



# Urostomy

## nutrition advice

Keeping you healthy after ostomy surgery





## Food freedom

Maintaining a balanced diet is important for living a healthy lifestyle, this does not change once you've had your ostomy surgery. We understand that finding the foods that work for you and your ostomy can be confusing, which is why we have worked with our team of stoma nurses and dietitian, to create this handy nutrition advice booklet which we hope you will find beneficial.

Please be reassured that you can continue to enjoy your favourite foods, however as with everyone, regardless of whether they have a stoma or not, you can react differently to certain foods.

It is important to start small and build up. So start reintroducing your favourite foods one at a time to make sure they do not cause you any upset, and if you are looking for any further advice please contact your stoma nurse or healthcare professional.

In this booklet we will cover:

- How the digestive system works
- The five food groups that make a healthy, balanced diet
- Frequently asked questions (or FAQs) answered by our amazing nurse team



## Contents

<b>General good advice</b>	<b>04</b>
<b>What is a healthy balanced diet?</b>	<b>05</b>
<b>Maintaining a healthy diet FAQs</b>	<b>06</b>
<b>Post surgery advice</b>	<b>08</b>
<b>Urostomy FAQs</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Did you know...</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Signs of dehydration</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Thank you</b>	<b>14</b>

## General good advice

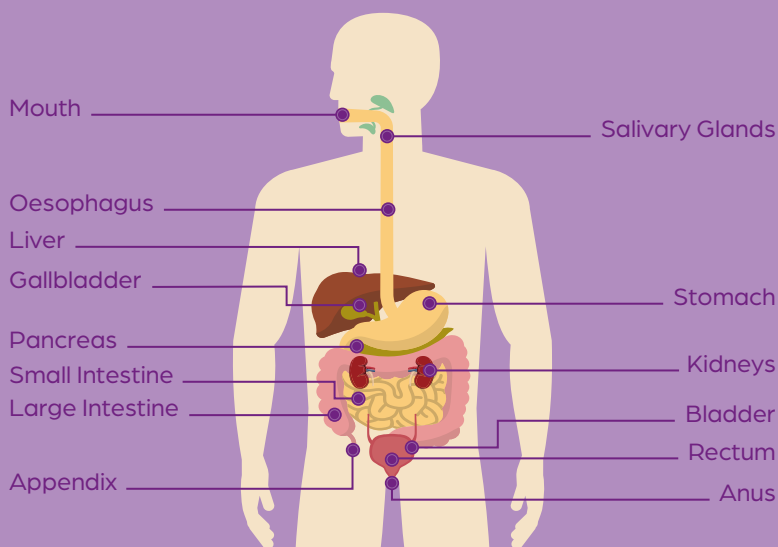
### How the digestive system works

When we eat, we put the food in our mouth and we chew it up. We swallow it and it goes down our food pipe (or oesophagus) into our stomach.

After the contents of the stomach are processed, they're released into the small intestine. The small intestine is a 22-foot long muscular tube that breaks down food using enzymes released by the pancreas and bile from the liver and is mainly responsible for the absorption of nutrients into the bloodstream.

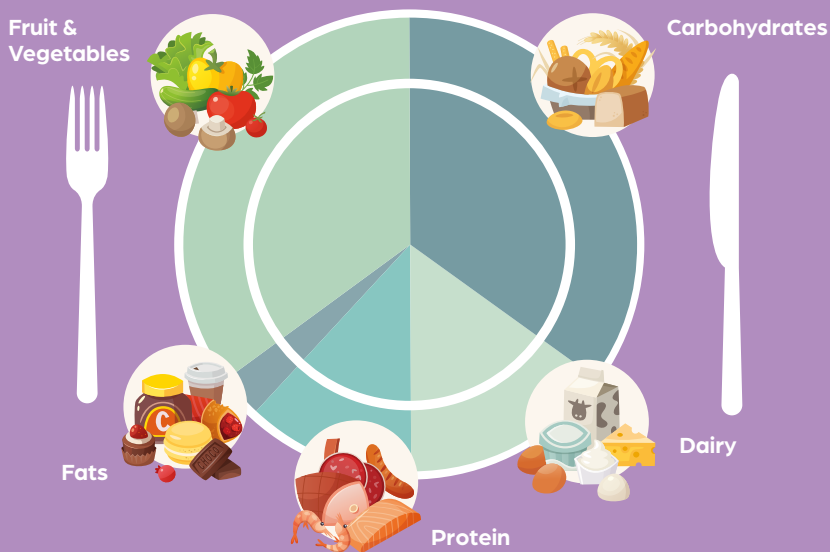
Once the nutrients have been absorbed and the leftover-food residue liquid has passed through the small intestine, it then moves on to the large intestine (colon).

