

Diet Recommendations following Bowel Surgery

While the anastomosis (join) in your bowel is healing it would seem sensible to eat foods that are easy to digest and provide extra nutrition and energy to help you recover.

- As with any operation, you may find that it takes time for your appetite to return, especially if you were unwell before the surgery. It is a good idea to reintroduce food gradually, starting with a light, soft diet which is easy to digest and will not disturb the internal surgical join (anastomosis) during healing: -

Include protein foods such as meat, fish, eggs cheese and milk to help wound healing.

- If your appetite is poor take smaller meals with snacks in between such as sandwiches, cheese and biscuits, yoghurts or nutritious drinks like milk, Build-up or other supplements as recommended by your dietitian.
- Choose plainly cooked foods and avoid spicy or highly seasoned dishes, fried foods and fibrous foods.
- Foods with “stringy” fibre are best avoided eg: bok choy, pithy fruits (Mango, orange, mandarins) and skins should be removed from other fruits
- Soluble fibre supplements are however OK (eg: Metamucil/psyllium husks)

How long?

- You will make good progress in the first 1 – 2 weeks after surgery, then steady progress for next few weeks. You can be back to a full healthy diet in 4-6 weeks. It can take several months to develop your new bowel habit and expect to be irregular for some time.

Exercise and Driving

- You should avoid heavy lifting for 6 weeks to allow the wounds to achieve sufficient strength
- Walking is good exercise and can be undertaken as soon as discharged (remember that you will tire easily-don't push it too hard to start with)
- Use common sense with regard to driving. You must be safe on the road and able to perform an emergency stop when necessary. If you can't then you are not ready to drive. The number of weeks will depend on the type of surgery (keyhole or open) and the speed of your recovery