Important Points to Keep in Mind

- Eat 5 to 6 meals a day. At first, you may be able to eat only small amounts at a time, about ½ cup.
- Cut your food into small pieces and chew it well.
- Focus on eating high-calorie, high-protein foods.
- Eat and drink slowly.
- If you have symptoms of dumping syndrome (diarrhea, nausea, bloating, weakness, and sweating), you may need to avoid foods that are high in sugar, fat and lactose (the sugar that naturally occurs in dairy products).
- Try not to drink anything 30 minutes before or after a meal to help prevent dumping syndrome.
- Drink 8 to 10 cups of liquid each day. One cup equals 8 ounces.
- Avoid lying down right after a meal to help prevent reflux. Wait at least 30 minutes before reclining. This will give your food time to settle.
- If you lose weight for more than 1 week after discharge, call the dietitian or diet technician.

Esophagectomy Diet

Nutrition guidelines

Because you had an operation to remove your esophagus (the tube that carries food and drink from your mouth to your stomach), you will not be able to eat and drink normally for the first 4 to 6 weeks after your operation.

The diet guidelines in this booklet will help you get enough calories. It is common to have difficulty swallowing and to quickly feel full after an esophagectomy. You may also have dumping syndrome, when food moves through the intestines too quickly, causing diarrhea or discomfort.
### Getting Started

When your doctor says you are ready, you will start a clear liquid diet, and then work up to moist, soft foods. The steps below explain what foods to start with and how your diet will progress.

**Step 1: Clear Liquid Diet**
- Jell-O
- Apple juice
- Broth (chicken, beef, or vegetable)
- Popsicles
- Tea (without milk)

**Step 2: Full Liquid Diet**
- Milk (skim, 1%, 2%, or whole)
- Puddings and custards
- Yogurt (without chunks)
- Ice cream and frozen yogurt as tolerated
- Creamy soups (without chunks)
- Smoothies (use fruits without seeds)
- Nutritional supplements such as Ensure High Protein, Boost High Protein, or Glucerna
- All clear liquids in Step 1 above

### Sample Menus

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Breakfast 1</th>
<th>Breakfast 2</th>
<th>Breakfast 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>½ cup cooked cereal</td>
<td>1 scrambled egg with 1 oz. cheese added</td>
<td>Fruit smoothie with ½ cup yogurt and blended peaches or banana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>½ cup milk</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Snack 1</th>
<th>Snack 2</th>
<th>Snack 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 oz. thinly sliced turkey breast</td>
<td>½ banana ½ cup yogurt</td>
<td>1 thin slice of cheese</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lunch 1</th>
<th>Lunch 2</th>
<th>Lunch 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>½ cup pea soup 1 cup milk or fruit juice</td>
<td>½ cup tuna casserole 1 cup milk or fruit juice</td>
<td>½ cup macaroni and cheese 1 cup milk or fruit juice ½ cup applesauce</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Snack 1</th>
<th>Snack 2</th>
<th>Snack 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 deviled egg</td>
<td>1 pudding cup</td>
<td>6 oz. to 8 oz. yogurt</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dinner 1</th>
<th>Dinner 2</th>
<th>Dinner 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>½ chicken breast marinated in teriyaki sauce ½ cup cooked carrots 1 cup milk or fruit juice</td>
<td>½ cup pasta with meat sauce 1 Tbsp. grated parmesan cheese ½ cup cooked zucchini 1 cup milk or fruit juice</td>
<td>2 oz. meatloaf ½ cup mashed potatoes 1 teaspoon butter/margarine 1 teaspoon sour cream 1 cup milk or fruit juice</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Snack 1</th>
<th>Snack 2</th>
<th>Snack 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>½ cup cottage cheese ½ cup canned fruit</td>
<td>1 can Glucerna or Ensure</td>
<td>½ cup dry cereal or instant oatmeal made with milk ½ cup milk or yogurt</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Use foods without added sugar if you have dumping syndrome.

**Basic Banana Smoothie**
*(1 serving)*
- 1 cup vanilla 2% low fat yogurt
- 1 frozen banana
- 3 ice cubes

Blend all ingredients until smooth.

*Per serving:* 300 calories, 12 grams protein (2 protein servings)

**Yogurt Shake**
*(8 oz. per serving)*
- ½ cup whole milk or milk mixture
- ¼ cup fruit yogurt
- ¼ cup soft fresh or canned fruit

Blend all ingredients until smooth.