The large intestine absorbs water and any remaining absorbable nutrients from the food. Stool is stored in the colon until a "mass movement" empties it into the rectum once or twice a day and is eventually expelled through the anus.



# What is a healthy balanced diet?

A healthy balanced diet is made up of the five food groups. The Eat Well Guide below is a recommendation only, for what your meals should look like. You don't need to achieve this balance with every meal, even if you just try to get the balance right once a week to begin with.



Fruit & Vegetables	Carbohydrates	Dairy	Protein	Fats
All fruit and vegetables including: Frozen Fresh Canned Dried Juiced	Bagels Rice Breakfast cereal Pasta Couscous Polenta Wheat Yams	Cheese Yogurt Cream Cheese (This also includes non dairy alternatives to these foods)	Poultry Game White fish Oily fish (Fresh, frozen or canned) Nuts Eggs Beans Vegetarian meal alternatives	Vegetable oil Rapeseed oil Olive oil Sun oil Fats / sugars Cakes Biscuits Chocolates Puddings

Reference: NHS Eat Well Guide – [www.nhs.uk/eat-well/the-eatwell-guide/](http://www.nhs.uk/eat-well/the-eatwell-guide/)

## Maintaining a healthy diet FAQs

Healthy eating is important for us all, and you should continue to follow a balanced diet for good health. Everyone's tolerance to different food varies, so monitor your reaction to foods to understand your tolerance.

### Why do we need carbohydrates?

Carbohydrates give you energy, which helps with the absorption of calcium and Vitamin B. Wholegrain variants offer lots of fibre to keep the digestive system healthy. Base your meals around starchy carbohydrates. If you're having chips, go for oven chips which are lower in fat and salt.

### Why do we need protein?

Protein provides vitamins, minerals and in particular iron, which is essential for healing and repair. It is recommended to eat two to three portions each day. Meat is a good source of iron, and it is recommended to eat at least two portions of fish each week, one of which is oily.

### Why do we need dairy?

Dairy contains protein and calcium and some vitamins like vitamin A, B and B12. Dairy is the main source of calcium which is essential for healthy bones. Aim to drink ½ to 1 full pint of milk (or equivalent) each day. Choose lower fat options if required.



## Why do we need fruit and vegetables?

Fruit and vegetables provide lots of vitamins, minerals and antioxidants, which are essential for good health, and contain fibre to keep your digestive system healthy. You should aim for at least 5 portions of a variety of fruit and vegetables a day. If you find some fruit and vegetables are intolerable at first post-surgery, try puréed vegetables, tinned or peeled fruit.

## Why do we need unsaturated fats and oils?

These products are considered to be “beneficial fats” because they can improve cholesterol levels, ease inflammation and stabilize heart rhythms. They provide energy and essential fats, which can be enjoyed in small amounts, choosing unsaturated options if possible.



## Post surgery advice

### A general guideline

Each patient and type of surgery are different, and no standard recommendations can be given for everyone. Most return to maintain a balanced diet, providing all the vitamins, minerals and calories needed for good health.

If you are experiencing some issues or would like further advice, please speak to your stoma nurse or healthcare professional. Here are some general guidelines to help you:

- Make sure to maintain your fluid intake. Try to drink around 2 litres of fluid a day. You could try flavoured still water for some variety.
- To help your body heal after surgery, include high protein foods such as fish, meats and eggs to your diet.
- Eating a wide range of food types is required for a healthy, balanced diet.
- If you live alone try batch cooking meals, this will help keep you rested whilst recovering from surgery.





# This is Laura... She's Family.

**Laura** hails from the West Coast of Scotland. She has two stomas as a result of bladder cancer, and loves a holiday in the Caribbean.

