li> </ul>  |
| <p>You may benefit from reducing the lactose in your diet.</p> <p><b>Foods with lactose</b> include milk and ice cream.</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Helps to decrease bloating and diarrhea.</li> </ul>  |
| Avoid high fibre foods (such as whole grains), stringy foods and foods with skins and membranes and other foods that may increase output.  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Helps to reduce stress on your bowel and symptoms of cramping and bloating. Helps to decrease output. See list on page 5.</li> </ul>                                       |
| Avoid foods high in sugar such as white or brown sugar, jam, honey, hard candy, molasses, juice and regular pop.   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May worsen diarrhea.</li> </ul>  |

## Foods that may affect your stool output

| Foods that may decrease the number of stools and/or diarrhea   | Foods that may increase the number of stools and/or diarrhea   |
|--|--|
| <p>Applesauce<br/>                     Bananas<br/>                     Bread – white<br/>                     Cheese<br/>                     Oat bran<br/>                     Oatmeal<br/>                     Pasta – white<br/>                     Peanut butter – smooth<br/>                     Potatoes<br/>                     Pretzels<br/>                     Rice pudding<br/>                     Rice – white<br/>                     Tapioca</p> | <p>Alcoholic beverages<br/>                     Beverages that have caffeine such as coffee, tea and cola<br/>                     Chocolate<br/>                     Dried fruit and pineapple<br/>                     Honey<br/>                     Jams and Jellies<br/>                     Juice especially apple, grape and prune<br/>                     Licorice<br/>                     Nuts<br/>                     Olives<br/>                     Peas, beans and legumes<br/>                     Pickles<br/>                     Popcorn<br/>                     Skins and seeds of fruits and vegetables<br/>                     Spicy foods/sauces<br/>                     Vegetables: broccoli, cauliflower and onions<br/>                     Whole grains</p> |

## Fluids – things to try ...

When you have a high output ostomy, your ability to absorb fluids is reduced. Drinking too much fluid can increase the output from your ostomy and cause you to become dehydrated. This may be opposite to what you might expect.

To help you absorb fluids:

- limit the amount of fluids you drink.
- change the types of fluids you are used to drinking. There are special drinks available called oral rehydration solutions.

| What to try   | Reason   |
|---|--|
| <p>Drink _____ cups of an oral rehydration solution each day</p> <p>Commercial brands of oral rehydration solutions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gastrolyte</li> <li>• Pedialyte</li> <li>• Ceralyte</li> </ul> <p>Home made oral rehydration solution recipe:</p> <p>1 litre (4 cups) of water<br/>40 ml (8 tsp) sugar<br/>5 ml (1 tsp) salt<br/>250 ml (1 cup) orange juice</p> <p>Shake well and dissolve.</p> <p>Other choices:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dilute juice (half juice half water)</li> <li>• Gatorade/Powerade</li> <li>• V8 juice</li> <li>• Tomato juice</li> <li>• Clamato juice</li> <li>• Soup</li> </ul> | <p>Helps to help keep you from getting dehydrated and decrease diarrhea.</p> |

| What to try  | Reason   |
|--|--|
| Limit your intake of all other types of fluids each day, including water, tea, coffee and milk to less than 500 ml or 2 cups a day.  | Water, tea and coffee may increase your diarrhea.  |
| Choose restricted lactose milk such as “Lactaid” or “Natrel lactose free” if you find regular milk increases your output.  | Milk sugar, called “lactose”, can make diarrhea worse in some people.  |
| Avoid drinks high in sugar such as juice, regular pop and fruit drinks.  | May worsen diarrhea.   |
| Avoid sweeteners such as sorbitol and mannitol. They are often found in “diet candies”: sugar free candies, gum and cough drops.   | May worsen diarrhea.   |
| Sip on oral rehydration fluids throughout the day. Try to limit fluid at meals to less than 125 ml (½ cup).  | Helps to prevent you from getting dehydrated.  |
| <p>Separate fluids and solids. It may be helpful to wait 30 minutes before and after a meal before drinking fluids.</p> <p>Limit fluids with meals to only sips and have no more than 125 mL (½ cup) in total.</p> | Helps the solid food pass more slowly through your intestines. This helps your body to absorb the nutrients. |

