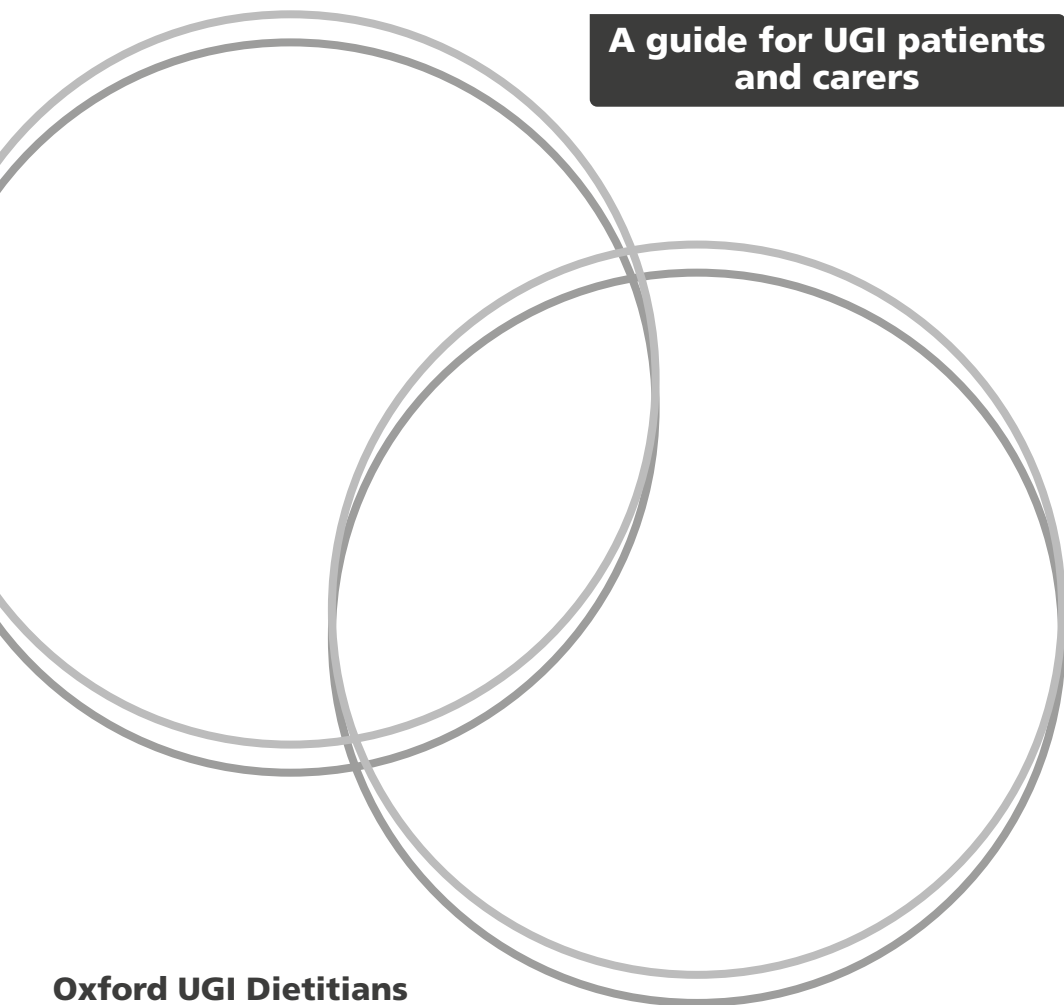


Soft & bite-sized diet following oesophageal or gastric surgery

**A guide for UGI patients
and carers**



This information is to be used in conjunction with diet sheets: 'Eating and drinking following a gastrectomy' or 'Eating and drinking following an oesophagectomy' dietary information. You should be provided with one of these information booklets to use alongside this soft and bite sized diet information.

Why is a soft and bite sized diet important?

Following 2 weeks of a pureed diet, it is important to now follow a soft and bite sized diet following oesophageal or gastric surgery for weeks 3-7 following your discharge from hospital. This will allow the surgical site to heal well and will avoid any irritation, pain or unwanted stretching which can lead to a misshapen gastric tube or oesophagus.

