



HEALTHCARE DELIVERY **REVIEWS**

The Ultimate Guide to Food & Diet With A Stoma



CONTENTS

02

Introduction To Food & Diet With A Stoma

03

Food & Diet After Stoma Surgery

04

What Is A Healthy Stoma Diet

05

Foods To Eat If Your Stools Are Loose

05

Foods That Can Cause Loose Stools

06

How To Avoid Constipation With A Stoma

07

Maintaining A Healthy Weight

08

Eating Out With A Stoma

09

Recipes - Eating In With A Stoma

Introduction To Food & Diet With A Stoma

Whether you've recently undergone surgery or you've had your stoma for a number of years, it can be pretty confusing when it comes to your diet.

- What can you eat?
- What should you eat?
- What should you avoid?

There is so much conflicting information out there it can be difficult to know where to turn. In this guide we want to help answer these questions and give the guidance you need to choose your foods with confidence.

The first thing we'd like to reassure you about is that, once you've recovered from your surgery, you really can enjoy a varied and satisfying diet. You'll still be able to go out for dinner, cook for friends and, in fact, you may find that you can actually eat a more varied diet than you were able to eat before your stoma surgery.

Food & Diet After Stoma Surgery

Your stoma nurse or doctor will provide you with a diet guide and care plan when you're discharged from hospital. It can be pretty daunting adjusting to living or life with a stoma and you should expect to spend a few weeks settling down into a new routine. Whilst you're recovering from surgery, it's a good idea to give your digestive system time to recover and you may need to limit certain foods for 6-8 weeks, but assuming all is well, after that, you should be able to resume a normal healthy diet. In fact, it's beneficial to return to a normal diet as soon as possible as it helps your digestive system to begin to work normally again.



Remember, everyone is different and you'll need to discover which foods (if any) cause you issues. Keeping a food diary will help you to monitor your food intake and you'll be able to note if something is causing discomfort. If something that you usually enjoy does upset you, you could try eating it in moderation occasionally and you might find your tolerance increases and you can enjoy it again without worrying about side-effects.

Foods you may need to avoid or limit in your recovery period:

- Foods high in fibre, such as raw vegetables, sweetcorn, nuts and seeds, wholemeal bread and pasta
- Fatty foods - avoid anything with a high saturated fat content - fast food and processed foods/cakes and pastries etc.
- Pulses



What Is A Healthy Stoma Diet?

Once you've recovered from your stoma surgery and your body has had time to heal, you can start to introduce a wider range of food. In fact, you'll not necessarily have to follow a specific diet, other than a usual healthy diet which is recommended for everyone, with the occasional treat every now and then of course!

You will get to know what is normal for you and if certain foods should be avoided. Again, keeping a food diary can be really helpful for this. There's no reason to cut spicy food completely out of your life if you enjoy it and similarly if you enjoy a fizzy drink or glass of wine from time to time, you can certainly carry on. Your body will let you know what you can tolerate and you will be able to adjust your intake accordingly.

Eating out need not be a thing of the past either. Restaurants are usually very good at catering to dietary needs and most have their menus online, so you can decide what you're going to eat before you go, or call ahead if you have any specific concerns.

All that being said, there are some food groups that may cause problems from time to time. Try to be aware of how much you are eating of the following, and reduce the amounts if necessary:

- Rich foods that are high in saturated fat such as fatty cuts of meat, sausages and pies
- Cured meats such as chorizo, salami and pancetta
- Dairy products including butter, ghee, cheese and cream
- Crisps, biscuits, cakes and pastries

Foods To Eat If Your Stools Are Loose

If you find your stools are too loose, the following foods can be eaten to thicken them.

	Jelly Babies		Bananas		Marshmallows
	Rice		Pasta		Mashed Potatoes
	Toast		Porridge		Peanut Butter

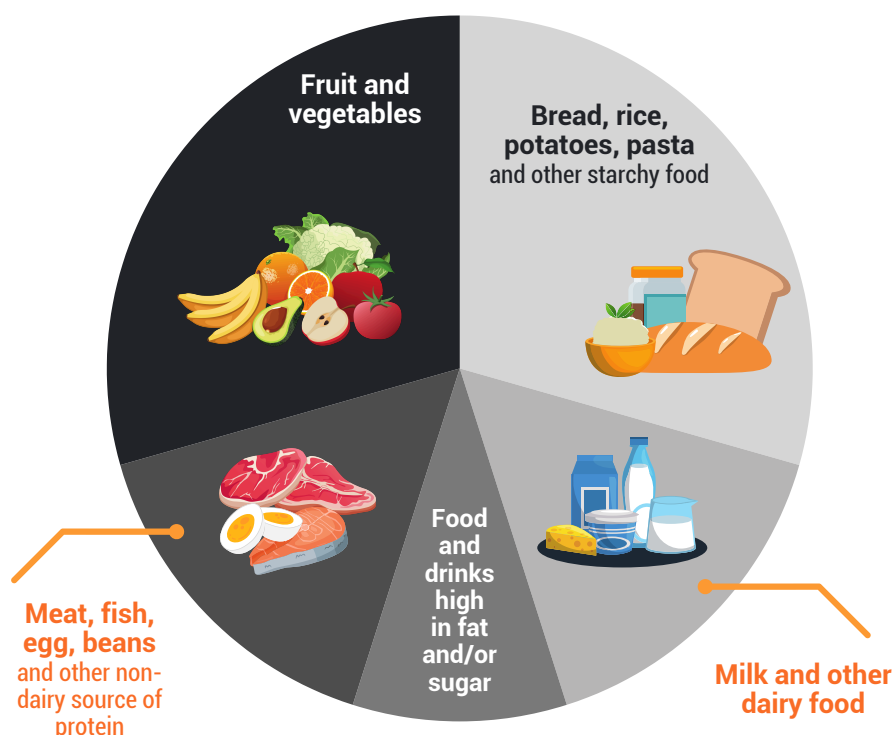
Foods That Can Cause Loose Stools

If this is a problem, check your food diary to see if you've been eating alot of these foodstuffs, as they can cause loose stools. Reduce the amount of these you eat for a while and introduce something from the table above, until the problem is resolved.

