

Colorectal Department

Colostomy: Nutritional Information

The first thing to be aware of is that 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. Secondly, 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 bowel movements of a regular consistency. 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, essential in helping to repair our body tissues and maintain our muscle strength, so 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 certain foods cause the stool to change in consistency, and you may want to avoid these foods. Experiment with each food several times before you exclude it from your diet. People with a new colostomy



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may experience excessive wind and odour from certain foods but in a few weeks time, when things have settled down and your digestive system has adapted to the new situation, you may well find you can eat them without problems.

Odour

In a well fitting appliance there should not be any odour except when changing the bag. However, 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 couple of things which some people say help to reduce odour: Peppermint oil capsules (available from most health food shops) have been found to be useful in masking faecal odour as have natural yoghurt, buttermilk, tomato juice, orange juice and parsley.

Wind

Call it what you will, wind consists of the gases that are produced during the digestive process. These are responsible for all those wind noises that **everyone** makes at some time or another. Some people, with or without a stoma, produce a lot of wind 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!) or pouring them into a glass to get rid of some of the bubbles or letting them stand for 10 minutes before drinking

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- 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 discover which foods if eaten in excess or not chewed thoroughly, can sometimes make your stool too solid, and you should then be more careful with the quantity. Foods such as celery, nuts, corn and coconut are known to make the stool more firm. Eggs, boiled rice, tapioca for example can have a binding effect.

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 if necessary.

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

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Diarrhoea

Very loose bowel stools or diarrhoea can be a most distressing experience and 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.

Should diarrhoea strike, **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.

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:

Abby Barnwell, Sarah Taylor	024 7696 5617
Helen Taylor	024 7696 5616
Katrina Turner, Sarah Thompson	024 7696 5825
Claire Jackson, Debbie Mulhern, Caroline Ling	024 7696 5753

Local Services

Age UK Coventry		024 7623 1999
Age UK Warwickshire		01926 458100

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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
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

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National Contact Numbers

Association of Coloproctology for Great Britain and Ireland	http://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

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.

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