Portion size

Whilst following a soft and bite sized diet, it is important to aim for a little and often approach to eating and to aim for 6 small meals or snacks per day. Your portion sizes may be very small to begin with which is normal at this stage. We would recommend eating no more than a tea plate size to begin with. Additionally, you should leave a break of about 1 hour between your meals, snacks and desserts.

Protein

Protein is important for wound healing, repair and recovery after surgery and will help preserve muscle mass and avoid muscle loss. We recommend basing your meals around protein rich foods with a small amount of carbohydrates and vegetables. Try to eat the protein part of the meal first.

Protein rich foods include meat, fish, poultry, seafood, pulses (such as lentils, beans and peas), eggs, soya products, nuts and seeds, yoghurt, cheese, milk, and other dairy foods.

It is recommended that you top up your protein intake with a high protein supplement drink which you will be provided with following your discharge from the ward.

Fibre

A high fibre diet can cause bloating in the early days and weeks after surgery; therefore, we recommend being cautious with the amount of fibre in your diet. You can include a small amount of fruit and vegetables but don't aim for your 5 a day of fruit and vegetables at this stage. You will be able to introduce more fibre at a later stage.

Soft and bite-sized diet – getting the texture right

Soft and bite-sized food are foods that are soft, tender and moist throughout. They can be mashed or broken down with pressure from a fork, spoon or chopsticks. A knife is not required to cut up the food and they shouldn't require lots of chewing. Often foods served with sauces or gravy are better tolerated at this stage because they help the food pass easily through the oesophagus or stomach tube. Crispy foods such as crackers, crisps and breadsticks will break up easily and tend to pass easily past the surgical site, these are best eaten with a topping such (please see ideas for savoury snacks on page 7). Bread and pastries should still be avoided as this can cause a food blockage which can get stuck.

Breakfast options

- Full fat natural, Greek or high protein yoghurt with a small portion of soft tinned or fresh fruit (skin removed), or a mashed banana.
- Milk-based smoothie drink – juice smoothies may be too high in sugar. Consider adding a small amount of ground flaxseed, ground almonds or smooth nut butter for extra protein or a small amount of protein powder.
- Cereals without nuts or seeds soaked in milk
- Porridge with milk
- Overnight oats made with yoghurt and milk
- Scrambled eggs lightly cooked to a soft consistency served with or without mashed avocado. You may need to add milk, butter and/or crème fraîche to soften and moisten at this stage
- Soft boiled eggs mashed
- Baked beans (lightly mashed with a fork if necessary)
- Skinless sausage mashed and served with baked beans
- Scrambled tofu with or without mashed avocado

Main Course options

- Casserole made with small, tender pieces of meat or poultry
- Curry with small, tender pieces of meat, poultry or lentils and vegetables with sauce
- Shepherds or cottage pie topped with mashed potato and served with gravy
- Corned beef hash with gravy
- Bolognaise sauce with a small portion of well cooked pasta
- Minced beef, pork, lamb, chicken, turkey or Quorn mince served with gravy
- Poached fish in parsley or cheese sauce
- Fish pie with mashed potato topping
- Soft meat balls in tomato sauce
- Moussaka or lasagne
- Baked beans lightly mashed and topped with grated cheese
- Cauliflower or macaroni cheese
- Lightly cooked scrambled egg, mashed soft boiled eggs or egg mayonnaise
- Tuna mayonnaise with mashed potato, or the centre of a jacket potato
- Scrambled tofu served with a tomato sauce
- Lentil dhal
- Chilli con carne

You may wish to serve some of these dishes with a small portion of mashed potato, mashed sweet potato, or mashed carrot, swede, broccoli or mushy peas.

Soups

- Soups can either be homemade or shop bought. Choose soups with protein that contain chicken, meat, fish, lentils, or pulses such as chickpeas or other beans.
- We do not recommend cup-a-soups, Bovril and broth as they provide very little energy and protein.

