Ostomy Diet Guidelines

 Whether you have a colostomy or an ileostomy, your diet will progress from clear liquids to a bland, low-fiber diet. You will likely be able to return to your usual way of eating within 6 to 8 weeks after your surgery. Please follow your doctor’s recommendations on specific food restrictions.

- Eat regular, balanced meals (3 to 6 per day). Your dietitian can provide you with added information on a balanced meal. Skipping meals increases gas and watery stools.
- Add small amounts of new foods, one at a time, every 2 days.
- If a food is not initially tolerated, try it again in a few weeks.
- Each person has different tolerances, so do not exclude a food unless it causes a problem for you. Your food intolerances before surgery will probably continue after surgery.
- Always drink 8 to 12 glasses of fluids per day.
- Chew your food well and always take plenty of fluids to prevent obstruction. This is important when eating fibrous foods such as celery, cabbage, bamboo shoots, nuts and corn or other kernels.
- Try to prevent large weight gains. If you need to lose weight, consult your doctor.

If you have excessive gas or odor:

- Eat slowly, in a relaxed setting, to prevent swallowing air.
- Trial and error may reveal foods that cause gas or odor.
- High-fiber or very spicy foods may be offenders. Try the following one at a time to isolate problem foods: coconut, green peppers, legumes (dried beans and peas), onions, cabbage, broccoli, cauliflower, raw fruits and vegetables, oat bran, pumpernickel bread, carbonated beverages, alcohol and fried foods.
If you have diarrhea:

- Do not control diarrhea by restricting fluids.
- Remember to drink fluids (8 to 12 glasses) during the day to replace the fluids lost.
- After surgery or after taking antibiotics, the normal bacteria in your intestines may need to be replaced. Eating a cultured milk product daily (e.g., yogurt) may help the normal bacteria.
- You may need to avoid high-fiber foods such as fruits, vegetables, whole grains, legumes and bran for a few days.

If you have constipation:

- Drink plenty of fluids.
- Increase high-fiber foods, such as whole grains, bran cereals, fruits and vegetables.
- Moderate exercise also may be helpful.

Health Information Resources

For more information, visit one of Northwestern Memorial Hospital’s Health Learning Centers. These state-of-the-art health libraries are located on the third floor of the Galter Pavilion and on the first floor of the Prentice Women’s Hospital. Health information professionals are available to help you find the information you need and provide you with personalized support at no charge. You may contact the Health Learning Centers by calling 312-926-LINK (5465) or by sending an e-mail to hlc@nmh.org.

For additional information about Northwestern Memorial Hospital, please visit our Web site at www.nmh.org.

Dietitian ___________________________

Phone Number ___________________________

Notes:

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Para asistencia en español, por favor llamar al departamento de representantes para pacientes al 312-926-3112.

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