*Per serving:* With whole milk: 225 calories, 8 grams protein (1 protein serving); with Milk Mixture: 310 calories, 13 grams protein (2 protein servings)

**Peanut Butter Smoothie**
*(1 serving)*
- 1 cup 2% low fat milk
- 2 tablespoons peanut butter
- 1 frozen banana

Blend all ingredients until smooth.

*Per serving:* 415 calories, 17 grams protein (2½ protein servings)

---

**Step 3: Soft Esophagectomy Diet**

Once you leave the hospital you should be ready to begin following a Soft Diet. You will follow this diet for the next 4 to 6 weeks, or longer if needed. If moist solid foods become too hard to swallow or cause nausea and abdominal discomfort, go back to the Full Liquid Diet (Step 2) until you are ready to try moist soft foods again.

Remember to eat slowly and to stop eating when you feel full.

---

**Soft Esophagectomy Diet**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Food Type</th>
<th>OK to Eat and Drink</th>
<th>Do NOT Eat or Drink</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Meats and Meat Substitutes</td>
<td>Tender, moist fish, shellfish, and poultry; ground meat with gravy or sauces; canned chicken, deli turkey, deli ham, tuna, cottage cheese, tofu, soft-cooked or scrambled eggs, sliced hard boiled or deviled eggs; moist casseroles with allowed ingredients, tuna or egg salad without coarse ingredients; moist macaroni and cheese, plain or flavored yogurt; thinly sliced cheese</td>
<td>Roast beef, pork or lamb, steak or chops; salami, pastrami, hot dogs, sausage, bacon, casseroles with rice, crunchy casseroles, cheese cubes (OK if melted in foods), sandwiches, peanut butter, nut butters, yogurt with berries, pizza</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(2 to 3 oz. portions)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Food Type</th>
<th>OK to Eat and Drink</th>
<th>Do NOT Eat or Drink</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Breads and Cereals</td>
<td>Soft pancakes moistened with syrup and butter; cooked cereal or dry cereal with milk i.e., cream of wheat, cream of rice, instant grits, Cheerios, Rice Krispies, Special K</td>
<td>All breads, rolls, crackers; whole-grain, high fiber dry or cooked cereals; old fashioned or steel cut oatmeal; cereals with dried fruits, nuts or seeds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Starches</td>
<td>Well-cooked, moist potatoes; potatoes in sauces (without skins), well-cooked pasta in sauces cut into small pieces</td>
<td>Potato chips, potato skins, fried potatoes, rice, corn, beans with skins (pinto, black, kidney)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vegetables</td>
<td>Vegetable juices; soft, well-cooked vegetables (such as carrots, beets, squash, or green beans) that can be mashed with a fork</td>
<td>Raw or fried vegetables, whole kernel corn, peas, dried beans, spinach, celery, gas-forming vegetables such as broccoli, cabbage, Brussels sprouts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fruits</td>
<td>Fruit juices, cooked or canned fruits without seeds or skin (peaches, pears, mandarin oranges); ripe bananas, melon, mango, papaya</td>
<td>All other fresh, frozen, or dried fruits or fruits with seeds or skins (apples, berries, pineapples, oranges, pomegranate)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Breakfast in a Glass**  
*(10 oz. per serving)*  
- ½ cup whole milk or milk mixture  
- ¼ cup orange or pineapple juice  
- ¼ cup liquid egg substitute  
- ½ banana  
- 1 teaspoon sugar

Blend all ingredients.

*Per serving:* With whole milk: 210 calories, 10 grams protein; with Milk Mixture: 270 calories, 15 grams protein (2 protein servings)

**Egg Nog**  
*(10 oz. per serving)*  
- 1 cup whole milk or milk mixture  
- ¼ cup liquid egg substitute  
- ½ teaspoon sugar

Blend all ingredients.

*Per serving:* With whole milk: 210 calories, 14 grams protein; with Milk Mixture: 320 calories, 25 grams protein (3½ protein servings)

**High-Protein Shake**  
*(12 oz. per serving)*  
- ½ cup whole milk  
- 1 cup ice cream  
- 1 package Carnation Instant Breakfast

Blend all ingredients until smooth.

