

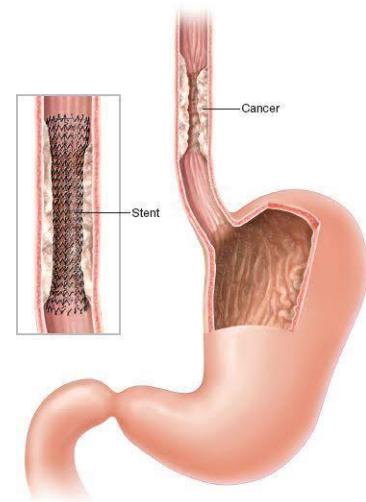
INFORMATION FOR PATIENTS

Eating with an oesophageal stent

What is an oesophageal stent?

This is a flexible mesh tube which is placed through the narrowing in your oesophagus (food pipe). It is designed to expand and hold open the narrowing in the oesophagus to make eating and drinking easier. The stent will not be as wide or as flexible as a normal oesophagus so you will need to take care with certain foods to prevent the stent from blocking.

Oesophageal stents come in different diameters and lengths to suit individual needs.



Re-introducing fluids and food

Once the stent has been placed you will be able to gradually re-introduce fluids and food. The staged build up approach will help you gain confidence with eating and drinking again. The consistency of foods tolerated varies; the timeline for building through the stages can be extended to meet your needs. Not everyone will be able to reach stage 3.

You will not be allowed any fluid or food for 2 hours after your procedure and then you will be advised to start sips of water for the next 2 hours before starting these stages.

There are 3 stages:

Stage 1:
Fluid diet

Stage 2:
Pureed diet

Stage 3:
Soft and bite-sized

Stage 1 - fluid diet

It is advisable to only have fluids for the first 24 hours after your stent has been placed. This is to wash away debris from around the stent and to allow the stent to expand as much as possible.

Fluid foods should be of a consistency that easily pours off a spoon and can be sucked through a straw. Food should be well blended and have no lumps; this is best achieved using a blender or liquidiser and sieve.

Examples of fluids to have on Stage 1:

- Water, squash, milk, cups of tea/ coffee, fruit juice.
- Blended Ready Brek with lots of milk.
- Soups including tinned soup, powdered or homemade. To make these more energy-dense you can add extra cream, skimmed milk powder, or evaporated milk. Try to use the 'cream of' or 'hearty' tinned options.
- Shop brought milkshakes or homemade options such as:
 - Fortified milk – 1 pint of whole milk with 2-4 tablespoons of skimmed milk powder.
 - Fortified milkshake - 200ml fortified milk with milkshake powder and 1 tablespoon of double cream.
- Fruit smoothies using soft or tinned fruit with lots of milk/fluid such as:
 - 200ml fortified milk.
 - 1 thick and creamy yogurt.
 - 1 scoop of ice cream and 1 portion of tinned peaches or banana.

Stage 2 - pureed diet

Pureed foods should be smooth throughout with no lumps. It must be a consistency that could be eaten with a fork as it will not drop through the prongs.

Top tips for pureed diet:

- A blender/liquidiser/food processor can be used, or food can be mashed and sieved to remove lumps.
- Ingredients that can be added to thicken your food include cornflower, custard powder, mashed potato, instant potato powder, and instant gravy granules.
- Pureed meals can be made into higher energy foods by adding white or cheese sauce, milk powder, cream, skimmed milk powder, evaporated milk, or whole milk.

Examples of food to have on stage 2:

- Cereals (such as porridge, cornflakes, Rice Krispies, Shreddies, Weetabix) blended using milk, evaporated milk, or yogurt. Avoid any nuts or dried fruit as these are difficult to blend smooth.
- Yogurt with no lumps. For a higher energy intake, you can choose thick and creamy options such as Greek yogurt or protein yogurts.
- Thick soup with no lumps.
- Blended meals with extra gravy/sauce such as cottage pie, cauliflower cheese, pasta, well cooked vegetables, or tinned fruit (with no skin).
- Yogurts with no lumps, custard, mousse, blancmange, Angel Delight, blended sponge and custard and blended milk puddings.

