



Most children with ostomies can return to a normal diet soon after the operation. You can start to give your child most foods slowly (unless there is an allergy). Talk with your child's doctor or nurse about specific foods. This Family Education Sheet can help you decide which foods may be best for your child.

How should my child eat after surgery?

- Your child may be more comfortable eating many small meals and snacks for the first few weeks after surgery instead of larger meals.
- Add new foods to your child's diet one at a time. After she gets used to that food, add another.
- Be sure that your child chews her food very well. Some foods can change the smell and thickness of the stool (poop) and cause gas (*you'll find a list of foods in this handout*). If a food seems to cause a bad smell or gas, you do not need to stop giving your child the food. You can try giving it to your child several times.

How much should my child drink?

- If your child has an ileostomy (a type of ostomy that connects the small intestine to the belly), it's very important for her to drink lots of fluids. Your child needs extra fluids to avoid becoming dehydrated.
- Children can also get dehydrated from being in the sun or in hot temperatures, lots of exercise (like playing sports) and taking some medications. It's important for your child to drink extra fluids in these situations.
- Talk with your doctor or nurse about exactly how much your child needs to drink.

What are the signs and symptoms of dehydration?

- Extremely thirsty
- Dry mouth and dry skin
- Less urine (pee) or urine that is darker in color
- Nausea or belly cramping
- General feeling of achiness
- Lightheadedness or feeling dizzy

What is a food blockage?

- Your child may develop a food blockage, especially if your child has an ileostomy. Undigested fibrous foods can build up and block the flow of stool through the bowel.
- Your child should chew foods well to avoid blockages.
- Call your doctor or nurse if your child has belly pain, very little or no stool for more than 4 hours, a large increase in the amount of stool or if she is vomiting (throwing up).

What foods can cause blockages?

- Fibrous vegetables like celery, broccoli, beans
- Coconut
- Coleslaw
- Corn on the cob
- Dried fruits
- Nuts and seeds
- Meats in casings, like hot dogs, sausage, kielbasa
- Peas
- Pineapple
- Popcorn
- Raisins
- Skins from fruits & vegetables

How can I tell if there is a blockage?

Your child may have:

- Crampy belly pain
- Belly swelling
- Stoma swelling
- Large amount of watery stool (usually with a bad smell)
- The inability to eat or drink
- Nausea and vomiting
- Irritability and crankiness
- Very little or no stool for more than four hours

What foods can cause a bad odor?

- Asparagus
- Beans
- Brussels sprouts
- Cabbage
- Coffee
- Cucumber
- Eggs
- Fish
- Garlic
- Green peppers
- Milk
- Onions
- Prunes
- Radishes
- Turnips
- Vitamins



What foods help with bad odor?

- Buttermilk
- Parsley
- Yogurt
- Cranberry juice
- Spinach

What foods might cause gas?

- Apples (raw)
- Chewing gum
- Nuts
- Asparagus
- Corn
- Onions
- Beans
- Cucumber
- Melon
- Broccoli
- Dairy foods
- Peas
- Cabbage
- Eggs
- Spicy foods
- Carbonated drinks
- Melon
- Spinach
- Cauliflower
- Mushrooms

Note: Chewing gum, or drinking straws, causes you to swallow more air and increase gas (“air in the pouch”). This may create a noisy stoma!

What foods thicken stool?

- Applesauce
- Marshmallows
- Starchy foods (rice, pasta, potatoes, tapioca)
- Bananas
- Milk
- Yogurt
- Breads
- Peanut butter (creamy)
- Cheeses

What foods thin stool?

- Apple juice
- Fried foods
- Foods with lots of seasoning
- Chocolate
- Grape juice
- Prune juice
- Fresh fruits
- Green beans

What foods change the color of stool?

- Beets
- Red Jell-O

Contact us

Monday—Friday
8:30 a.m.— 5 p.m.

Call the General Surgery Outpatient
Nurse Practitioner line at 617-355-7716.

Weeknights
5 p.m.— 8:30 a.m.
weekends/holidays

Call the page operator at 617-355-6369
and ask for the General Surgery senior
resident on call.

For more information

The United Ostomy Associations of America:

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This Family Education Sheet is available in [Arabic](#), [Haitian Creole](#), [Simplified Chinese \(China PRC, Singapore and Malaysia\)](#), [Spanish](#) and [Traditional Chinese \(Hong Kong and Taiwan\)](#).