Adding protein to soups

Some vegetable and tinned soups can be low in protein therefore we recommend the following tips to boost the protein:

- Add skimmed milk powder, creme fraiche or grated cheese.
- Add a tin of chickpeas, butterbeans or cooked red lentils
- Silken tofu can be added and blended to soup to give a creamy consistency.

Ideas for soups with protein

- Lamb/chicken, chickpea and lentil
- Chicken and vegetable
- Fish/seafood chowder
- Pea and ham
- Cauliflower and cheddar
- Broccoli and stilton
- Lamb and vegetable
- Pork and mushroom
- Chicken and red lentil
- Sweet potato and red lentil
- Carrot, parsnip and chickpea

- Creamy mushroom soup with silken tofu
- Creamy thai squash soup with silken tofu

Some tinned soups may be lower in protein compared to fresh or homemade soup. Please refer to the tips for adding protein to tinned soups above.

Ideas for savoury snacks

- Cereal or porridge with milk and ground almonds
- Soft crackers, oat cakes and breadsticks will break up easily and can be eaten on a soft diet. Try these topped with protein such as hummus, meat paté, mackerel/salmon pate or mousse, cheese triangles, cottage cheese or cream cheese. Smooth nut butters can be used as a topping in addition to mashed avocado, guacamole or other dips such as taramasalata, tzatziki, blue cheese dip.

Dessert options

- Full fat natural, Greek or high protein yoghurts
- Stewed fruit served with yoghurt, custard or ice-cream
- Fresh fruit such as raspberries or strawberries softened with the back of a spoon and served with yoghurt, cream or ice-cream
- Mashed banana and custard
- Fruit crumble with custard or ice cream
- Rice pudding, tapioca or semolina
- Potted desserts: custard, rice pudding, mousse, fruit fool, crème caramel
- Ice-cream
- Finely ground nuts can be sprinkled on top of desserts to boost the protein content
- Puddings made with blended silken tofu

You should be able to tolerate a small dessert if eaten an hour after your meal or snack. Try to choose those with a lower sugar content if possible.

Nourishing drinks

You will have been provided with high protein nutritional supplements on discharge from hospital. Many shop bought milkshakes or nutritional supplements that you were provided with prior to surgery may be too high in sugar or carbohydrate. Check with your Dietitian if you are unsure.

Examples of protein rich drinks:

- Glass of milk
- Home made milk-based smoothie using milk of your choice and yoghurt. Consider adding a small amount of ground flaxseed, ground almonds or smooth nut butter for extra protein or a small amount of protein powder.
- Hot chocolate / Ovaltine / Horlicks / Coffee made with milk

Fortified Milk Recipe

To boost the protein and calorie content of milk you can make fortified milk which you can use throughout the day on cereal, drinks and added to meals.

- Add 2-4 tablespoons of skimmed milk powder to 1 pint of full-fat milk and mix well

Suggested meal plan

Breakfast:

Porridge or cereal with fortified full fat milk

Mid-morning:

A small portion of yoghurt with mashed banana and ground almonds sprinkled on top

Lunch:

Scrambled eggs with mashed baked beans followed 1 hour later with yoghurt or custard with a small serving of soft fruit

Mid-afternoon:

1-2 oat cakes topped with salmon paté

Evening meal:

Chicken casserole with a small portion of mashed potato or mashed sweet potato followed 1 hour later with a potted dessert such as custard, yoghurt, creme caramel or mousse

Supper:

Glass of milk or cocoa made with fortified milk

Further information

If you would like to discuss further, please contact your Specialist Dietitian.

Specialist UGI Dietitians:

Churchill Hospital,

Oxford

Contact: **01865 228305**

Further information

If you would like an interpreter, please speak to the department where you are being seen.

Please also tell them if you would like this information in another format, such as:

- Easy Read
- large print
- braille
- audio
- electronic
- another language.

We have tried to make the information in this leaflet meet your needs. If it does not meet your individual needs or situation, please speak to your healthcare team. They are happy to help.

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