



## Ostomy Diet Guidelines

Following ostomy surgery a low residue diet is recommended for approximately 6 weeks. A low residue diet contains limited amounts of undigested or only partially digested ingredients. Residue is defined medically as the solid contents that have reached the lower intestine. The main source of residue is fiber in foods like whole grain breads and cereals, seeds and nuts, dried fruits, and the stalks and skins of fruits and vegetables. For the first six weeks the stoma will be edematous (swollen) and undigested or bulky foods passing out of the stoma may cause some discomfort. A low residue diet is restrictive of plant fibers, for instance raw fruit and vegetables. A good rule of thumb is that if you cannot cut the fruit or vegetable with the side of your fork; you should not include it in a low residue diet. For instance soft banana can be included; an apple cannot be included.

Once the stoma swelling has subsided foods can be reintroduced slowly. It is recommended that a small amount of previously restricted food be tried and if no bloating or discomfort is noted, this food can now be included in your diet. Most foods can be eaten without problems if chewed well and eaten slowly. If certain foods caused you problems before your illness they may again cause you problems.

Should you notice that the amount of the ostomy output is high and if the texture is more like water than a thick consistency, you can try foods that can thicken the drainage.

These foods include:

|                |          |               |            |
|----------------|----------|---------------|------------|
| Bread Products | Crackers | Pretzels      | Applesauce |
| Rice           | Pasta    | Peanut Butter | Bananas    |

If you note that you are emptying your pouch more frequently than normal, this may be a sign that you could become dehydrated. Other signs include: a feeling of light headiness or becoming dizzy upon arising, a fast heart rate and low urinary output. Do not just take more fluids; you must take foods that can work with the fluid to rehydrate your system. If you are noting signs and symptoms of dehydration, eat a starch based product (crackers, pretzels, pasta, bagel, etc) with all of the fluids you drink. For instance eat crackers with a cup of water. Drinking alone without the inclusion of a starch based product can cause additional liquid to exit the stoma.

At times it may be useful to take antidiarrheal such as Imodium. Talk to your ostomy nurse to determine an appropriate dose.