



Maria R. Brown, M.D.

BARIATRIC & GENERAL SURGERY

EATING AFTER YOUR ESOPHAGEAL SURGERY

After surgery expect some sticking with swallowing for 1-2 months

Do not be alarmed if you do not progress at the same speed as the recommendations below. Everyone is different. Some people advance more quickly and some people less quickly.

If food sticks while eating this is called “dysphagia” and is due to postoperative swelling. This will improve over the next few months.

Day 0-10: To help you through this phase, in the hospital, we **start on a Liquid diet with protein shakes three times daily. You should stay on this diet for 7-10 days**

11-20 days: You may advance to a Level 1 Pureed (blenderized) diet.

We ask you to stay on this diet 2-3 weeks to avoid any foods becoming stuck postoperatively.

At 3 weeks: Start Soft foods

At 4 weeks: Start Chopped foods

At 5-6 weeks: Start Regular food

At 3 months: May resume bread products or tortillas and red meat if tolerating all other foods.

Basic Rules to follow:

- Maintain an upright position whenever eating or drinking. Remain upright 60-90min after eating. Short walks can be helpful.
- Take small bites, 1 tsp at a time
- Eat slowly. It make also be helpful to eat one food at a time
- Avoid the urge to eat large meals, enjoy smaller more frequent meals
- Do not push through feelings of fullness, bloating, or nausea. Stop eating.
- Do not mix solid food and liquids in the same mouthful
- Avoid large gulps of liquid to “wash food down”
- Expect to feel gassy and bloated initially, this will improve over time. Avoid carbonated beverages. Walking helps to improve gas and bloating. Mallow & GasX can also be helpful
- Avoid straws
- Avoid talking while eating.
- **If food sticks, DO NOT PANIC.** Try to relax and allow the food to pass on its own. Sipping warm liquid such as strong hot black tea can be helpful.

Use Common Sense & Move Slowly:

- If you are easily tolerating a “Level” of food, advance slowly to the next level
- If you are having trouble swallowing certain foods, avoid them
- If food is feeling like it is getting stuck, return to the previous level for 1-2d then try again.

LEVEL 1 = PUREED DIET

BEGIN 10 DAYS AFTER SURGERY

- Foods in this group are pureed or blenderized to a smooth, mashed potato-like consistency.
- If necessary, the pureed foods can keep their shape with the addition of a thickening agent.
- Meat should be pureed to a smooth, pasty consistency. Hot broth or gravy may be added to the pureed meat, approximately 1 oz. of liquid per 3 oz. serving of meat.
- CAUTION: If any foods do not puree into a smooth consistency, swallowing will be more difficult. (For example, nuts or seeds sometimes do not blend well.)

Hot Foods	Cold Foods
Pureed scrambled eggs and cheese	Pureed cottage cheese
Baby cereals	Thickened juices and nectars
Thinned cooked cereals (no lumps)	Thickened milk or eggnog
Pureed French toast or pancakes	Ensure
Mashed potatoes	Ice cream
Pureed parsley, au gratin, scalloped potatoes, candied sweet potatoes	Fruit or Italian ice, sherbet
Pureed buttered or alfredo noodles	Plain yogurt
Pureed vegetables (no corn or peas)	Instant breakfast
Pureed soups and creamed soups	Smooth pudding, mousse, custard
Pureed scalloped apples	Whipped gelatin
Gravies	Sugar, syrup, honey, jelly
Sauces, cheese, tomato, barbecue, white, creamed	Cream
Any baby food	Creamer
Alcohol in moderation (not beer or champagne)	Margarine
Coffee or tea	Mayonnaise
	Ketchup, mustard
	Apple sauce

SAMPLE MENU: PUREED DIET

Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner
Orange juice, 1/2 cup Cream of wheat, 1/2 cup	Pineapple juice, 1/2 cup	Pureed turkey, barley soup, 3/4 cup Pureed Hawaiian chicken, 3 oz
Scrambled eggs, mashed or blended with cheese, 1/2 cup Tea or coffee, 1 cup Whole milk, 1 cup Non-dairy creamer, 2	Mashed potatoes, 1/2 cup Pureed cooled broccoli, 1/2 cup Apple sauce, 1/2 cup Coffee or tea	Mashed potatoes, 1/2 cup Pureed spinach, 1/2 cup Frozen yogurt, 1/2 cup Tea or coffee

LEVEL 2 = SOFT DIET

After your first 3 weeks, you can advance to a soft diet. Keep on this diet until everything goes down easily.

