

# Nutrition and Gastroparesis

## Gastroparesis

Gastroparesis means your stomach takes longer than normal to pass food into the intestine because the action is either slowed or stopped. This happens when the nerves are damaged or stop working.

High blood glucose over a long period of time is a cause of gastroparesis (called diabetic gastroparesis). Disorders of the nervous system and specific medicines can also cause gastroparesis. In some cases no obvious cause is found.

## Symptoms

The common symptoms of gastroparesis are:

- feeling full after only a few bites of food
- abdominal bloating
- excessive belching
- upset stomach (nausea), throwing up (vomiting) or both, especially after meals
- heartburn or reflux of stomach contents into the throat or mouth
- lack of appetite
- stomach muscle spasms
- weight loss
- constipation.

### Gastroparesis Nutrition Guidelines

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|----------------------------------|---|
| Eat 4 to 6 small meals each day. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Eating small meals more often will result in fewer symptoms than eating large meals.</li> <li>■ The larger the meal you eat, the longer it will take for your stomach to empty.</li> </ul>   |
| Drink more liquids.              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Liquids leave the stomach easier and quicker than solids.</li> <li>■ Drink liquids during meals.</li> <li>■ Liquid meals may be better tolerated than solid food when you have active symptoms..               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Most foods can be pureed into a consistency that is easier to digest.</li> <li>— If you do not have a blender, you can also have strained baby food.</li> <li>— Ready-to-drink nutrition beverages such as Carnation® Instant Breakfast®, Boost®, Ensure®, Glucerna® or generic brands provide enough calories and protein.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> |

## Gastroparesis Nutrition Guidelines

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|---------------------------|--|
| Limit food high in fat.   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Fat naturally causes slow digestion.</li> <li>■ Avoid food high in fat such as:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— fried or greasy foods</li> <li>— pastries (cookies, cake, croissants, donuts, pie).</li> </ul> </li> <li>■ Limit foods that have more than 3 grams of fat per serving. (Ready-to-drink nutrition beverages will have more than 3 grams of fat per serving. These are OK to have.)</li> </ul>   |
| Limit food high in fiber. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Avoid fresh (raw) fruits and vegetables.</li> <li>■ Use well-cooked or canned vegetables (beets, carrots, mushrooms, summer squash, yams) or canned fruit without skins (applesauce, peaches, pears).</li> <li>■ Eating foods high in fiber can cause food to harden into solid masses called bezoars. This may cause nausea, vomiting and blockage in the stomach.             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— To help avoid bezoars, do not eat apples, figs, Brussels sprouts, potato peels, berries, oranges, green beans, sauerkraut, coconut, persimmons and legumes.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> |

### Other Suggestions

- Eat nutrient-rich foods first to avoid filling up on empty calories.
- Use whole milk or evaporated milk for drinking and making soups and milkshakes.
- Make custards and puddings with eggs or egg substitutes.
- Add ice cream, sherbet or sorbet to ready-to-drink nutrition beverages.
- Chew food well, especially hard-to-chew foods such as broccoli, nuts, seeds, corn and popcorn.
- Sit up while eating and for 1 to 2 hours after you are done.
- Go for a walk after meals.
- Your health care provider may recommend you take a liquid multivitamin once a day.

### Sample Menu

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|---|--|---|
| <b>Breakfast:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ 1 slice of toast (white bread) with 1 teaspoon jam</li> <li>■ ½ cup cooked Cream of Wheat®</li> <li>■ 1 hardboiled egg white</li> <li>■ ½ cup cranberry juice</li> </ul> | <b>Lunch:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ 2 ounces cooked turkey breast</li> <li>■ ½ cup cooked white rice</li> <li>■ ½ cup cooked spinach</li> <li>■ 1 cup fat-free or 1 percent milk</li> </ul> | <b>Dinner:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ 3 ounces cooked lean fish</li> <li>■ 1 small baked potato (no skin) with 2 teaspoons low-fat or fat-free sour cream</li> <li>■ ¼ cup well-cooked carrots</li> <li>■ 1 cup fat-free or 1 percent milk</li> </ul> |
| <b>Morning snack:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ ½ cup canned fruit</li> <li>■ ½ cup low-fat or fat free cottage cheese</li> </ul>  | <b>Afternoon snack:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ 6 ounces low-fat or fat-free yogurt</li> <li>■ ½ banana</li> </ul>  | <b>Evening snack:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ 10 to 15 animal crackers</li> <li>■ 1 cup fat-free or 1 percent milk</li> </ul>  |