

Regular Feature: Diet and Nutrition

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Type 2 Diabetes and a Stoma or Internal Pouch

When you have two complex health conditions to deal with, it can be very stressful but especially when the dietary advice you get for both conditions are contradictory! Your stoma team is advising you to eat low fibre versions of foods, whilst your diabetes specialists are advising you to increase your fibre intake to help you to manage your blood sugars. Where do you turn? It can be very difficult to manage but luckily, there are some new foods and tricks available that help you to control both conditions without surrendering to one or the other.

Bread

Let's talk about bread first. For your stoma or internal pouch, you are advised to have white bread, and for your diabetes you are advised to choose granary or seeded versions. White bread is a high glycaemic food, meaning that it digests quickly in your body and raises your blood sugars. Well, one good thing to come out of the recent pandemic

was the rise (pun intended) of sourdough bread. In lab tests, even the white version of this bread was shown to be lower in the glycaemic index score than yeast-risen white bread. Just be careful when shopping for it and choose a version that hasn't got added yeast in the ingredients. This is because there are lots of sour-fauxs (get it?) out there that aren't made properly and therefore still increase blood sugars. If you're not keen on one with a sour flavour, try a few varieties to find a less sour version. One extra trick to make it even better for your blood sugars is to slice the loaf up and keep it in the freezer, defrosting it as you need it. Freezing bread helps to reduce how quickly it digests too.



Sourdough bread has a lower glycaemic index score than yeast-risen white bread.

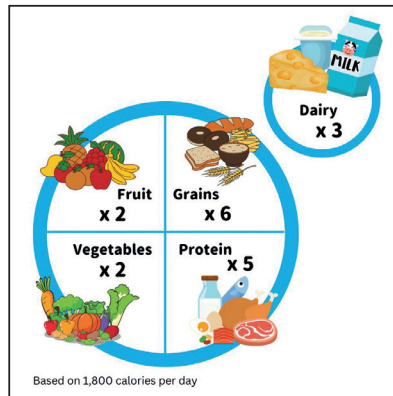


Vegetables: Variety is more important than quantity.

Vegetables

When thinking about fruits and vegetables, having a variety of them is more important than the quantity that you're eating. Peeling the skins and avoiding seeds can help prevent stoma or internal pouch blockages but the flesh of fruit and tinned fruit (in juice rather than syrup) are still packed with nutrients. As fruits also contain natural sugars,

take care of your portion size. A handful of fruit is one portion and we would advise aiming for 2 portions of fruit and 2 portions of vegetables per day. Eating fruit after meals rather than in between meals can help to reduce how quickly they raise your blood sugars. Even though pickled vegetables are not seen as vegetables that are recommended, the vinegar used to make them has been shown to reduce blood sugars and can often soften the skins too. Having something such as pickled peppers or pickled cauliflower florets with a sandwich provide low fibre options that will benefit your blood sugars. Just take care not to choose very crunchy pickles such as cabbage or onion if you see them pass straight through into your stoma bag.



A visual guide on types of foods to have at each meal.

tests and this is difficult to treat since medications high in magnesium can cause a loose output. Foods that are high in magnesium are foods that are often restricted, such as nuts, seeds and pulses. Luckily, the following foods are high in magnesium and low in fibre – fatty fish such as salmon or mackerel, tofu, cakes and

biscuits made with almond flour, marzipan and even small amounts of dark chocolate! They can't always avoid the need for magnesium supplementation but can help.

I hope that this information can help you to find more variety and enjoyment in your meals and reduce some of the worry that come with managing these two health conditions. If

you have more questions, be sure to ask your stoma nurse to refer you to a gastro-specialist dietitian to discuss other issues that you might be having.

Rice, pasta and potatoes

Other carbohydrate foods such as rice, pasta and potatoes can be difficult options too. You could try white basmati varieties of rice, corn or maize pasta and new potatoes without their skins. These all digest slower than other types of these foods. Try not to have more than 1/4 of your plate filled with carbohydrate foods and make sure you don't eat carbohydrate foods by themselves; always have them with protein foods and vegetables. This reduces the glycaemic load of a complete meal, where foods are mixed together in order to slow down their digestion and impact on blood sugar levels.

Magnesium

People with an ileostomy in particular can have repeatedly low levels of magnesium in blood

Sophie is a dietitian who has specialised in advising diets to patients after surgery and with various Gastroenterological issues, such as bowel cancer, ulcerative colitis, Crohn's disease, coeliac disease and irritable bowel syndrome. She has worked in hospitals and outpatient clinics for over 15 years and has helped people with multiple chronic conditions, where dietary advice can be contradictory. She now works in GP surgeries to help people to prevent developing type 2 diabetes and has a passion for bakery goods; her great-grandfather used to be a baker.