



Eating after Esophagectomy

These guidelines will help you manage symptoms that can happen after this surgery.

We also give you 2 booklets:

- “Preparing for Your Surgery”
- “Esophageal Surgery”

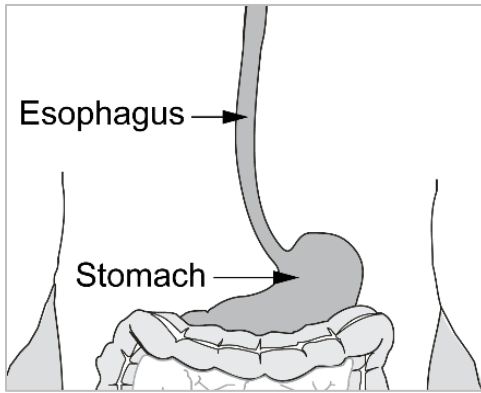
Read both booklets carefully.



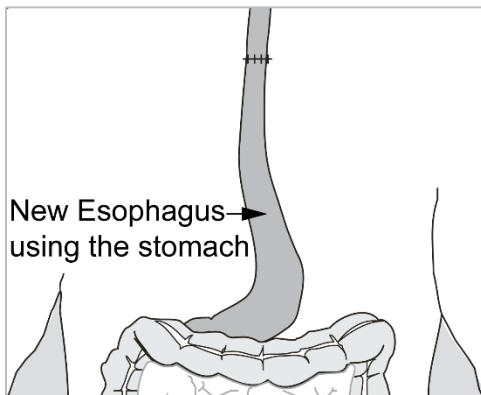
Introduction

An esophagectomy removes part of or the whole esophagus and uses your stomach as your new esophagus.

Before surgery, your esophagus and stomach look like this.



The surgery pulls your stomach up and attaches it to the remaining healthy part of your esophagus.



As you recover, you progress through different diet textures. What you eat will change depending on both your recovery and how well you tolerate food.

Follow a Full Fluid Diet (page 7) until your surgeon says you are ready to move to Soft Diet (page 10).

General Guidelines

To get enough vitamins and minerals

- Take a multivitamin and a mineral supplement every day for 6 months or until you are eating well.
- Take a vitamin B12 supplement (1000mcg a day).
- Take a vitamin D supplement (1000IU a day).
- Start with supplements in liquid form.
- Switch to chewable supplements if you want when you are ready to move to a Soft Diet.
- Ask your family doctor to check your vitamin B12 and iron levels at least once a year.

To keep from getting heartburn (acid reflux)

- Eat small amounts of food and eat more often so you don't overfill your stomach.
- Eat foods that are not spicy, especially foods made with black, red, or chili peppers.
- Avoid fluids and foods that give you heartburn such as citrus fruits or juices.
- Bend at the knees to pick up objects or to tie your shoes.

- Always eat sitting up.

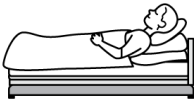
Stay sitting up for 30 minutes after eating.

Don't lie down for at least 1 hour after drinking or eating.

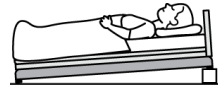


- When resting or sleeping, do not lie flat.

You might need to raise the head of your bed 15 to 20 cm (6 to 8 inches) with blocks of wood or another object.



Head and chest raised with pillows



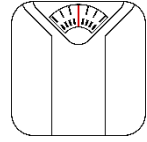
Head of bed raised on blocks

- Don't drink or eat for 2 hours before bedtime.
- Refrain from drinking alcohol and smoking. Both can give you heartburn.

To maintain your weight

- **Weigh yourself once a week.**

It is common to lose a little bit of weight as you adjust to your diet. If you are losing weight, eat more food or eat more often. If you continue to lose weight, contact the dietitian, surgeon, or your family doctor.



Keep track of your weight on page 14.

- Along with tracking your weight, take note of your energy levels. If you have enough energy to do everyday activities, then you are meeting your needs and recovering well.

- Eat small meals more often along with snacks

Snack Ideas:

- custard or pudding
- cream soup
- yogurt or smoothie
- commercial nutritional supplement drink such as Ensure[®] or Boost[®]

- _____

- _____

- Choose foods higher in calories and protein.

If you can only eat a small amount, make every mouthful count!

- Make a list of foods you enjoy and tolerate well.

