

What to Eat after Nissen Fundoplication and Esophagectomy Surgery

After your surgery, you will need to follow a **soft food diet**.

A soft food diet can make it easier for you to swallow after your surgery.

It does not include food or drinks that can make swallowing harder or make pain worse after your surgery. This diet will also help you eat enough calories and protein, which will promote healing and let you return you to your normal diet.

Your doctor may advise you to follow a full fluid or pureed diet before you begin a soft diet. If this is advised, the dietitian will give you additional information.

How long will I have to follow a soft food diet?

You will need to follow this diet for 2 to 4 weeks after your surgery. Check with your doctor at your first follow-up appointment to see when you are able to go back to your regular diet.

What foods can I eat?

A soft food diet includes foods that are both **soft** and **moist**.

Before eating, ask yourself, is this food soft and moist? For example, bread is soft, but it is not moist.

Refer to the chart on the following pages for foods and drinks you can and cannot eat.

Guidelines:

1. Sit upright while eating.
2. Sit upright for 30 to 60 minutes after eating meals and snacks.
3. Eat 4 to 5 small meals during the day.
4. Take small bites, eat slowly and chew your food well. Drink liquids with meals.
5. Prepare foods so that they are moist, soft, and easily swallowed.
6. If you are having problems eating enough protein and calories, you may need to drink a nutritional supplement or homemade milkshake as a meal or snack. Examples include Carnation Breakfast Anytime, Ensure, Boost, or a similar store brand.
7. Take a multivitamin, in liquid or chewable form.

Foods	Eat these foods	Don't eat these foods
Milk and mild products	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cheese, all types • Cottage cheese • Custard • Milk, all types • Milkshake • Smoothie • Pudding • Yogurt, smooth without skin/seeds • Ice cream, smooth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yogurt and ice cream with nuts, pieces of dried fruit and/or granola (such as Heavenly Hash or Rum & Raisin ice cream, yogurt parfait)
Bread and grain products	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cereal, cooked (such as oatmeal or cream of wheat) • Noodles, cooked • Dry cereal softened with milk • Rice, well cooked or in soup or sauce • Toast without crusts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bread, rolls, and bagels • Any grain products containing coconut, nuts, seeds or dried fruit • Muffins • Grains
Meat and alternatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tender, minced, or stewed meat and poultry moistened with gravy, sauce or broth • Scrambled or poached eggs • Tofu • Fish, all types (except deep fried) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fried eggs • Deep-fried, battered meat • Legumes such as chickpeas, kidney beans and lentils • Luncheon meats, bacon • Nuts and seeds • Peanut butter
Fruits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applesauce • Berries (strawberry, blueberry, raspberry, blackberry) • Ripe fresh fruit, peeled (such as banana, melon, pears, peach) • Fruit juice • Canned fruits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apples • Any fruit with skins • Dried fruit • Hard or stringy fruit, such as rhubarb or pineapple
Vegetables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potatoes, well cooked, no skin • Sweet potatoes, well cooked, no skin • Canned vegetables • Vegetables, well cooked, no skin 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • French Fries • Raw vegetables • Hard or stringy vegetables, such as celery

Foods	Eat these foods	Don't eat these foods
Soups and casseroles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Soups and casseroles made with food from the "Foods you can eat" list, such as cream or broth soups, macaroni and cheese 	
Sweets, deserts and snack foods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chocolate, no nuts • Gelato • Jelly, seedless jam • Jell-O • Marshmallows • Popsicle, fruit ice • Sorbet 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cake, all types • Chocolate with nuts, dried fruit • Cookies • Muffins • Pastries • Deep fried food • Chips • Crackers • Popcorn • Pretzels

For Nissen Fundoplication patients only:

It will be difficult or impossible for you to burp after surgery. To prevent gas and bloating in your stomach follow the suggestions below:

1. Do not use straws.
2. Sip drinks, do not gulp them.
3. Do not have carbonated drinks such as soda pop, sparkling water, beer or champagne.
4. Do not chew gum.
5. Do not talk while eating.

If you are choking or have pain during swallowing, go to the emergency department at the hospital closest to you.

Please talk to any member of your healthcare team if you have questions or if you do not understand any of the information in this handout. Your nurse will have given you the number for to call between the hours of 8:30am and 4pm from Monday to Friday. The cancer centre is closed on weekends and holidays.

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Adapted from "What to eat after Nissen Fundoplication Surgery" with permission from Hamilton Health Sciences