

DIETARY ADVICE FOR AFTER YOUR HIATUS HERNIA REPAIR

Following the surgery, it is important to follow a special diet afterward as swallowing may be difficult as a result of swelling around the oesophagus (gullet) in addition to the tightness from the stitches.

Patients who also follow the diet advice have better outcomes and are less likely to get recurrent symptoms. It may take a month or more for swallowing to feel normal again with all foods.

"It is important to realise that you may always have a degree of difficulty in swallowing large amounts of bread or red meat. We would also advise not to have too many fizzy drinks as this may cause excessive gas bloating."

FOUR STAGES OF DIET ARE ADVISED. IN EACH STAGE, WHEN SWALLOWING FEELS NORMAL, YOU CAN MOVE ON TO THE NEXT STAGE.

MOST IMPORTANTLY:

- Have small, frequent meals and snacks, rather than large meals
- Eat slowly and chew foods well
- Have moist foods
- If any food sticks, stop eating, relax, and allow time for food to clear. Try and drink water to wash the food down; if that fails, try some soda water. If food remains stuck, contact the hospital ward or your surgeon.

Avoid the following until swallowing is free and easy (usually four weeks):

- Fresh bread
- Rice
- Cake
- Hard biscuits
- Grilled and fried meat, especially steak, chicken, unless pureed, minced or finely chopped
- Aerated drinks (soft drinks, milkshakes – unless soda water is required to relieve blockage)
- Highly spiced foods (avoid for 6 weeks).
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STAGE 1: DAY 1 TO DAY 7 POST SURGERY

Fluids and semi-fluid items only, these should be smooth with no lumps

- Water, juice, cordial (no fizzy drinks)
- Milk – plain, flavoured
- Tea, coffee (not too hot)
- Soups (strained or finely pureed no lumps)
- Ice-cream, custard, jelly
- Yoghurt (plain, vanilla or honey – not with seeds or pieces of fruit)
- Smoothies (no lumps)
- Gravy, white sauce (no lumps)
- Food pureed to a thin consistency (no lumps).

A food processor or blender is useful.

Breakfast ideas

Choose from: glass of milk, smooth yoghurt, custard, jelly, tea/coffee, juice. NO LUMPS

Lunch ideas

Choose from strained soup, puree potato Swede and carrot, gravy, white sauce, tomato sauce, jelly, custard, ice-cream, cordial, juice. NO LUMPS

Dinner ideas

Choose from strained soup, puree potato, puree carrot or Swede, gravy, white sauce, ice-cream, jelly, tea, coffee, and juice. NO LUMPS
Between meals snack ideas: milk (plain or flavoured), cordial, juice, smooth yoghurt fortified

STAGE 2: ONE WEEK POST SURGERY - FOR 2 WEEKS

Mashed and very soft foods only, soft lumps able to be mashed with a fork.

Add in:

- Porridge, breakfast cereals such as Weetabix, Cornflakes, rice crispies, well softened with milk or hot water
- Fruit – fresh fruit (soft, well ripened) stewed or tinned fruit (soft or pureed)
- Vegetables – well cooked, soft, mashed or pureed
- Pasta (spaghetti, noodles) well cooked, soft
- Pureed meats, pureed chicken – can be with gravy in a thick soup, or served with mashed/pureed vegetables
- Fish – fresh (take care to remove all bones) or canned tuna, salmon (mashed, no bones)
- Eggs – soft boiled, scrambled, and poached.

Breakfast ideas

Choose from porridge or softened cereal with milk and sugar, soft boiled egg.

Lunch ideas

Choose from smooth soup, mashed tuna or salmon with noodles and white sauce, pureed meat with mashed or pureed vegetables, pureed or mashed fruit.

Dinner ideas

Choose from pureed braised meat, poached fish fillets with white sauce, mashed potato, pureed vegetables, pureed or mashed fruit, and custard.

Between meals snack ideas: soft or mashed fruit, custard

STAGE 3: THREE WEEKS POST SURGERY - FOR 2 WEEKS

Light foods with more texture – chew well

Add in:

- Tender meats, mince, stews
- Chicken – minced or finely chopped
- Salads (remove skin from peppers, cucumber and tomatoes if having difficulty)
- Toast
- Biscuits
- Alcohol in small quantities if desired.

Breakfast ideas

Choose from any of the above, plus toast with spreads, baked beans, cheese and tomato.

Lunch Ideas

Choose from any of the above plus soup, tender braised meat and vegetables, fish in white sauce with or without cheese, canned spaghetti, creamed beans kidney, butter or baked (well cooked), cheese, salad, soft fruit, tinned or fresh.

Dinner ideas

Any of the above, plus pasta with bolognese sauce, meat casserole, cottage pie, steamed fish, well cooked vegetables, soft fruit, fresh or tinned.

Between meals snack ideas: ripe fresh fruit, cheese, biscuits.

STAGE 4: GRADUAL RETURN TO NORMAL EATING - FIVE WEEKS POST SURGERY

Gradually add in firmer foods. Try the food in the avoid list in small amounts one by one. Chew these foods well.

After about Five weeks, you should be able to eat a full range of foods.

However, you are advised to:

- Continue with small meals and between-meals snack if need to satisfy your appetite rather than large meals
- Continue to chew all foods well.
- Eat slowly allowing time for food to pass into the stomach

If you are unable to eat a proper diet after about four weeks, please contact your surgeon's secretary as your surgeon may wish to see you earlier than planned in the Outpatient Department.