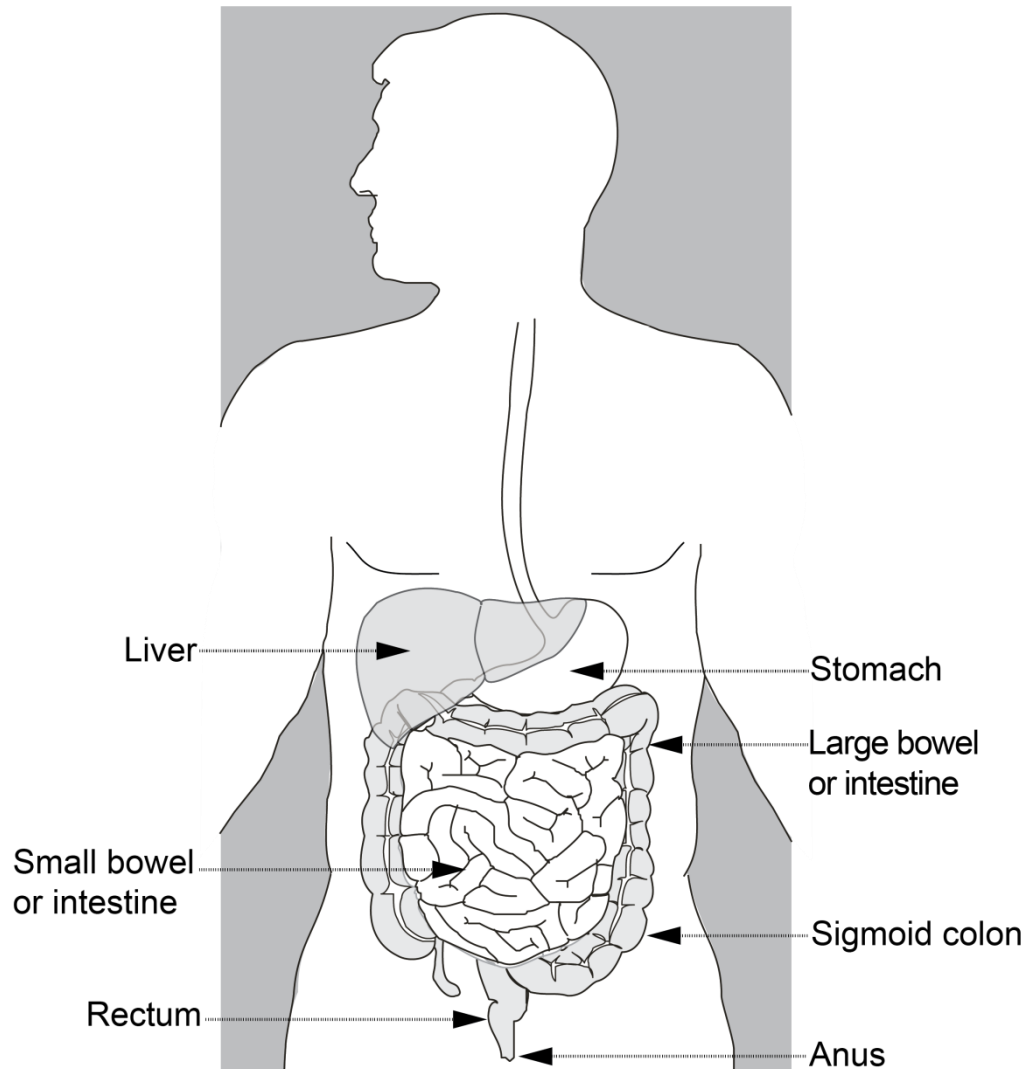


# Colostomy Nutrition Guidelines



Many people with ostomies can enjoy a normal diet. However, what foods are tolerated can vary from person to person.

The most important dietary concerns for people with ostomies are:

- having regular bowel movements, and
- avoiding foods that produce unpleasant odours or gas.

This booklet gives you some tips on how to manage certain unpleasant problems.

## General tips

The following tips will help make caring for your ostomy easier:

✓ **Choose a variety of foods.**

This will help you obtain all the nutrients you need.

✓ **Eat meals regularly.**

You should eat 3 or more times a day. An ostomy works best this way and produces less gas.

✓ **Chew your food well.**

Be especially careful when chewing foods that could be hard to digest or foods that have high fibre content. Chewing well helps to avoid a blockage at your stoma site.