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# Urostomy FAQs

## **What if you get urinary odour or a change to the colour of your urine?**

Urine is normally clear and pale yellow in colour, however its colour and odour can vary depending upon what you eat or drink. This does not change when you have a urostomy. Your urostomy bag is made of special laminated and odour proof plastic. When it is in place and properly applied there should not be an odour.

## **What can cause odour?**

- Urinary tract infections
- Asparagus
- Fish
- Onions and garlic and some spices

Make sure to drink a minimum of 6–8 cups of fluid daily to avoid dehydration.

## **What if you get a urinary tract infection?**

Your urinary tract consists of your kidneys, ureters (which are the tubes draining urine from your kidneys) and your stoma. A urinary tract infection (UTI) can occur in any part, or all of this system, through mucus not flushing out into your stoma bag, or contamination from unwashed hands.

## **How to prevent a urinary tract infection**

- Drinking plenty of water – it is important to stay hydrated.
- Eating foods that are high in Vitamin C – this makes urine acidic and helps prevent infections.
- Avoid consuming large amounts of caffeine and alcohol – these can dehydrate you and make you more susceptible to UTIs.
- If you use a night drainage system, make sure to thoroughly clean the leg bag or container.
- Regularly empty your urostomy pouch.

## **What are the signs of a urinary tract infection?**

- Flu-like symptoms
- Dark, cloudy urine
- Blood in urine
- Strong-smelling urine
- Back pain (where your kidneys are located)

If you notice any of these symptoms contact your healthcare professional, stoma care nurse or GP.

## **What can cause urine to change colour**

- Food and drinks such as beetroot, red fruit and red fruit drinks.
- Senna can change urine colour to yellow-brown or pink.
- Nitrofurantoin can change urine colour to brown-yellow.
- Ibuprofen can change urine colour to red.
- Iron salts can change urine colour to black.
- Warfarin can change urine colour to orange.
- Metronidazole can change urine colour to red to brown.
- Antibiotics can change urine colour to reddish brown.
- Some anti-depressants turn urine blue-green.

# Did you know...



## 60–70%

of the human body consists of water, **keeping hydrated is essential.**

Watermelon, strawberries and grapefruit each have a water content of over

## 90%

perfect for keeping hydrated.



**Drink 8**  
**glasses of water a day,**  
a lack of fluid causes dehydration.

### Hydration tip

Make your own vitamin water, simply add slices of cucumber, lemon, lime or berries to a jug of cold water.

## Signs of dehydration

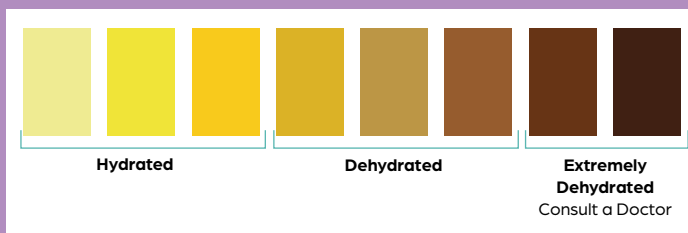
Water makes up two thirds of our body, and it is vital we drink enough fluid to maintain a healthy balance. Many people get dehydrated by not drinking enough fluid or by losing fluids and not replacing them. Good hydration is important for all age groups and is something everyone needs to consider.

### What are the signs of dehydration?

The signs of dehydration are visible in your urine. Dark and strong smelling urine is a clear sign that you need to drink more fluids.

A colour chart to check for sign of dehydration can be used to help identify levels of dehydration. Other symptoms include:

- Dry mouth/lips
- Dizziness
- Headache
- Tiredness
- Lack of concentration



Please see the hydration colour chart which can be used to help you check for signs of dehydration.

If dehydration is left untreated it can become severe. Severe dehydration is a medical emergency and requires medical attention. The key is to drink regularly throughout the day, if you are active or if the weather is particularly hot there is greater risk of dehydration.

As always, if you require any further advice or are concerned about any of the topics we discuss in the booklet, please consult your healthcare professional or stoma care nurse.



**We hope you have found this booklet  
useful in helping to understand nutrition  
post ostomy surgery.**

It is important to remember that you can enjoy food  
as before your surgery, just take your time reintroducing  
foods back into your diet, whilst maintaining a  
balanced diet.

Please be mindful that this is a recommended guide only.  
If you have any queries please contact your stoma  
nurse or healthcare professional, who will be able to  
assist you further.

**Thank you**

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