

Nutrition for Healing

After your jaw surgery

This handout is for patients at UW Medical Center who have had jaw surgery. It explains changes you will need to make to your diet during recovery, and what to eat to help yourself heal.

How will I eat after surgery?

After your jaw surgery, it will be hard to open your mouth and chew food. Your nutritional needs must be met with blended foods that do not require chewing. You will need to use a straw or a 60 cc syringe to feed yourself.

What can I eat?

We will ask you to follow a *clear liquid diet* for at least 48 hours after surgery. When your doctor says it is OK, you can start to eat a *blended liquid diet*.



Use a strong blender or food processor to make your meals during your recovery.

Clear Liquids

Clear liquids are fluids you can see through. They include clear juices, meat or vegetable broth (no chunks), gelatin, coffee, tea, popsicles, soda pop, and water.

You can also drink clear liquid supplements such as Boost Breeze, Premier Protein Clear, Ensure Clear, Isopure, and others.

Blended Liquids

Blended foods must be very smooth and thin. You must be able to eat or drink them with a straw or syringe, or by taking small sips from a spoon. A larger straw may work better than a thin straw.

Make sure to strain out any chunks that need chewing.

A liquid diet tends to make you feel full quickly. To take in enough nutrition, you will need to eat 6 or more times a day.

How long will I need to eat blended foods?

Ask your surgeon:

- How long you will need to be on a blended liquid diet
- If it is OK to drink with a straw

Be sure to talk with your surgeon before you start eating foods that you need to chew.

How do I make blended liquids?

Use a variety of foods in your blended meals. This will give you a variety of nutrients and help you enjoy eating.

To make blended foods:

- Cut the foods into small pieces. Place the pieces in a strong blender or food processor.
- Add liquids to the blender, such as fruit juice, milk, soy milk, bone broth, vegetable juice, gravy, or soup.
- Blend until smooth. Adjust the amount of liquid to get it thin enough for the straw or syringe.
- If needed, strain out any lumps and chunks. Very small pieces are OK, as long as they can easily move through the straw or syringe.

How much should I eat?

Your body needs extra nutrients for healing. Every day, you should take in:

- _____ calories
- _____ gm protein (_____ protein servings)
- _____ cups fluid

Will I lose weight after surgery?

It is common to lose 5 to 10 pounds during the first 2 weeks after surgery. **But, we want you to stay as close to your normal weight as you can.**

Please keep track of your weight:

- Today, you weigh _____ pounds.
- Weigh yourself several times during the first week after surgery. After that, weigh yourself once a week.
- Call your dietitian at 206.598._____ if you lose more than 10 pounds.

Do I need special nutrients for healing?

For your bones and tissue to heal well, your body needs extra vitamins C and D, calcium, and protein. Your dietitian will explain how to meet these extra needs.

Foods to Choose Each Day

Make sure to include foods from each of these groups each day: proteins, vegetables, fruits, starches, and healthy fats.

Protein

Protein foods that blend well include:

- Milk, yogurt, kefir, cottage cheese
- Tender, well-cooked meat, poultry, or fish (NO bone or skin)
- Cooked eggs or liquid pasteurized eggs
- Soft soy foods such as tofu or soy milk
- Smooth nut butters

Vegetables

- Choose 2 or more servings a day.
- Most well-cooked or canned vegetables blend well with a liquid, but frozen vegetables do not.
- Some people choose to eat baby food for their fruit and vegetables.

Fruit

Choose 2 or more servings a day:

- Try many kinds of fruit juice for variety.
- You can blend both fresh and canned fruits.

Starches

- Rice
- Pasta
- Starchy vegetables such as potatoes, yams, and winter squash
- Couscous without seeds and nuts
- Cooked cereals such as oatmeal and cream of wheat

Healthy Fats

Healthy fats are an important part of your diet. They also contain calories that will help you maintain your weight. They include:

- Avocado
- Nut butters
- Coconut or olive oil

You can also eat ice cream and use melted butter during recovery.

Other Diet Tips

- **To add flavor:** Try powdered seasonings and mild spices.
- **Beverages:** Drink dairy and nut milks, water, flavored waters, juice, milkshakes, and smoothies.
- **Supplements:** Good brands include Premier Protein, Odwalla High Protein, Orgain, and Ensure or Boost products. You can also add pea protein to smoothies.
- **Tracking calories:** If your weight is stable, you do not need to track calories. If you are losing weight, research online for high-calorie foods to try blending.
- **Tracking protein:** You may want to keep track of the protein grams you eat, to make sure you are eating enough. Check the Nutrition Label on packaged foods. Remember that 7 gm of protein = 1 serving of protein. This is:
 - 1 oz. meat, poultry, or fish
 - 1 egg or ¼ cup liquid pasteurized egg
 - ¼ cup cottage cheese
 - 2 tablespoons nut butter
 - 8 oz. dairy milk

Questions?

Your questions are important. Call your dietitian if you have questions or concerns.

Your Dietitian:

Phone: 206. 598. _____