*Per serving:* 340 calories, 10 grams protein (1½ protein servings)
**Boosting Protein**

Here are some tips to add protein to your diet:

- Use milk, Milk Mixture (see recipe at left), evaporated milk, or cream instead of water for cooking hot cereal. Also use these liquids instead of water to make instant cocoa, canned soups, custards, and pudding.
- Add pureed or chopped meat to scrambled eggs, omelets, or soups. For example, add chicken to cream of chicken soup, ham to split pea soup, or beef to tomato soup.
- Add chopped, hard-cooked eggs to sauces, soups, casseroles, or chicken or tuna salad.
- Add grated cheese to cooked vegetables, sauces, soups, and casseroles.
- Cottage cheese with avocado or canned fruit makes a good snack.

**Special Drinks**

These drinks may be prepared at home to supplement your diet. The flavors may be changed to suit your own tastes.

If you are lactose intolerant, try soy milk, rice milk, or almond milk instead of cow’s milk.

**Milk Mixture**

*(Makes 4 servings, 8 oz. each)*

- 1 quart regular whole milk
- 1 cup powdered milk

Blend and chill well. Use in place of regular milk for cooking or in special drinks.

*Per serving:* 265 calories, 18 grams protein (2½ protein servings)

---

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Food Type</th>
<th>OK to Eat and Drink</th>
<th>Do NOT Eat or Drink</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Beverages</strong>&lt;br&gt;Drink 64 ounces a day</td>
<td>All allowed except carbonated beverages</td>
<td>Carbonated beverages: soda pop, sparkling water, beer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Soups</strong></td>
<td>Soups made with allowed ingredients that are easy to chew i.e., chicken noodle, tomato, blended cream soup, blended split pea soup</td>
<td>Avoid soups with rice or large chunks of meat or vegetables</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Desserts</strong>&lt;br&gt;Avoid these foods if they cause dumping syndrome</td>
<td>Pudding, custard, ice cream, sherbet, fruit ice, frozen yogurt, gelatin made with allowed food, popsicles, milkshakes, smoothies</td>
<td>Cookies, pies, or any dessert with a crust or containing nuts, coconut, or dried fruit; bread or rice pudding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fats</strong></td>
<td>Butter, margarine, salad dressing, mayonnaise, gravy, sour cream, whipped toppings, oils</td>
<td>All fats with chunks added, such as salad dressings with seeds, fruit, or vegetables; cream cheese with fruit or vegetable pieces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sweets</strong>&lt;br&gt;Avoid these foods if they cause dumping syndrome</td>
<td>Sugar, syrup, honey, jelly, plain chocolate</td>
<td>Nuts, coconut, chewy candy such as caramels, licorice, hard candy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

Eating enough calories and protein helps with wound healing.
### Eat a variety of foods from each food type.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Food Type</th>
<th>OK to Eat and Drink</th>
<th>Do NOT Eat or Drink</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Mild spices, ketchup, mustard, barbeque sauce</td>
<td>Pickles, popcorn, sticky foods, hot spicy foods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial</td>
<td>Ensure, Boost, Glucerna, Carnation Instant Breakfast, Slimfast</td>
<td>If dumping syndrome is a problem, using products designed for people with diabetes may be helpful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protein Drinks</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Calorie and Protein Needs

- You need to eat ______ calories a day.
- Every day, you will need: ____ grams of protein, which equals _____ servings.

#### High-Quality Protein Foods

Below is a list of common foods rich in high-quality protein. Each food amount listed is equal to 1 protein serving (7 grams).

- 1 oz. cooked fish, poultry, or lean ground meat
- 1 egg or ½ cup liquid eggs substitute
- 1 oz. cheese (melted)
- 1 cup milk (skim, 1%, 2%, or whole)
- 1 cup yogurt
- ½ cup canned tuna or salmon
- 1 cup pudding
- 3 oz. tofu

#### Boosting Calories

After surgery, the body needs more calories and protein for healing. Eating small, high-calorie meals throughout the day can help you meet those needs.

Here are a few ways to add calories to your diet:

- Eat smaller meals more often, or divide meals in half. For example, have an egg for breakfast and then have some canned fruit and cooked cereal for a midmorning snack.
- Add butter or margarine to hot cereal, eggs, cooked vegetables, mashed potatoes, pasta, and soups.
- Use gravies and sauces on meats and vegetables. A variety of sauce mixes are available at the grocery store.
- Use sour cream to top fruits, meats, cream soups, and baked potatoes. It can also be added to sauces, scrambled eggs, and omelets.
- Use mayonnaise or salad dressing on meats and eggs.
- Eat avocados plain or make guacamole to top egg dishes, meats, cooked vegetables, or cottage cheese.
- Use whipped cream on canned fruit, pudding, or Jell-O.