



Royal Berkshire  
NHS Foundation Trust

# Dietary advice when you have a colostomy

## Information for patients

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Your Dietitian \_\_\_\_\_

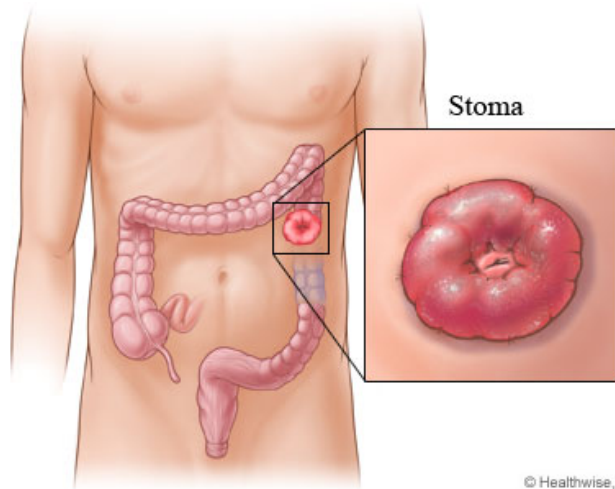
Dietitian contact number: 0118 322 7116

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# What is a colostomy?

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A colostomy is a surgical procedure that brings out the healthy end of the large intestine, also known as the colon, through the front of the abdomen forming a stoma (opening) from which a pouch is connected to collect stool excreted by the bowel.



## What can I eat?

For the first 4-8 weeks after your colostomy has been formed, your bowel may be swollen which may affect how well your food is absorbed. Therefore you may find it beneficial to have three small, easily digested meals each day with two to three snacks or nutritional drinks in between. Remember to eat slowly and chew your food well.

Once your bowels are working more normally there are no specific foods that you need to avoid, but you may find that some foods upset you or cause unpleasant symptoms. More information about foods that may cause problems will be discussed later on in this booklet.

# Eatwell Guide

Use the Eatwell Guide to help you get a balance of healthier and more sustainable food. It shows how much of what you eat overall should come from each food group.

Check the label on packaged foods

Each serving contains		
Low	High	
Energy	1.5kcal	2.5kcal
Fat	5g	10g
Saturated fat	1g	2g
Salt	0.5g	1.5g
Sugar	5g	10g

of an adult's recommended intake

based on the adult diet 100g/100kcal/100kcal

Choose foods lower in fat, salt and sugars



Minimise 'sugary' soft drinks including tea and coffee all count. Limit fruit juice and other sweeteners to a total of 150ml a day



Eat less often and in small amounts

Per day 2000kcal 2500kcal = ALL FOOD + ALL DRINKS

## What is a balanced diet?

A balanced diet contains foods from each of the following 5 food groups, in the correct proportions. This will mean your body gets all the nutrients that it needs (see the Eatwell Guide on page 2)

### Potatoes, bread and cereals

Include these with every meal and snack. High fibre varieties (such as wholemeal bread and pasta, wholegrain cereals) can help relieve constipation, but some people may find these cause wind or loose stools. It is recommended that you consume **7-14 portions per day**.

A portion includes one of the following:

- 2-4 tablespoons (tbsp) cereal.
- 1 slice of bread.
- 2-3 crispbreads or crackers.
- 2-3 tbsp rice, pasta or mashed potato.
- 2 new potatoes or half a baked potato.

### Fruit and vegetables

Aim to have **5 portions per day**. A portion includes one of the following:

- Banana or apple.
- 1 slice of melon.
- 2 plums.
- 1 small glass of fruit juice or smoothie.
- 1 handful of grapes.
- 1 cereal bowl of salad.
- 3 heaped tbsp of vegetables.
- 2 new potatoes or half a baked potato.

## Meat, fish, eggs and alternatives

Have **2-3 servings daily**. Alternatives include beans and pulses but avoid large portions of these if you find that they upset you. A serving includes one of the following:

- 2-3 oz (60-85g) meat, poultry or vegetarian alternative.
- 4-5 oz (120-140g) fish.
- 2 eggs.
- 2 tbsp nuts.
- 3 tbsp beans, lentils.

## Dairy products

Try to have **3 portions** of milk, cheese and yoghurt **daily**. Use full fat products if your appetite is poor or you are trying to gain weight.

A portion of dairy includes one of the following:

- $\frac{1}{3}$  pint of milk.
- Small pot yoghurt.
- 2 tbsp cottage cheese.
- 1  $\frac{1}{2}$  oz (40-45g, matchbox size) cheese.

## Foods containing fat and sugar

These include cooking and spreading fats, sugar, cakes, biscuits, crisps and so on. These can be eaten more if your appetite is poor or if weight gain is desired. If you need to build up your dietary intake or weight, snacks between meals are a good idea. Suitable snacks include:

- Cheese and biscuits
- Yoghurt and fruit

- Small sandwich or cake
- Cereal with full fat milk
- Packet of crisps or mini cheddar biscuits

## Fluid

One of the main jobs of the colon is to absorb water, but you may find that in the first few weeks after your operation, you may not absorb water as efficiently. Therefore it is very important to drink plenty of fluids to prevent dehydration. Aim for at least 2 litres (10 cups) of fluid daily. All non alcoholic drinks count. The following drinks are good options:

- Fruit squashes or diluted fruit juice.
- “Isotonic” sports drinks.
- Milkshakes and milky drinks eg: hot chocolate, Horlicks, Ovaltine.
- Fizzy drinks such as lemonade or flavoured water – stirred or shaken to remove the fizz.

You will need to drink even more fluids if you do any physical exercise or if the weather is very hot.

## Are there any foods I need to avoid?

It is possible that some foods may cause unpleasant symptoms. You should only avoid foods that you find upset you, as everybody is different.

If you find that a food causes a problem initially, you may find that your tolerance improves with time. Therefore, aim to retry any problem foods every few weeks. If you experience problems with a particular food, you may decide to eat that food only when at home, and avoid it in social situations.

Foods that *may* increase/quicken stoma output:

- Fatty or spicy foods.
- Alcohol.
- Fruit juice.
- Dried fruit.
- Rhubarb.
- Green leafy vegetables.
- Peas.
- Beans.
- Sweet corn.
- Celery.
- Oily dressings.
- Chocolate.

**Note:** gelatine containing foods like jelly babies and marshmallows may thicken the stool and slow down its passage through the bowel. Be aware that these are high in sugar, if you have diabetes.

Foods that *may* cause wind:

- Fizzy drinks.
- Beer.
- Baked beans.
- Lentils.
- Peas.
- Cabbage.
- Brussels sprouts.
- Leeks.
- Onions.
- Cucumber.
- Artichokes.
- Asparagus.
- Bananas.
- Curry.
- Nuts.

Foods that may increase odour of stoma output:

- Onions.
- Garlic.
- Brussels sprouts.
- Cabbage.
- Broccoli.
- Cauliflower.
- Parsnip.
- Turnip.
- Beans.
- Fish.
- Eggs.

**Note:** fruit juices, yoghurt or parsley may help to control the odour

Food that *may* change the colour of stoma output

- Beetroot.

## Notes

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This document can be made available in other languages and formats upon request.

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