Hot Foods	Cold Foods
White fish	Cottage cheese
Stuffed fish	Junior baby fruit
Baby food meals	Semi thickened juices
Minced soft cooked, scrambled, poached eggs	nectars
Souffle & omelets	Ripe mashed bananas
Cooked cereals	Canned fruit, pineapple sauce, milk
potatoes	Milkshake
Buttered or Alfredo noodles	Custard
Cooked cooled vegetable	Puddings, including tapioca
Sherbet	Yogurt
Vegetable soup or alphabet soup	Fruit ice, Italian ice
Gravies	Whipped gelatin
Sugar, syrup, honey, jelly	Junior baby desserts
Sauces: Cheese, creamed, barbecue, tomato, white	Cream
Coffee or tea	Margarine

SAMPLE MENU: LEVEL 2

Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner
Orange juice, 1/2 cup Oatmeal, 1/2 cup Scrambled eggs with cheese, 1/2 cup Decaffeinated tea, 1 cup Whole milk, 1 cup Non-dairy creamer, 2 Tbsp	Pineapple juice, 1/2 cup Minced beef, 3 oz Gravy, 2 Tbsp Mashed potatoes, 1/2 cup Minced fresh broccoli, 1/2 cup Applesauce, 1/2 cup Coffee, 1 cup	Turkey, barley soup, 3/4 cup Minced Hawaiian chicken, 3 oz Mashed potatoes, 1/2 cup Cooked spinach, 1/2 cup Frozen yogurt, 1/2 cup Non-dairy creamer, 2 Tbsp

LEVEL 3 = CHOPPED DIET

- After all the foods in level 2 (soft diet) are passing through well you should advance up to more chopped foods.
- It is still important to cut these foods into small pieces and eat slowly.

Hot Foods	Cold Foods
Poultry	Cottage cheese
Chopped Swedish meatballs	Yogurt
Meat salads (ground or flaked meat)	Milk
Flaked fish (tuna)	Milkshakes
Poached or scrambled eggs	Soft, cold, dry cereal
Souffles and omelets	Fruit juices or nectars
Cooked cereals	Chopped canned fruit
Chopped French toast or pancakes	Canned fruit cocktail
Noodles or pasta (no rice)	Pudding, mousse, custard
Cooked vegetables (no frozen peas, corn, or mixed vegetables)	Green salad
Canned small sweet peas	Ice cream
Creamed soup or vegetable soup	Fruit ice, Italian ice
Pureed vegetable soup or alphabet soup	Non-dairy creamer
Ground scalloped apples	Margarine
Gravies	Mayonnaise
Sauces: Cheese, creamed, barbecue, tomato, white	Ketchup
Coffee or tea	Mustard

SAMPLE MENU: LEVEL 3

Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner
Orange juice, 1/2 cup Oatmeal, 1/2 cup Scrambled eggs with cheese, 1/2 cup Decaffeinated tea, 1 cup Whole milk, 1 cup Non-dairy creamer, 2 Tbsp Ketchup, 1 Tbsp Margarine, 1 tsp Salt, 1/4 tsp Sugar, 2 tsp	Pineapple juice, 1/2 cup Ground beef, 3 oz Gravy, 2 Tbsp Mashed potatoes, 1/2 cup Cooked spinach, 1/2 cup Applesauce, 1/2 cup Decaffeinated coffee Whole milk Non-dairy creamer, 2 Tbsp Margarine, 1 tsp Salt, 1/4 tsp	Pureed turkey, barley soup, 3/4 cup Barbecue chicken, 3 oz Mashed potatoes, 1/2 cup Ground fresh broccoli, 1/2 cup Frozen yogurt, 1/2 cup Decaffeinated tea, 1 cup Non-dairy creamer, 2 Tbsp Margarine, 1 tsp Salt, 1/4 tsp Sugar, 1 tsp

LEVEL 4: REGULAR FOODS

- Foods in this group are soft, moist, regularly textured foods.
- This level includes meat and breads, which tend to be the hardest things to swallow.
- Eat very slowly, chew well and continue to avoid carbonated drinks.
- Most people are at this level in 4-6 weeks

Hot Foods	Cold Foods
Baked fish or skinned	Soft cheeses - cottage cheese
Souffles and omelets	Cream cheese
Eggs	Yogurt
Stuffed shells	Milk
Spaghetti with meat sauce	Milkshakes
Cooked cereal	Cold dry cereals (no nuts, dried fruit, coconut)
French toast or pancakes	Crackers
Buttered toast	Fruit juices or nectars
Noodles or pasta (no rice)	Canned fruit
Potatoes (all types)	Ripe bananas
Soft, cooked vegetables (no corn, lima, or baked beans)	Peeled, ripe, fresh fruit
Creamed soups or vegetable soup	Cakes (no nuts, dried fruit, coconut)
Canned chicken noodle soup	Plain doughnuts
Gravies	Ice cream
Bacon dressing	Pudding, mousse, custard
Sauces: Cheese, creamed, barbecue, tomato, white	Fruit ice, Italian ice, sherbet
Decaffeinated tea or coffee	Whipped gelatin
Pork chops	Regular gelatin
	Canned fruited gelatin molds
	Sugar, syrup, honey, jam, jelly
	Cream
	Non-dairy
	Margarine
	Oil
	Mayonnaise
	Ketchup
	Mustard

If you have questions or concerns please contact our office directly at **480-969-4138**