Stage 3 and onwards - soft and bite-sized diet

Soft and bite-sized foods should be soft, tender, moist and require little chewing. There should be no chewy, fibrous, crunchy, or dry bits. Lumps should be no bigger than 0.5 – 1.5cm.

Example of foods to have on stage 3:

- Porridge/Ready Brek, Weetabix, Shreddies, Cornflakes (all soaked well with milk).
- Yogurt with/without fruit puree.
- Scrambled eggs or boiled eggs mashed with mayonnaise (add extra butter/milk).
- Boneless fish, e.g., salmon, tuna, white fish, fish fingers (add parsley sauce/ mayonnaise.)
- Tender/minced meat or poultry.
- Stews and casseroles with tender and bite sized pieces of meat.
- Skinless sausage/sausage meat/corned beef.
- Macaroni cheese (mash with a fork).
- Well cooked pasta with sauce (mash with a fork).
- Potatoes without the skin can be mashed, boiled, or baked with, for example, baked beans/cottage cheese/curry/tuna.
- Vegetables need to be cooked soft and tough skins removed. These include beetroot, carrots, cauliflower, courgettes, mushy peas, parsnips, turnip/swede, broccoli, and tinned chopped tomatoes (sieving any seeds).
- Soft fruits with skins and seeds removed such as bananas, pears, or peaches. Consider peeling and stewing apples.
- Sponge pudding with custard, rice pudding, semolina, ice cream, yogurt, mousse, Angel Delight, and blancmange.

Foods to avoid with an oesophageal stent

Some people find that the following foods stick and block their oesophageal stents and so it is advisable to avoid them:

- **Bread and toast.** Bread swells when we chew it and is dry which can be difficult to swallow.
- **Boiled, poached and fried eggs.** Egg yolk can stick to the stent. Try adding mayonnaise or salad cream or choose scrambled eggs.
- **Fish with bones.** Bones can get trapped in the stent; therefore, ensure any bones are removed before eating.
- **Stringy fruit and vegetables.** Stringy/tough parts of fruits and vegetables can get stuck.
- **Potato chips/fries.** These can be difficult to chew down and can be dry. If you are having soft chips ensure to add extra sauces such as gravy, beans, curry sauce. Have bite-sized pieces and take your time.

What if my stent blocks?

- Try not to panic.
- Stop eating.
- Stand up and walk around.
- Take a few sips of your drink.

If it has not cleared after 1-2 hours contact either your GP, specialist nurse team or any rapid response numbers you have if you are on cancer treatment.

If you are diabetic and have taken your insulin before your stent gets blocked, please be aware of hypoglycaemia. Contact your GP or NHS 111 straight away for advice.

Managing acid reflux/indigestion

Acid reflux/indigestion is common in people with oesophageal stents placed at the lower part of the oesophagus near the stomach. Please speak to your GP to ensure you are on the correct medication for your reflux.

Top tips to help manage this:

- Limit the amount of rich and spicy foods.
- Avoid caffeinated, acidic, alcoholic or fizzy drinks. Instead try milk, water, decaffeinated drinks and non-acidic fruit juice such as cranberry, apple, pear or blackcurrant.
- Don't lie down straight after eating; allow time for your food to go down at an upright angle.
- Try to sleep propped up with a sleeping wedge pillow or extra pillows.
- Take your time with your meals.

Contact information

Dietitian:

Telephone number: 01623 676025

Further sources of information

NHS Choices: www.nhs.uk/conditions

Our website: www.sfh-tr.nhs.uk

Patient Experience Team (PET)

PET is available to help with any of your compliments, concerns or complaints, and will ensure a prompt and efficient service:

King's Mill Hospital: 01623 672222

Newark Hospital: 01636 685692

Email: sfh-tr.PET@nhs.net

If you would like this information in an alternative format, for example large print or easy read, or if you need help with communicating with us, for example because you use British Sign Language, please let us know. You can call the Patient Experience Team on 01623 672222 or email sfh-tr.PET@nhs.net.

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