Meal ideas following bariatric surgery - pureed to solid food

Issued by Nutrition & Dietetics
Dietitian

Bariatric Specialist Dietitians
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This leaflet is designed to provide you with ideas for what foods to include at each stage after surgery from pureed to solid foods. Use this alongside your ‘eating plan’ leaflet.

There are tips on how to prepare your food for each texture stage and how to incorporate foods that may be difficult to eat such as protein foods and fruit and vegetables.

We have also included meal suggestions at each stage. As you become more confident with eating you will expand your choices.

**Food groups**

Include foods from the following main food groups in your daily diet.

**Fruit and vegetables** – try to have some vegetables with each of your main meals and use fruit as a dessert or snack. Try chopping vegetables finely/grating and mixing into the sauce if you are having difficulty eating these.

**Protein** – required for growth, repair and wound healing. Try to include these at each meal. Higher amounts of protein are found in lean meats, poultry, fish, eggs, pulses, legumes and low-fat dairy products.

**Carbohydrates** – provides energy, vitamins & minerals and fibre. Includes potatoes, rice, pasta, cereals, porridge, pitta bread, wraps, crackers/crispbreads, cous cous – include these at each meal and snack.

**Dairy** – provides calcium and protein. Includes milk, cheese, yoghurts. 1 portion is equal to $\frac{1}{3}$ pint of semi-skimmed milk; 125g pot yoghurt; matchbox size piece of cheese. Choose low fat varieties. Aim to have 3 dairy containing foods per day.

**Salt** Try to limit the amount of salt used at the table and during cooking.
Planning your main meals

When planning your main meals - breakfast, lunch and evening meal - it may be helpful to think of your plate in ‘thirds’. Imagine the diagram shown is your plate. If you make sure that each main meal contains the food groups shown then you can be confident that this is a balanced meal.

You also need foods rich in calcium (such as dairy foods) and fruit in your daily diet. Some of these foods will be as part of your meals e.g. milk in breakfast cereal and others you can include as snacks.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Calcium rich foods – try to include 3-4 portions per day</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low fat yoghurt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low fat cheese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milk - choose semi skimmed or skimmed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broccoli, kale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beans for example kidney beans, chickpeas, baked beans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fish for example sardines, salmon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fruit especially dried fruit, figs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fortified breakfast cereals</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Planning your snacks
If you have had a gastric bypass you will need to have 2-3 small, healthy snacks per day.

If you have had a gastric band, balloon or sleeve you should try to just have your main meals but it may be necessary to include 1 or 2 small, healthy snacks particularly if you are very active or feel lightheaded between meals.

Snacks are a good opportunity to take in your calcium requirements and to top up your protein and fruit and vegetable intake. Try to have some of your calcium and protein foods with a carbohydrate food which will give your body energy and prevent you feeling dizzy between meals. Crackers/crisp breads are ideal as they can be topped with a variety of foods and are usually well tolerated. Try to choose wholemeal varieties to increase your fibre intake.

Pureed stage meals
When you start to eat after surgery you need to begin with smooth pureed or liquidised foods. This is to allow safe healing and there will be some swelling around your stomach. Any foods that are too lumpy at this stage will stick and make you vomit. Refer to your eating plan booklet for guidance on how long you need to follow each stage.

Food preparation
• All foods should be smooth and free of any lumps. The consistency should be similar to a thick yoghurt
• Prepare and cook foods as usual and remove any gristle, bones or fat before blending
• A hand held stick blender will be very useful to blend food in small quantities or you can use a food processor for larger quantities
• You may need to add extra liquid e.g. gravy, stock, milk or sauce to make it easier to blend

• A meal may look more appetising if you keep items of food separate on the plate

• If cooking in bulk, freeze your food into ice cube trays and defrost as needed. Make sure it is thoroughly defrosted before reheating. Reheat until piping hot and only reheat food once

• When making sauces e.g. tomato sauces, add extra vegetables into the sauce then blend

• As the portions will be small and the foods will be diluted with sauce/gravy, it is a good idea at this stage to mix in some dried skimmed milk powder to your meals to increase the protein content

• First stage baby foods can be used at this stage

**Tips for pureed food choices**

**Soups**

Homemade or tinned soup can be liquidised.

Add pulses e.g. lentils or beans to the soup to add extra protein and blend.

Ham or other meats can also be added for extra protein and blend.

Packet soups can be made with milk instead of water.

When making homemade soups include a protein food e.g. beans/lentils/chicken/ham; vegetables and a starchy carbohydrate e.g. potato/pasta/barley. Then blend until smooth.

**Meats, poultry, fish, beans and pulses (protein rich)**

All can be liquidised with extra liquid added (includes fresh and tinned varieties).

Add sauces such as gravy, white sauce, parsley sauce or
cheese sauce.
Try meat and fish pastes or pâté, pease pudding.