Keep this list handy so you do not need to think up new ideas for snacks or meals.

To keep from getting gas

- Choose foods and drinks that do not give you gas. Stay away from foods and drinks like broccoli, beans, lentils, cabbage, cauliflower, onions, peas, and carbonated drinks.
- Drink straight from the cup or glass. Don't use a straw.
- Don't chew gum.
- Refrain from smoking.



To manage bowel movements

- Don't eat foods that are natural laxatives such as prunes, figs, flax, and licorice.
- Find out how much sugary food your digestive system can handle without getting diarrhea or dumping syndrome.
 - Start with small amounts of simple sugars such as white sugar, brown sugar, syrup, honey, jelly, or jam.
 - Gradually increase how much you have until you notice increased diarrhea.
- If diarrhea becomes severe, contact your dietitian or surgeon.

If you have a feeding tube

- Flush the feeding tube with 30 to 60mL of warm water at least 2 times a day (such as every morning and evening), even if you are not using it for feeding.

Added Guidelines for Soft Diet

To reduce discomfort

- Eat small, frequent meals (6 to 8 small meals a day).

This helps you get all the nutrients you need.

A small meal is no more than 2 cups of food

– less if you feel full.

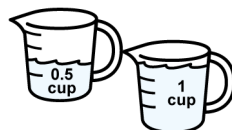


- Eat slowly. Take small bites. Chew your food well.
This helps you to swallow and digest your food.

- Drink most of your fluids between meals.

Limit fluid with meals to ½ cup.

Limit fluid with snacks to 1 cup.



- Choose foods that are soft and moist.

Avoid sticky or gummy foods and foods that are harder to swallow (breads, rice, tough meats, raw vegetables).

Full Fluid Diet

Your surgeon tells you when it is safe to start eating solids. Until then, follow a full fluid diet.

The food included below should be soft and moist. The best way to do this is to cook the food well and add sauces and/or gravies.

Don't eat very hot or very cold foods. They can trigger heartburn.

To make a smooth paste or puree, blend food in a blender. If you don't have a blender, take small bites and chew really well.

Allowed	Not allowed
Milk and Milk Products	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ All milk beverages ✓ Blended yogurt ✓ Cottage cheese ✓ Custard 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Yogurt with nuts, seeds, or pieces of fruit
Grains and Cereals	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Hot cereal (cream of wheat or oatmeal) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Cold cereal ✗ Hot cereal with seeds or nuts
Fruits and Vegetables	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Any fruit or vegetable juice ✓ Applesauce ✓ Pureed fruit ✓ Mashed potato 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ All other fruit and vegetables
Soups	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Strained or blended soups ✓ Broth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ All other soups

Allowed	Not allowed
Desserts	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Pudding and custard ✓ Gelatin desserts like Jell-O ✓ Ice cream, ice milk ✓ Popsicles ✓ Sherbet ✓ Dessert Tofu 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ All other desserts made with coconut, fruit, nuts, or whole fru
Drinks	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Sports drinks ✓ Tea, coffee ✓ Smoothies ✓ Nutritional supplements (Ensure[®], Boost[®], Breakfast Anytime[®], or no name brand nutritional supplement) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ All other drinks, including carbonated beverages

Skim milk powder

To increase your protein and calorie intake, add 1 to 2 tablespoons of skim milk powder to ½ to 1 cup serving of milk or any other item on the full fluid list.

Fluids

To make sure you are getting enough fluid each day, try to drink at least 6 to 8 cups of water throughout the day.



Sample Menu

Breakfast

Fruit juice
Hot cereal

Milk
Tea or coffee

Snack

Yogurt

Lunch

Soup
Vegetable juice

Pudding
Custard

Snack

1 cup of nutritional supplement

Dinner

Soup
Milk

Yogurt
Custard

Snack

Pudding

Soft Diet

When your surgeon says it is safe to start eating solids, follow a soft food diet.

