

Dietary advice following insertion of your oesophageal stent

Introduction

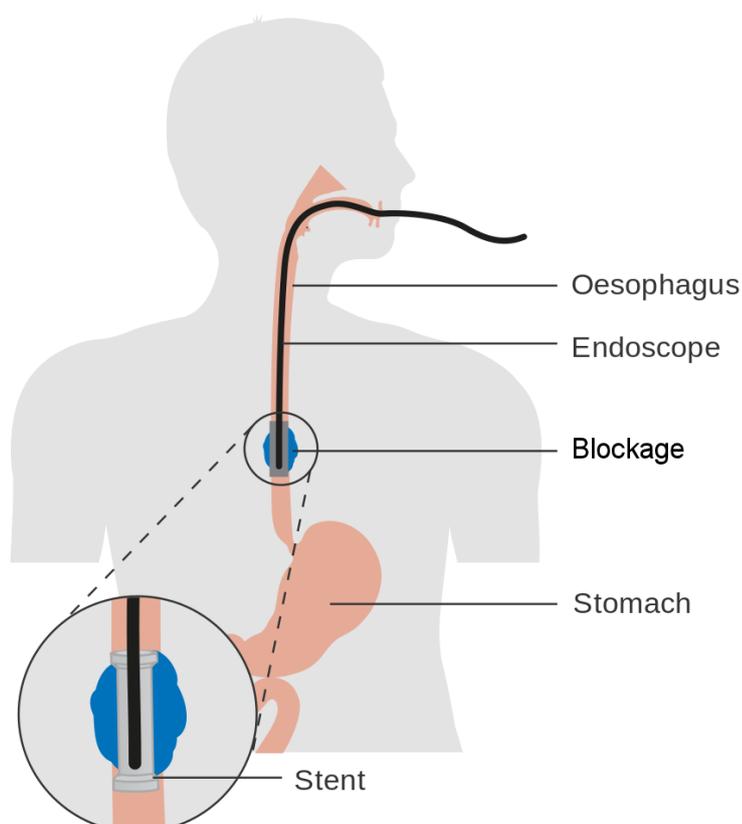
This leaflet provides information on what an oesophageal stent is, why you may need one, and what diet you will need to follow after the stent is placed.

What is an oesophageal stent?

The oesophagus (gullet) carries food and fluid from the mouth to the stomach. A blockage or narrowing in the oesophagus will stop food from moving as it should, making eating difficult.

An oesophageal stent is a flexible mesh tube which is placed at the site of the blockage. The stent will expand and allow food and fluid to pass through easier.

There are different types of oesophageal stents and it will be inserted in the Endoscopy Unit. The procedure will take approximately 30 minutes.



Dietary guidelines following stent insertion

Once the stent is in place, the medical team will advise you when it is safe to start eating or drinking. You may never return to a normal diet but it should be possible to manage a soft diet. It is important to introduce foods gradually in stages. The following can be used as a guide:

Stage 1 – Liquid diet

- Sips of water, squash, tea, coffee, fruit juice, full fat milk.
- You may require prescribable nutritional supplements to help you meet your nutritional requirements. Your Dietitian can advise you on this.
- If this is tolerated, progress to strained soup (no lumps), ice cream, smooth yoghurt, and custard.
- After 24 hours, you may feel ready to progress to the next stage.



Stage 2 – Puree diet

- A pureed diet should have a smooth consistency.
- It can include mashed vegetables, pureed fruit, milky porridge, and Weetabix with milk.
- It is also possible to blend meat, fish and eggs. This is made easier by adding gravy or sauce when blending.
- If you are an inpatient at the hospital, you can select the puree option from the hospital menu.



Stage 3 – Soft diet

- A soft diet should need little chewing and should be able to be mashed with a fork.
- Chop or mash foods finely and use plenty of gravy, sauces and cream to adjust the consistency.

If you are unsure about when to progress through the stages, please contact your medical team.

Meal ideas

Breakfast – porridge, Rice Krispies, cornflakes, creamy yoghurts, stewed fruit and cream, scrambled egg, omelette.

Lunch – soup with no lumps, mashed baked beans, mashed potato, jacket potato (no skin), tinned fish, pasta with sauce, ravioli.

Main meal – fish in sauce, fish pie, spaghetti in tomato sauce, macaroni cheese, broccoli or cauliflower cheese, corned beef hash, cottage pie, casserole or stews.

Desserts – custard, semolina, Instant Whip, mousse, ice cream, rice pudding.

Snacks – milkshakes, moist sponge cake, biscuits dipped in drinks, yoghurt, mousse, soft fruit, Meritene or Complan.



It is important to include a variety of foods of a suitable texture in order to give you all the nourishment you need.

Ideas to enrich your diet

Eating little and often is the best way to increase your calories – try to eat something every 2-3 hours. Foods can be fortified to make them more nourishing, and aim to follow a high calorie, high protein diet. The following may be useful:

- Add butter, spread, cream or cheese to mashed potato.
- Add grated cheese to soup, scrambled eggs, vegetables or sauces.
- Add cream, ice cream, or syrup to puddings and tinned fruit.
- Include full fat yoghurts and milky puddings such as custard, rice pudding, mousse and crème caramel.
- Use mayonnaise, salad cream and dressing.
- Fortify milk by adding 4 tablespoons of skimmed milk powder to full fat milk – this can be used with cereals and drinks.

Nutritional supplements

These are high calorie drinks which also contain protein, vitamins and minerals. They can be used if you are unable to meet your nutritional requirements through your normal diet. There are different types and flavours so it is worthwhile trying different ones to see which suits you best. Examples include: Ensure Compact, Ensure Plus Milkshake, Ensure Twocal, Ensure Plus Juice, ProCal Shot and Calogen.



There are some nutritional supplements which can be bought over the counter. Examples are Complan and Meritene which are available in most pharmacies and supermarkets.

Acid reflux

This is a common issue post-insertion because the stent is placed across the opening between the oesophagus and the stomach. Your doctor may prescribe an antacid medication to help this.

How to prevent the stent from blocking

Certain foods are more likely to cause your stent to become blocked. It is therefore necessary to avoid the following: bread, toast, tough meat, hard-boiled egg or fried egg, fish with bones, pithy fruit (orange, grapefruit, pineapple), stringy vegetables (green beans, celery), potato skins, chips, salad items, and raw vegetables.

It is also important to take time at mealtimes and eat little and often, aiming for 5-6 small meals daily. Always sit upright at mealtimes and for half an hour afterwards. Having drinks during and after meal may help foods to move more easily through the stent.

What to do if your stent becomes blocked

- Remain calm and try not to panic.
- Stop eating and take a few sips of a drink – warm or fizzy drinks are often useful to relieve blockages.
- Try standing up and walking around.
- Try this over several hours as it can take time for the blockage to be relieved.
- If after 24 hours, you are still not able to swallow food or fluid, contact your medical team or the Endoscopy Unit.

Contact us

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

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