

Post Surgical Liquid Phase:

Guidelines for Stomach and Bariatric Surgery



After gastric (stomach) surgery, our initial concern is to allow the sutures etc (including a band if inserted) and the swelling to settle down and become secure. We believe that this settling in process takes about 6 weeks and we therefore have a program covering this period during which we focus very much on a pattern of drinking and eating which will not put any strain on the surgery.

In particular we are seeking to avoid vomiting and stretching of the newly rearranged stomach.

The program consists of an initial phase of having liquids only, and then after about two-three weeks a phase of gentle transition from liquids through to solid food. This will be discussed at an appointment ~ 2 weeks after your surgery.

The following guides you through a suitable drinking and eating pattern during the first 3 weeks after operation and offers a range of suggestions to help make this phase more tolerable. It is important that your liquid diet is as nutritionally balanced as possible during the 3 weeks and you are taking your multivitamins.

At all times throughout this phase (and through subsequent months and years when you are on solid food) you should seek to identify when you have had enough and stop any oral intake before it generates a feeling of discomfort or nausea or wish to vomit.

You must take fluids slowly so that you can develop an increased sensitivity or alertness to how easily they pass into the stomach area. Clear fluids should pass easily at all times without any hindrance. If you are having difficulty with clear fluids then something is wrong and you should always your contract your doctor.

On the Day of the Operation

After you are fully awake from the anaesthetic you will be able to have sips of fluid and ice to suck. You will have an intravenous drip in the arm and this will provide all the volume of fluid that you need. You may be able to commence on clear fluids (refer to list over page) that evening.

On the First Day after operation

A special X-ray will be performed in some cases which involves you drinking a special fluid and staff watching that it passes normally through the stomach. This helps to confirm that all is correctly in position, that there is a clear pathway for food. Once this X-ray confirms that all is well, you will be able to progress from clear fluids to nutritional fluids. If this is not

required, you will be able to commence a liquid diet once you have been seen by the surgeon.

On the Second Day After Operation (at home)

You will now be having nutritional fluids in addition to the clear fluids / water. The nutritional fluids will give a sensation of fullness so drink these fluids steadily rather than gulping then down to minimise pressure on the stomach area and to prevent vomiting.

For the first week you will find your volume to tolerance will be small, so regular sips of nutritious fluids during day is important.

The following is a guide to help encourage a sufficient intake of nutritional fluids during the first two weeks

For the first 4 days it is suggested that you try to have at least **50-100ml** 'Nutritional' fluids of a thinner consistency **every hour** (total 800-1000mls).

Have additional sips of water in between **and drink at least 2 litres of fluid per day**. Tea and coffee included.

Then move onto 200ml of nutritional fluids of a thicker consistency every **second hour** (Total 1200- 1400mls). Sips of water in between and drink at least two litres of fluid per day. Tea and coffee included.

The amount of fluid tolerated at any one time will vary between individuals, for example, 100ml banana smoothie may take over 20 minutes to drink, taking small sips at a time. For the first few days after surgery you may need to have your fluids at a thinner consistency.

Aim for a total fluid intake of at least 2 litres each day to prevent dehydration. You may need to sip slowly on other fluids including water, tea/ coffee between drink times to achieve two litres.

***The final test of whether a food is appropriately liquid is whether you can suck it up a straw.**

For the Remainder of the First three Weeks

The volume you can tolerate will increase over the next 2 weeks; don't be surprised if you are able to manage almost normal volumes by the middle of the 3rd week. Remember to stop when you are feeling comfortably full. This liquid diet needs to continue for **three weeks** from the day of operation.

Avoid Alcohol

Medication

Any medicines that you take are best taken as a liquid or finely crushed (talk to your doctor or pharmacist if unsure). Tablets such as Panadol[®] and Asprin can be used in soluble form.

The other end (your bowels)

Inevitably the fluid diet is lower in roughage (fibre) so you could expect the frequency of bowel activity to decrease. Alternatively, some people experience fluid bowel actions. If you are concerned about your bowel habit, contact your doctor or dietitian.

What To Include in your Liquid Diet: Nutritional Fluids

Milk

Physical 'No Fat' and 'Skinny Milk' are the most suitable milks. You may take plain milk or flavoured or a Low fat, Calcium fortified soy milk such as Vitasoy[™]. Try flavouring milk with "Quick", topping or blended with fresh fruit to make a "Smoothie." Low calorie hot chocolate powders (e.g. 'Jarrah' brand) are also available for preparing warm milk drinks.

Fruit Smoothie

400ml Skim milk

200ml skim yoghurt

200 grams fresh fruit such as banana or strawberries (Frozen varieties are ok)

Combine all ingredients in a blender and blend until smooth. Serve chilled on ice. Refer to additional smoothie recipes provided.

Custard

Homemade custards and commercial custards are suitable so long as they are liquid enough to pass through the straw

Yoghurt

Low fat is preferable. Yoghurt should be taken in liquid form. Commercial drinking yoghurt is suitable and so is standard yoghurt so long as it can be taken via a straw. Other brands may be purchased and diluted with milk or water. If yoghurt contains fruit, the fruit will need to be thoroughly blended through the yogurt.

SOUPS

All soups must be of a liquid consistency without any lumps. One way of testing whether soup is of a suitable consistency is to ensure it can be sucked up a straw. To thin soups add stock, milk or water and re-blend. Commercial, canned soups are suitable so long as they do not contain unblended lumps. Blending chunky soups will ensure their suitability.

Refer to Soup recipes provided

‘Cup of soups’ are not recommended due the limited fibre and nutritional value

Fruit and Fruit Juice

Fruit may be taken in liquid form only. Any commercial fruit juices are suitable, but try a range of different juices to add variety to your liquid diet. Pineapple juice, apricot nectar and tomato juices are available in addition to orange and apple juices. Pear Juice or prune juice

Vegetable Juice

All vegetables must be taken in liquid form. Commercial vegetable juices are available that combine a mixture of different vegetables. Campbells ‘V8™’ vegetable juice is a nourishing juice available at most supermarkets. You may like to prepare your own tasty vegetable juice combinations, using a juicer.

Clear Fluids

Water, plain mineral water, soda water, fruit juice, tea or coffee, sloppy jelly, consommé. Low calorie soft drinks or cordial.

Multivitamins

Multivitamins are to be commenced after surgery. A chewable or liquid multivitamin is recommended.

Nutirchew™ Chewable Multivitamins are specifically designed for bariatric surgery, providing high levels of all vitamins and minerals.

'Supradyn™' is a dissolvable multivitamin, one per day is recommended, available from the supermarket or chemist.

'Herrons VitaMinis™' or **'Centrum Kids Chewable™'** are available from the supermarket or chemist. Even though it states it is designed for children, chewing 3 tablets per day, will meet your vitamin and mineral requirements, which may not be available from the modified eating plan you are following.

For more advice regarding your diet during the first 3 weeks after your operation, you can contact:

- Kate Save **Accredited Practising Dietitian**
- Marnie Ward **Accredited Practising Dietitian**
- Jodie Smith **Accredited Practising Dietitian**

Peninsula Private Hospital 9788 3466

Melbourne Bariatrics 9770 7189