Allowed	Not allowed
Milk and Milk Products	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Milk ✓ Yogurt ✓ Custard ✓ Ice cream, ice milk ✓ Cottage cheese ✓ Cheese 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Ice cream or yogurt with pieces of fruit or nuts
Grains and Cereals	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Hot cereal ✓ Cold cereal softened in milk ✓ Soft cooked noodles, pasta, rice ✓ Plain toasted bread ✓ Pancakes dipped in milk / tea / coffee ✓ Crackers (saltine-type, round-butter type, graham) dipped in milk / tea / coffee ✓ Cookies (Arrowroots, Social teas, Digestives) dipped in milk / tea / coffee 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Coarse cold cereals such as bran, granola, shredded wheat, Müslix ✗ Hot or cold cereal with dried fruit, coconut, seeds, nuts ✗ Fresh or doughy breads, untoasted ✗ Whole grain breads, untoasted or toasted ✗ Bagels ✗ Breads and crackers with nuts, seeds, dried fruit, coconut ✗ Highly seasoned crackers such as garlic- or onion-flavor ✗ Sweet rolls, coffee cake, pastries, or donuts ✗ Fried, brown, or wild rice ✗ Popcorn, potato or taco chips ✗ Hard and soft taco shells

Allowed	Not allowed
Vegetables	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Well cooked, soft vegetables without skins and seeds ✓ Mashed or baked potato or sweet potato (no skin) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Raw vegetables ✗ Tough and stringy cooked vegetables (spinach, potato skins, bean sprouts, asparagus) ✗ Gas-producing vegetables such as beans, broccoli, Brussel sprouts, cabbage, cauliflower, corn, cucumber lentils, green peppers, onions, radishes, rutabagas, sauerkraut, turnips
Meat and Meat Substitutes	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Finely ground lean beef ✓ Tender cuts of lamb, pork, veal, chicken, turkey ✓ Moist fish (deboned and baked) ✓ Casseroles and stews ✓ Cottage and ricotta cheeses ✓ Mild cheese such as cheddar, mozzarella, Swiss ✓ Smooth peanut butter ✓ Plain custard ✓ Eggs (not fried) ✓ Tofu 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Tough meats with a lot of gristle ✗ Deep or pan fried, highly seasoned, smoked, or fatty meat, fish, or poultry (frankfurters, luncheon meats, sausage, bacon, spare ribs, beef brisket) ✗ Chili and other entrees made with pepper or chili powder ✗ Shellfish ✗ Crunchy peanut butter ✗ Yogurt with nuts, seeds, coconut ✗ Pizza, hot dog, hamburger, and other fast foods ✗ Hard beans like chick peas

Allowed	Not allowed
Fruits	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Fruit juice ✓ Fresh, peeled fruit (banana, melon, berries, apples) ✓ Canned or cooked fruit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Citrus juices (orange, grapefruit, or pineapple) ✗ Fresh fruit with skins ✗ Dried fruit
Soups	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Mildly flavored meat stocks ✓ Cream soups made from allowed foods 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Highly seasoned soups ✗ Cream soups made with gas-producing vegetables (see Vegetables section)

Sample Menu

Breakfast

- ½ cup canned fruit (non-citrus)
- ½ to ¾ cup cereal
- 1 small pancake
- 1 teaspoon margarine / butter
- 1 teaspoon jelly
- ½ cup 2% milk or ½ cup of Greek style yogurt

Snack

- 3 graham crackers
- 1 tablespoon peanut butter
- 1 teaspoon jelly
- 1 cup decaf tea

Lunch

- 3 oz. beef patty (finely ground) with gravy or ½ cup
canned tuna mixed with mayonnaise
- ½ cup mashed potatoes
- ½ cup canned peaches
- ½ cup soft cooked vegetables

Snack

- 4 to 6 saltine crackers
- 1 tablespoon cream cheese
- 1 cup milk or high calorie, high protein drink

Dinner

- 3 oz. roast chicken (finely ground) with 1/2 cup white
rice or pasta or noodles, or 1 cup stew
- ¼ cup soft cooked vegetables
- ½ cup canned fruit
- 1 teaspoon margarine/ butter
- ½ cup decaf tea taken 30 minutes later

Snack

- ¼ cup cottage cheese
- ½ cup applesauce
- ½ cup milk or 1/2 cup of high protein high calorie drink

Remember: To keep hydrated, drink extra fluids throughout the day.

When you have questions



- Fraser Health Virtual Care
10:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m., 7 days a week
Phone: 1-800-314-0999
Live chat: fraserhealth.ca/virtualcare
- HealthLinkBC Dietitian
9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday to Friday
Phone: 8-1-1
Email: healthlinkbc.ca/healthy-eating/email-healthlinkbc-dietitian

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

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