

Colorectal Department

Colostomy - Nutritional information

Someone with a colostomy does not really have any dietary restrictions at all. You can eat the same things that you used to eat before the operation.

But it is important to realise that you can still become constipated or experience diarrhoea from an upset tummy.

Everyone is different and what suits one person may not suit another. Rigid instructions are impossible to give, so this information is only meant as a guide. The most important advice is to enjoy your food.

Tips and hints

Managing your stoma is easier if you have regular consistent bowel movements. To help you achieve this:

- **Don't under-eat:** Have 3 regular meals a day. If you don't eat regularly, you may experience irregular motions with excessive wind.
- **Try to eat a balanced diet:** This is a diet which is low fat, with a moderate fibre intake and includes fruit and vegetables.

Meat, fish, cheese and eggs are sources of protein. Protein is essential for helping to repair our body tissues and maintain our muscle strength. Include one of these foods in your diet every day.

Don't cut out high fibre foods entirely as these contain many vitamins and minerals necessary for our health.

- **Drink plenty of fluids:** At least 6 cups per day
- **Take gentle exercise**



Foods which don't agree with you

You may find some foods cause your poo to change in consistency. You may want to avoid these foods.

Experiment with each food several times before you remove it from your diet.

People with a new colostomy may experience excessive farts and odour from certain foods. But in a few weeks' time you may find you can eat them without problems once things have settled down and your digestive system has adapted.

Odour

In a well-fitting appliance, there should not be any odour except when changing the bag.

Some people find that certain foods increase odour whilst others find no problem at all.

Listed below are foods that are known to cause odour:

Beans (all types)	Eggs
Broccoli	Fish
Cabbage	Garlic
Cheese	Onions (especially cooked)
Cucumber	Parsnips
Curry	Spinach

There are a few of things which some people say help to reduce odour:
Peppermint oil capsules (available from most health food shops)

- natural yoghurt
- buttermilk
- tomato juice
- orange juice
- parsley

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Farting

Farts consist of the gases that are produced during digestion. These cause the wind noises that everyone makes. Some people, with or without a stoma, fart more and others do not.

How and what you eat can make a difference:

- Swallowing a lot of air while you eat, by gulping your food instead of chewing it properly
- Talking while eating
- Fizzy drinks - try shaking cans before opening them (gently), pouring them into a glass to get rid of some of the bubbles, or letting them stand for 10 minutes before drinking
- Irregular meals
- Certain foods - identify foods which give you wind and eat them in moderation

Listed below are foods that are known to produce wind:

Artichokes	Brussel Sprouts	Eggs
Onions	Asparagus	Cauliflower
Fizzy drinks	Peas	Bananas
Chocolate	Fruit	Radishes
Beans (all types)	Cucumber	Nuts
Spinach	Beer	Curry
Mushrooms	Sweetcorn	

Constipation

You will find some foods can make your stool too solid if eaten in excess or not chewed thoroughly. You should be more careful with the quantity of these foods.

Foods such as celery, nuts, corn and coconut are known to make the stool firmer. Eggs, boiled rice, tapioca for example can have a binding effect.

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Increasing your intake of fluids (especially water) and taking regular exercise can help to prevent constipation. Eating more fresh fruit and vegetables may also help.

Some people have found that drinking a glass of prune juice each morning also helps to relieve and prevent further episodes of constipation.

However, you can always consult your colorectal nurse specialist for advice about the use of laxatives.

Below is a list of foods that can alleviate constipation:

Beans	Cereals	Leafy green vegetables
Chocolate	Raw vegetables	Fresh fruit and vegetables
Spices	Fruit juice	Prunes

Diarrhoea

Very loose bowel stools or diarrhoea can be a distressing experience. It can be caused by a number of things and not just what you have been eating.

An over indulgence in alcohol can have an adverse effect, as can any kind of emotional upset, stress or strain.

If you have diarrhoea, **don't stop drinking**. If anything, try to drink as much as possible to replace what is being lost.

If you can eat, there are certain foods that may help to control diarrhoea such as: ripe bananas, boiled rice, tapioca, peanut butter and mashed potato.

If the diarrhoea persists, contact your doctor or Colorectal Nurse Specialist for advice.

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Listed below are foods that are known to cause loose stools:

Beans (all types)	Peas	Bran Cereals
Prunes	Cabbage	Raw vegetables
Chocolate	Rhubarb	Curry
Spinach	Figs	Spices
Fresh fruit	Fruit juice	Sprouts
Oil based salad dressing		Sweetcorn

For further information please contact the colorectal nurse specialists:

Michelle Hicken, Hannah Davies, Helen Taylor, Sarah Thompson, Caroline Ling, Deepa Philips

Telephone 024 7696 5825

Local services

Service	Location	Contact details
Age UK Coventry Age UK Warwickshire		024 7623 1999 01926 458100
Bowel Screening Unit		01788 545166/667737
Cancer Information Centre	Main Entrance UHCW	024 7696 6052
Coventry Macmillan Care Team	Hospital Community	024 7696 5498 024 7623 7001
Rugby Macmillan Care Team.	Community	01788 555119

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GUT (Cancer Support Group for Coventry & Warwickshire)		024 7696 6475
Chaplaincy (Hospital)	Hospital	024 7696 7515
Bowel Clinical Trials Nurse	Hospital	024 7696 7151
Specialist Genetic Nurse	Hospital	024 7696 4000
Surgical Counselling Service	Hospital	024 7696 6188
Oncology Counselling Service	Hospital	024 7696 7290
Complimentary Therapies	Hospital	024 7696 7290
Psychosexual Therapy	Hospital	024 7696 7290
Citizens Advice Bureau	Coventry Rugby	024 7625 2050 (Appointments only) 0844 855 2322
Coventry Carers Centre	Support for carers	024 7663 2972
Guideposts Trust	Support for carers	024 7638 5888

Also available at University Hospital:

Physiotherapy, Occupational Therapy, Dietitian Service, Social Services

National contact numbers

Service	Website or phone number
Association of Coloproctology for Great Britain and Ireland	https://www.acpgbi.org.uk/
Beating Bowel Cancer	020 8892 5256 www.beatingbowelcancer.org
Benefit Enquiry Line	Freephone 0800 882200
National Cancer Institute (American)	www.cancer.gov
Bowel Cancer UK	www.bowelcancer.org.uk
Colostomy Association	0800 328 4257 www.colostomyassociation.org.uk/
CORE (The Digestive Disorders Foundation)	020 7486 0341 www.corecharity.org.uk
The Ileostomy & Internal Pouch Support Group (IA)	0800 018 4724 www.the-ia.org.uk
Macmillan Cancer Support	0808 808 0000 www.macmillan.org.uk
Marie Curie Cancer Care	0800 716 146 www.mariecurie.org.uk

Patient Information

The Trust has access to interpreting and translation services. If you need this information in another language or format, please contact 024 7696 5617 and we will do our best to meet your needs.

The Trust operates a smoke free policy.

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