Diet Guidelines Following Esophageal Surgery

Nutrition is very important for healing and preventing weight loss following esophageal surgery. Because of the surgery, your esophagus may not be able to move foods as easily from your mouth to your stomach. Certain foods can be difficult to swallow. It is not uncommon for individuals to have difficulties with eating after surgery. Please call Rob at 559-8989 with questions. The following may be helpful to lessen eating difficulties for Dr. Oleynikov’s patients:

Diet Basics after Esophageal Surgery

- Foods that may be difficult to swallow:
  - Soft, doughy bread or rolls
  - Tough, gummy or stringy foods
- Soft, moist foods may be easier to get down
- After surgery, you may have less stomach capacity. Often these feelings go away over time.
- Try eating 6 small, nutritious meals and snacks during the day, rather than 3 larger meals.
- If a certain food causes you discomfort, wait a week or two then retry the food.
- Take small bites and chew foods well.
- Stop eating when you start to feel full.
- Take a daily multivitamin. Chewable children’s vitamins (2 per day) are usually well tolerated and are what you should take for the while you are on the restricted diet and until you can swallow vitamins whole. Ask your doctor if you require Vitamin B12, iron, calcium or folic acid supplementation after surgery.
- If your appetite is poor and weight loss occurs, a liquid supplement may be used. Examples include: Ensure™, Resource™, Boost™, or Carnation Instant Breakfast™. See a dietitian for more choices.

Diet recommendations for side effects post-surgery:

To decrease heartburn or reflux:

- Wear loose fitting clothing
- Limit caffeine intake (coffee, tea and cola drinks).
- Limit or avoid high fat foods (e.g. deep fried food)
- Limit or avoid alcohol
- Sit upright after eating and stay in a sitting position for 45-60 minutes after eating
- Limit or avoid acidic, salty, and extreme temperature (very cold or very hot) foods

These foods may tend to cause or worsen heartburn or reflux:

- Chocolate
- Tomatoes and tomato products
- Citrus fruits/juices (orange, lemon, pineapple, grapefruit, tangerine)
- Spearmint, peppermint, mint teas, black or red pepper, hot peppers and vinegar

To decrease gas and bloating:

- Limit or avoid “air swallowing” activities, such as: using straws, slurping foods, chewing gum, sucking on candy or ice cubes, and drinking carbonated beverages.
- The following foods may cause gas and bloating: broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cauliflower, cabbage, garlic, onions, apples, melon, legumes
## FOOD LIST

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Post-op diet—at least until two weeks after surgery</th>
<th>To be slowly added after post-op visit*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Beverages</td>
<td>Milk (as tolerated); decaf tea; non-acidic fruit juice and fruit drinks; sports drinks, water, coffee</td>
<td>Alcohol, carbonated beverages, citrus juice, sparkling water</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breads/Cereals</td>
<td>Dry or moist cooked cereals (oatmeal, farina, grits, cream of wheat, cream of rice), soft pancakes with syrup</td>
<td>Soft, breads, rolls, bagels, English muffins, thick-crust pizza, soft pretzels, crackers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Desserts</td>
<td>Pudding or custard, gelatin made with allowed fruits, ice cream, sherbet, cream pie, fruit ice, popsicles, milkshakes, soft cake</td>
<td>All doughy baked desserts, Desserts made with nuts, coconut. Cookies, pies, dried fruit, bread and rice pudding</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fats</td>
<td>Butter, margarine, salad dressing, vegetable oils, sour cream, cream cheese, gravy, whipped toppings</td>
<td>Nuts, peanut butter, all fats with chunks added</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fruits</td>
<td>Canned fruits without seeds or skins, ripe fresh fruits without tough skins (i.e., bananas), fruit juices</td>
<td>Dried fruits, citrus fruits, stringy fruits (i.e., pineapple), fruits with skins or seeds</td>
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<tr>
<td>Meat &amp; Meat Substitutes</td>
<td>Tender, moist fish, shellfish, poultry, ground meat with gravy or sauces, moist casseroles with allowed ingredients, cottage cheese, soft eggs, tuna/egg salad without course ingredients/moist macaroni and cheese, plain or flavored yogurt with no fruit chunks</td>
<td>Tough, stringy or grisly meats, highly spiced or seasoned meats, fried meats, red meats, lunch meats, hot dogs, sausage, bacon, casseroles with rice, dry casseroles, cheese slices or cubes (ok melted in casserole), sandwiches, peanut butter, yogurt with nuts, dried fruits, pizza, hard eggs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potatoes &amp; Other Starches</td>
<td>Well cooked, moist potatoes. Noodles &amp; pasta well cooked in sauces</td>
<td>Rice, potato chips, potato skins, fried potatoes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Soups</td>
<td>Soups made with well cooked and tender allowed meats and vegetables</td>
<td>Soups that are tomato-based, made with rice, contain large chunks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vegetables</td>
<td>Soft cooked fresh or frozen vegetables, canned vegetables (should be able to mash with a fork)</td>
<td>Fried vegetables, raw vegetables, tomato sauces and products</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous</td>
<td>Salt, mildly flavored sauces and gravies, other seasonings as tolerated</td>
<td>Black pepper, spicy BBQ sauce and other spicy condiments, acidic foods, vinegar, and products made with mint</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*If no adverse symptoms occur, these foods can be added as tolerated*