

Gastroparesis

Gastroparesis happens when the nerves of the stomach are damaged. As a result, the muscles cannot work as well as they should to move food through the digestive tract. This causes the stomach to empty more slowly. You may have:

If you have any questions, please ask your physician or nurse.

- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Abdominal pain or discomfort
- Fullness/bloating soon after eating

If you have diabetes, you may also have:

- Wide swings in blood glucose
- Unexpected low blood glucose after meals

Symptoms can vary from week-to-week or even day-to-day. This guide can help you change your diet to help manage the symptoms.

Managing your symptoms

How the stomach empties can be different for each person. As a result, it often takes “trial and error” to find which changes in your diet work for you. The goal is to decrease the chance for flare-ups and manage your diet when symptoms happen.

Following a range of diet types can help you manage your symptoms. You may need to adjust your diet based on your symptoms. During a flare-up, start with a clear liquid diet. As your symptoms improve, you can advance to the next type of diet.



Helpful diet tips

- **Liquid diet.** With gastroparesis, liquid calories are easier to take than solids.
- **Avoid large meals.** The larger the meal, the more slowly your stomach will empty. This can cause discomfort. Eat 4 to 6 small meals throughout the day.
- **Limit high fat foods.** High-fat foods may slow your stomach from emptying. Many people can take fat better in a liquid form. Try milkshakes, whole milk and nutrition supplements to find what works best for you.

- **Eat nutritious foods first.** You may feel a sense of fullness or have a satisfied appetite early in your meal. Choose soft or pureed foods high in calories and protein first. Try not to fill up on “empty calories” with little nutritional value.
- **Chew foods well.** Some meats may be easier to eat if they are ground or pureed. Keep foods simple, soft and easy to chew.
- **Avoid high-fiber foods.** Foods high in fiber may stay in your stomach longer. This may cause you to feel full or like something is “stuck” in your stomach. Choose low-fiber foods, such as:
 - White bread and refined cereals and rice products. Avoid products made with whole grain flour, bran, seeds or nuts.
 - Canned or cooked fruits and vegetables without seeds or skin. Drink juices without pulp.
 - Tender, ground or well-cooked meats.
- **Avoid all dried beans and peas.**
- **Avoid food and beverages that may increase acid reflux.** These foods include: acidic, spicy and greasy foods, caffeine, and mint.
- **Avoid carbonated beverages.** They increase bloating.
- **Do not drink alcohol.**
- **Do not smoke.**

Sit up while eating and for 1 hour after meals. This may help ease discomfort. When symptoms are severe, let your stomach rest. Until your symptoms improve, think about other options, such as:

- Liquids or meal replacements (Ensure™ or Glucerna™) rather than solids.
- Foods that are mixed or “thinned” with broth or other liquids.
- Blended or pureed food.

Stay hydrated. A lot of vomiting can cause your body to lose a lot of fluid. During symptom flare-ups, drink water or rehydration drinks to replace lost fluids.

If you have diabetes, it is important to manage your blood glucose levels. Test your blood glucose levels and call your physician if you are having a hard time managing them.

Diet Recommendations for Gastroparesis

Food groups	Recommended foods	Foods to limit
Beverages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decaffeinated coffee or tea • Non-acidic juices (limit to 4 ounces per day) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Juices with pulp • Orange, grapefruit and tomato juice • Alcohol • Carbonated beverages
Dairy products	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skim or 1% milk (as tolerated) • Buttermilk, evaporated milk • Non-fat or low-fat plain or flavored yogurt • Low-fat frozen yogurt • Low-fat cheese • Cottage cheese • Low-fat ice cream • Lactose-free products (if you are lactose intolerant) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whole milk, 2% milk if liquid fat increases your symptoms • Cheese slices • Soy milk (may cause bloating)
Bread	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Breads with less than 2 grams of fiber per serving • White bread or plain rolls • Bagels (plain) • English muffin • Pita bread • Tortilla • Pancake or waffles • Saltines • Pretzels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Breads with 2 grams or more of fiber per serving • Any whole grain or bran bread • Biscuits, sweet rolls, muffins, snack crackers with added fat • Fried tortillas • Corn bread • Croissants
Cereal and pasta	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quick oats (plain), grits • Cream of Wheat[®], Cream of Rice[®] • Cereals with less than 2 grams of fiber per serving • Rice Krispies[®], Special K[®] • Rice (plain) • Pasta (plain) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cereals with 2 grams or more of fiber per serving • Bran, whole wheat or granola cereals • Whole wheat pasta • Brown rice
Vegetables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All well-cooked and canned vegetables without seeds or skins • Mashed potatoes or sweet potatoes without skin • Strained baby food vegetables • Non-acidic vegetable juice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All other vegetables • Tomato juice

Food groups	Recommended foods	Foods to limit
Fruit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ripe banana, melon, applesauce • Canned fruits (in light syrup) • Strained baby food fruits • Non-acidic juices without pulp 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All other fruits • Juices with pulp • Oranges, grapefruit and tomato juice
Meats and meat substitutes and protein foods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low-fat meats – fish, poultry without skin, pork loin, sirloin or beef tenderloin • Fat-free lunch meat • Lean ground beef • Tofu • Strained baby food meats • Egg whites or low-fat egg substitute 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All fried and breaded meat and seafood • High-fat red meats • Hot dogs, sausages, salami • All dried peas and beans
Soups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broth • Bouillon • Strained cream soups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All other soups
Fats	<p>As you are able</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cream cheese • Mayonnaise • Margarine • Canola, olive oil 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nuts • Coconut • Fried foods • Butter
Desserts and sweets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Angel food cake • Animal crackers • Custard/pudding • Gelatin • Plain sherbet (no fruit pieces) • Popsicles • Vanilla wafers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All other cakes, cookies, pies and pastries unless made with low-fat ingredients • Any desserts with bran, seeds, nuts, dried fruit