	Fruit, vegetables & salad		Alcohol		Fizzy drinks
	Chocolate		Fruit Juice		Fish
	Spicy Food		Nuts		Caffeine
	Fatty Foods		Sorbitol (an artificial sweetener)		

The NHS Eatwell Guide

A general guide to healthy eating can be found at **The Eatwell Guide** which is recommended by the NHS to ensure a well-balanced diet containing the correct proportion of all the food groups such as carbohydrates, protein, dairy, fruits and vegetables and essential fats.



How To Avoid Constipation With A Stoma

Keep an eye on your hydration levels, particularly if you have an ileostomy. Make sure you drink plenty of water every day to avoid dehydration - 6 - 8 glasses a day is recommended. Plain water is best, but tea and no-added sugar squash is fine too. Vegetable juices are a good way to get your vitamins and minerals if you find you can't eat your five a day due to the high-fibre content causing constipation. Eat ripe soft fruits - nectarines and apricots for example. Peeling the skin from fruit will reduce the fibre content too.

Keeping active is an excellent way to relieve the symptoms of constipation. Make sure you eat regularly and don't eat too quickly. Some medications can cause constipation too, so check with your pharmacist if this becomes a problem.

Maintaining A Healthy Weight

If you've lost weight following your illness and resulting stoma surgery, you may want to follow a diet to increase your weight to your normal level. You should find that once you're able to start eating more normally again, your appetite will be stimulated and you should be able to build your weight back up in a healthy and controlled manner.

You could try eating more regularly, for example, smaller meals but more often and increase the amount of dairy foods you eat, such as cheese and milk, to help you gain weight.



Healthy milkshakes and smoothies are also useful to increase your calorie intake, as are homemade soups. You could try adding double cream to soups and use it to make mashed potatoes instead of milk and butter.

If you feel you are struggling to eat your five a day, you could ask your healthcare provider to recommend a good multi-vitamin.

Eating Out With A Stoma

One of the biggest concerns of people who are new to having a stoma is about eating out in their favourite restaurants or even trying somewhere completely new. These days most restaurants do their best to cater to a variety of specific dietary requirements and they often ask when you book a table or as you are being seated.

You can mention to your server if you need to avoid any particular food types, and once you've made up your mind of what you want to eat you can always double check the ingredients.

If you're unsure about a potential trip to a new restaurant then why not look them up online prior to the visit. Most places display their menu on their website so you can get a gauge as to the type of food you might want before hand.



Recipes - Eating In With Stoma

Here are some ideas for smoothies, soups and shakes to have as part of your healthy diet.

Smoothies

Keep bags of ready chopped fruit in the freezer so you can quickly whip up a delicious smoothie, and if the fruit is frozen, you don't need to add ice cubes. Chopped bananas freeze really well, and make a good base for your smoothie, and you can add mixed berries, honey, peanut butter, oats or any combination you like!

Green smoothies are really good for you and a great way of 'eating your greens', and blending them breaks down the fibre content which makes it easier to digest.

There are thousands of recipes online, but we especially like these from **Jamie Oliver**, and **BBC Good Food** have a huge variety to choose from.





Soups

Homemade soup can be simple and quick to make with just a couple of ingredients, or elevated to a luxury dish such as a seafood bisque or a rich french onion soup topped with a cheesy crouton.

You can use any combination of vegetables you have in your fridge, which makes them economical and great for using up leftovers and reducing waste.

Of course, there's also a huge selection of tinned or fresh soups available in all the supermarkets if you don't have time to prepare from scratch. Many of these are healthy and contain a few of your 'five a day', but you can't beat homemade soup for taste and knowing exactly what it's been made with. All you need is stock, seasoning and a handful of veg! **Olive Magazine** has some lovely recipes, and there's a good selection at **BBC Good Food**.

Shakes

Milkshakes can be very indulgent, with whipped cream toppings, chocolate and all sorts of added extras. But there's also a wide choice of more healthy options which can be made with Greek Yoghurt, added protein powder, nut butters and these can provide a quick and nutritious breakfast, or a pick-me-up after exercise. This easy recipe from The Body Coach, **Joe Wicks** looks very tasty.



In Conclusion...

Enjoying satisfying and healthy food with a stoma is definitely possible. Always follow the advice given to you by your stoma nurse, or doctor, especially if you've recently had surgery. Here's a summary of quick tips:

- Keep a food and symptom diary until your body has settled after surgery and you know how different foods will affect you
- No food is off-limits but be aware of how some food groups can have an affect on your digestive system
- Try to eat a healthy balanced diet - everything in moderation!
- If something upsets you, limit the amount you eat and try it a few times to see if it was a one-off reaction before cutting it out of your diet forever
- If you have an worries or concerns, always contact your healthcare professional



HEALTHCARE DELIVERY **REVIEWS**

Find Support

If you would like further help and support about a stoma diet then check out the below communities:

Colostomy UK
www.colostomyuk.org

Ileostomy & Internal Pouch Association
www.iasupport.org

Got A Recipe To Share?

If you've got a recipe you want to share with the community and feature it in this guide then please send details to:

HELP@HEALTHCAREDELIVERYREVIEWS.CO.UK

