Eating Guidelines for People Who Have a Colostomy

The information in this handout will help you once you are ready to eat solid foods after your colostomy surgery. It provides advice on healthy eating, managing constipation and odours and gas from your colostomy. If you have any concerns about your diet or you are experiencing discomfort with your colostomy, speak with your health care provider or dietitian.

Steps you can take

1. Follow Eating Well with Canada’s Food Guide to get the nutrients you need to stay healthy [www.healthcanada.gc.ca/foodguide](http://www.healthcanada.gc.ca/foodguide). It provides advice about the types and amounts of foods that you need each day.

2. Include foods that contain dietary fibre and drink plenty of fluids every day to help keep bowel movements regular and prevent constipation.

   To increase the dietary fibre in your diet include:

   - Whole grain breads, bagels and pasta.
   - High fibre cereals with at least 4 grams of fibre per serving.
   - Whole grains such as buckwheat, bulgar, pot barley, quinoa and brown rice.
   - Fresh, frozen or canned vegetables such as bok choy, broccoli, corn, peas, squash.
   - Fresh, frozen or canned fruits like bananas, oranges and peaches
   - Unsalted nuts and seeds like almonds, cashews and sunflower seeds.
   - Dried beans, peas and lentils such as kidney beans, chickpeas and brown lentils.

   Good fluid choices include:

   - water
See the Additional Resources below for more information about how to stay hydrated and manage constipation.

3. If you have odour or gas from your colostomy, try the following tips to help manage your symptoms. If some foods give you problems, stop eating them for a couple of weeks to see if it makes a difference. If it does not help, add the food back into your diet. Find out what works for you. Everyone is different.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Symptoms</th>
<th>Tips</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Odour    | Try limiting these foods to help decrease odour:  
|          | - asparagus  
|          | - broccoli  
|          | - eggs  
|          | - fish  
|          | - garlic  
|          | - onion  
|          | - spiced foods.  
|          | Try adding these foods to help decrease odour:  
|          | - buttermilk  
|          | - fresh parsley  
|          | - yogurt.  
|          | Try a pouch deodorizer. Talk to a pharmacist, nurse or doctor about this. |
| Gas      | Try limiting these foods to reduce gas:  
|          | - cruciferous vegetables (broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, cauliflower) |
Try the following suggestions to reduce swallowing air and producing gas:

- Eat slowly.
- Chew food well.
- Avoid talking while eating.
- Don't smoke.
- Avoid chewing gum.
- Avoid drinking with a straw.
- Avoid carbonated beverages.

If you are still having problems, try keeping a food diary. It can help you remember what you ate and any symptoms you had. To keep a food diary write down:

- What you eat and drink.
- The time you have food or drink.
- Any symptoms you have.

Review your food diary to help find any food or drinks that may be causing you problems.

**Special Considerations**

**Should I take a multi-vitamin?**

Talk to your dietitian or doctor about whether you need a vitamin or mineral supplement.
Additional Resources

- Tips to Reduce Gas?

- Guidelines for Drinking Fluids to Stay Hydrated

- Food Sources of Fibre

These resources are provided as sources of additional information believed to be reliable and accurate at the time of publication and should not be considered an endorsement of any information, service, product or company.

Notes

Distributed by:

© 2013 Dietitians of Canada. All rights reserved. May be reproduced in its entirety provided source is acknowledged.

This information is not meant to replace advice from your medical doctor or individual counseling with a registered dietitian. It is intended for educational and informational purposes only.