

Post Surgical Nutritional Guidelines

For the initial 6- 24 hours after surgery your diet will consist of clear liquids (water, broth, and electrolyte replacement). The length of this initial period depends on the type and extensiveness of your surgery and how quickly you recover from the anesthesia. Most importantly, you should stay hydrated and replenish electrolytes. (Leave instructions with your caregiver to wake you every three hours so you can drink at least two cups of fluid. Remember to drink slowly). To begin with, liquids will sit better in the stomach if they are at room temperature; not too hot and not too cold.

Try to refrain from using sports drinks. These do contain electrolytes, but they also contain high levels of sugar which may upset your stomach. Instead, try the oral electrolyte solution Pedialyte. You can purchase this in the baby section of your local supermarket. Pedialyte must be kept refrigerated after it is opened (orange is the best flavor). Pedialyte popsicles are available in the freezer aisle. Stick with Pedialyte until you have fully switched over to eating whole foods again and then switch to water, herbal tea or broth.

After this initial period, when you feel you are ready to start to eat solid foods again, focus on easily digestible foods using the BRAT diet as a guideline. BRAT stands for: banana, rice, applesauce and toast. Each of these foods is easy on the stomach and will gently guide you back into eating solid foods. If your stomach is still settled after an hour of eating a couple of these snacks then try to go to the next stage by including these soft foods: smoothie, scrambled eggs, cottage cheese, chicken noodle soup or hot cereal. If your stomach becomes upset, return to the BRAT diet.

In general:

1. **Small frequent meals will 'sit' best in your stomach.**
2. **Food choices will need to be easily chewed.** Limit foods that are dry (turkey, roast beef), sticky (peanut butter), gummy (fresh bread), or stringy (fibrous fruits or vegetables).
3. **Focus on protein.** Smoothies are an easily digestible snack or meal that will allow you to get in the extra protein that is necessary for wound healing. Include a smoothie every day for at least one week post surgery (see recipes on back of page). A separate handout on protein has been included in this packet.
4. **Avoid foods that contain sugar.** Foods that are high in sugar may create an uncomfortable reaction called dumping syndrome (sweating, low blood pressure, dizziness, abdominal cramping).
5. **Eat slowly.** Chew your food very thoroughly.

Smoothies

Smoothies can be made with rice, almond, cashew, soy or regular dairy milk. An additional protein source is essential to the smoothie recipe. You can choose to add organic protein powder in the form of soy, whey or rice protein or you can additionally add 1-2 tablespoons of nut butter.

Variations: Milk source: dairy, soy, nut or rice.

Protein source: 1 T flax meal, 1 T nut butter or protein powder (whey or rice). For a colder smoothie, you may choose to add 4 ice cubes.

Pumpkin-Banana Smoothie

2 servings vanilla flavored rice protein
1 cup vanilla soy milk, light
¼ cup canned pumpkin (not pumpkin pie mix)
½ medium banana
Dash of pumpkin pie spice

Chocolate Raspberry Shake

2 servings chocolate flavored soy protein
1 cup vanilla soy milk, light
1 cup frozen raspberries
1/8 tsp orange extract

Very Berry Shake

2 servings vanilla flavored soy protein
1 cup vanilla soy milk, light
1 cup frozen mixed berries
A few drops vanilla extract

Orange Julius Shake

2 servings vanilla flavored soy protein
1 cup vanilla soy milk, light
3 T frozen orange juice concentrate
¼ tsp vanilla extract

Apple Pie Shake

2 servings vanilla flavored soy protein
1 cup vanilla soy milk, light
1 cup frozen apple slices
A few dashes each cinnamon, nutmeg, cloves
¼ tsp vanilla extract