



TRANSITIONING TO SOLID FOODS & TROUBLESHOOTING

Follow these guidelines and tips to promote food tolerance and aid in your transition to solid foods.

Aim to eat every 3-5 hours (4-6 times per day) and keep the volume of food consumed to $\frac{3}{4}$ -1 cup in a single sitting (volume of food will depend on the foods' texture and density)

Use smaller plates and utensils to help with meal size

Try one new food at a time to determine tolerance

Keeping a food journal can help you keep track of this

Prioritize protein and always eat it first

The first 2-4 ounces ($\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ cup) of food should be high in protein

Eat slowly, allow 20-30 minutes to finish a meal

- Avoid eating while distracted (multi-tasking, on the phone, watching TV, on the computer, while driving), as this can cause you to eat quickly
- Create a calm atmosphere while eating
- Use a timer to help pace your meals
- Record starting and finishing times in your food log
- Put your utensil down and take short breaths in between bites
- Split your food in half on the plate, take 15 minutes to eat the first half and 15 minutes to eat the second half

Chew well

- Your stomach's ability to digest is now limited, chewing your food will help compensate for this and increase the likelihood of a food's tolerance
- Cut your food into small bites, this will require less work to chew your food
- Think about chewing all foods to "applesauce" consistency before swallowing



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Avoid drinking fluids with meals, drink 30 minutes before or 30 minutes after eating

- Keep all fluids off the table while eating
- Set a timer once you finish eating for 30 minutes so you know when it is time to begin drinking again
- Eat fish/meat-based soups with a fork and discard all the leftover liquid

Ensure that your foods are moist and not too dry

- Prepare meats in a crock pot or slow cooker
- Prepare meats with low-fat sauces, marinades, salad dressings, salsas, yoghurt, milk, or broth
- Cover meats with a lid or aluminum foil when baking or grilling
- Pound out meats into thinner pieces before cooking
- Choose more moist proteins choices such as tofu, beans, 93% lean ground beef/chicken, chicken tenders, boneless/skinless chicken thighs, etc.
- When reheating food in the microwave, be sure to add additional sauce/gravy to avoid your meals being too dry
- Avoid over-cooking meats by using a food thermometer

Limit or avoid stringy/chewy/sticky/crunchy foods, as these are often not well tolerated initially and can cause blockages and/or plugging

These can include fresh bread, sticky rice, pasta, melted cheese, raw veggies, nuts and seeds, and popcorn

Limit or avoid tough, fibrous foods for 3-6 months following surgery

These can include grapes, celery, and sweet potatoes

Cooking these foods until tender and chewing them well can help them be better tolerated

Learn to identify hunger cues and distinguish between true and emotional hunger

Signs of true hunger include weakness, lethargy, feelings of tiredness and fuzzy thoughts



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Learn to recognize fullness/satiety

- Try to identify your new feelings of fullness so you do not overeat
- Common symptoms that you may be full include the hiccups, the feeling like you need to belch, and/or slight nausea
- Practice eating more slowly so you can identify these symptoms and stop eating before they occur
- Avoid distractions while you are eating
- Keep a food journal to record your observations

Aim for 150 minutes per week of exercise, and 2 days per week of strength training

Use Listerine strips or mouthwash if you are experiencing bad breath
Avoid excess sugar-free mints or gum

Try different strategies to control gas if you are experiencing bloating or other symptoms

- Avoid or limit intake of foods that may cause gas/bloating (beans, fiber-rich foods such as berries, oatmeal, or carrots, dairy, sugar substitutes, and/or fatty foods)
- When eliminating foods, keep track of your symptoms and try to identify foods (such as the ones listed above) that may be contributing to the gas/bloating
- Keeping a food journal may help you identify the causes, monitor and avoid these symptoms
- Reduce excess air while swallowing, as this can make you feel bloated
- Chew and eat slowly, avoid gulping food and liquids
- Avoid carbonated liquids
- Skip chewing gum and drinking through a straw

Sources: <https://connect.mayoclinic.org/blog/weight-management-1/newsfeed-post/managing-gas-after-weight-loss-surgery/>