✓ **Try new foods one at a time.**

Learn which foods might cause you problems such as extra gas, unpleasant odours, constipation, or looser stool. If a new food seems to give you problems, do not eat it for a few weeks. Try it again later.

✓ **Drink at least 2 litres (8 cups) of fluid a day.**

You might lose more body fluids than normal through the stoma, so it's important to drink a lot of fluid.

Ostomy patients who have lost a large part of their large bowel (intestine) will especially notice more fluid loss. This is because most fluids are normally reabsorbed in the large intestine.

## To relieve diarrhea

✓ **Drink at least 2.5 L (10 cups) of fluid.**

This is to help replace the extra fluid lost. Diarrhea can lead to dehydration.

- Watch for signs dehydration: increased thirst, dry mouth, dry skin, dizziness, fatigue, decreased urine output, and weight loss.
- Contact your doctor if the signs of dehydration do not go away with drinking more fluids.

✓ **Eat foods that help control diarrhea and thicken stool.**

bananas	cheese	smooth peanut butter
applesauce	yogurt	tapioca
boiled rice	oatmeal	soda crackers
pasta	oat bran	marshmallows

✓ **Choose foods high in sodium.**

Examples include chicken soup, bouillon, processed cheese, salted crackers, pretzels, and pickles.

✓ **Choose foods high in potassium.**

Examples include avocado, kiwi, bananas, oranges, orange juice, tomatoes, tomato sauces or juice, potatoes, and sweet potatoes.

✓ **Avoid foods that might increase diarrhea.**

Examples include dried beans, sugar alcohols (found in sugar-free gum and candy), alcohol, coffee, tea, and other caffeinated drinks.

✓ **Avoid natural laxatives.** Examples include prunes, figs, and licorice.

✓ **Call your doctor if:**

- The diarrhea lasts longer than 24 hours, or
- You are not able to keep up with replacing your fluid losses and are losing weight rapidly.

## To relieve constipation

- ✓ **Drink at least 2.5 litres (10 cups) of fluid each day.**
- ✓ **Eat more fibre.**  
Examples include whole grains breads and cereals, bran, vegetables and fruit.
- ✓ **Try natural laxatives.** Examples include prunes, figs, and licorice.
- ✓ **Exercise.**

## Reducing gas

- ✓ **Avoid swallowing air.**  
Doing these things can add to the problem:
  - drinking carbonated beverages
  - drinking alcohol
  - drinking through a straw
  - chewing gum
- ✓ **Eat regularly.**  
Skipping meals is likely to produce gas.
- ✓ **Avoid foods that cause you problems.**  
The following foods and drinks are just a few that could cause extra gas. If you are bothered by gas, try not to eat these foods. Or, you can try not to have more than one of them at one meal.

broccoli	legumes	turnip
Brussel sprouts	beer	onions
cauliflower	carbonated drinks	pickles
cabbage	peppers	radishes

Again, do not stop eating these foods unless you are sure they are really the cause of the unpleasant problems.

- ✓ **Eat foods that might help reduce gas.**  
Examples include buttermilk, parsley, and yogurt.

## Reducing odour

✓ **If you experience a problem with odour:**

- Try making some changes in your diet.
- Try using odour-resistant appliances.
- Regularly change your pouch and clean your stoma.

✓ **Avoid foods that cause you problems.**

Again, do not stop eating these foods unless you are sure they really are the cause of the odour. Always experiment before cutting out your favourite foods. The following might produce odour:

alcohol	Brussel sprouts	eggs
broccoli	baked beans	strong cheese
cauliflower	onions	garlic
cabbage		

✓ **Eat foods that might help reduce odour.**

Examples include buttermilk, parsley, and yogurt.

✓ **Remind your doctor you have an ostomy** when they are prescribing medications and supplements.

Certain vitamins and medicines can cause odour.

Foods and drinks that give me gas

Foods and drinks that cause odour

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## Further questions

- ✓ Ask your doctor to write a referral for you to see the Outpatient Dietitian at your local hospital.
- ✓ Call 8-1-1 to speak with a Registered Dietitian at HealthLinkBC. Dietitians are available Monday to Friday. For an interpreter, say your language in English. Wait until the interpreter comes on the phone.

[www.fraserhealth.ca](http://www.fraserhealth.ca)

This information does not replace the advice given to you by your healthcare provider.

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