**Eggs (protein rich)**
Scrambled eggs can be liquidised, extra milk can be added if needed.

**Pasta**
Pasta dishes can be liquidised by adding extra sauce or tinned tomato or passatta (smooth, sieved tomatoes).
Try macaroni cheese, spaghetti bolognaise, tomato based sauces.

**Potatoes**
Mashing potatoes until they are smooth or using a potato ricer will be sufficient.

**Vegetables**
Fresh, tinned and frozen should be cooked until soft then liquidised.
Root vegetables such as carrot, turnip, squash can often be taken mashed.
Try cauliflower/broccoli cheese liquidised.

**Fruit**
Tinned and stewed fruit can be liquidised.
Bananas can be mashed.

**Dairy**
To increase your protein intake mix 4 tablespoons of dried skimmed milk powder into 1 pint of skimmed milk to use through the day.
Smooth low fat, low sugar yoghurts.
Spreadable low fat cheese.

**Meal ideas for pureed stage**
### Pureed breakfast ideas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Low fat yoghurt with pureed fruit</th>
<th>½ Weetabix made soft with milk and mashed down</th>
<th>Porridge made with milk</th>
<th>Low fat yoghurt with mashed banana</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stewed fruit with Ready Brek</td>
<td>Liquidised scrambled eggs</td>
<td>Ready Brek made with milk</td>
<td>Summer fruit puree with natural yogurt</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Pureed lunch / evening meal ideas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Homemade soup</th>
<th>Macaroni, cauliflower &amp; broccoli cheese pureed</th>
<th>Tinned mackerel / salmon liquidised</th>
<th>Pureed beans with mash</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pureed cod in white sauce mash potatoes &amp; pureed vegetables</td>
<td>Pureed chicken with gravy &amp; pureed vegetables &amp; mash</td>
<td>Chicken breast in a tomato based sauce pureed</td>
<td>Minced meat with gravy pureed with mash and vegetables</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Pureed snacks / supper ideas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No added sugar Angel Delight made with milk</th>
<th>Low fat yoghurt (no lumps)</th>
<th>Soup - blended with no lumps</th>
<th>Stewed fruit-pureed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cereal e.g. weetabix or porridge with milk</td>
<td>High protein milk</td>
<td>Mashed banana</td>
<td>Milky coffee</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Soft stage meals

An indication that you are ready to move on to this stage is when you are able to eat larger portions of pureed foods and you are not experiencing any difficulty eating.

**Food preparation**

- You no longer need to liquidise your food
- Foods will now have more texture and can include soft lumps
- You should be able to cut or mash food with a fork
- Choose tender foods – try slow cooking chicken/meats; chop meat finely or choose minced meats
- Continue to peel fruit and vegetables
- Remove gristle and fat from foods
Tips for soft food choices

Protein foods

Meat, poultry, fish, beans and pulses

Meats are dense sources of protein that may be difficult to digest at first. You will find it easier to eat these using a moist cooking method and chew them very well. Moist cooking methods are poaching, boiling, stewing, steaming and using slow-cookers.

Examples:

- Well cooked, tinned or ready meals can be minced with sauce for example minced beef, lamb, chicken, turkey
- Choose tender meats and chop finely or mince
- Bolognese sauce, casseroles and stews
- Meat paste and pâté, pease pudding
- Choose skinless, boneless fish
- Tinned tuna mixed with low fat salad cream/mayonnaise
- Try steamed, poached or microwaved fish. Flake it and serve with a sauce to help moisten them
- Beans/pulses can be used in stews or soups to increase protein
- Try mashing beans

Eggs

Try scrambled, boiled and poached egg.

Soft omelettes (some people may struggle with this if it is too rubbery).

Avoid fried eggs.
**Carbohydrate foods**

Potatoes: peel and boil until tender – serve as boiled or mashed potato.

Baked potatoes (without the skin) with a soft filling such as egg or tuna mayonnaise or bolognaise sauce.

Add mashed carrot or sweet potato to mashed potatoes to incorporate more vegetables.

**Crispy foods**

These foods can be included now as they melt/break up easily when chewed.

The following can all be topped with a spreadable cheese, houmous, pâté, chopped boiled egg, tinned fish, sliced cooked meats etc:

- Crispbreads for example Ryvita, Crackerbread
- Crackers and water biscuits
- Breadsticks
- Toast (thinly cut bread, toasted till crisp)
- Melba toast

**Pasta**

You can try cooked until soft with a sauce.

Some people do struggle to eat pasta – try small shapes such as baby stars or baby spaghetti.

Do not overcook.
**Fruit and vegetables**

Peel then boil vegetables until soft, mash if necessary.

Avoid any vegetables with a shell for example peas and sweetcorn, broad beans; and those which are stringy or tough for example large chunks of onion, leeks and green beans.

Add finely chopped vegetables into a tomato sauce when cooking meals such as bolognaise or pasta sauces or stews.

Peeled, ripe soft fruits e.g. nectarine, pear, banana.

Tinned fruit in natural juice.

**Dairy**

Low fat, low sugar yoghurts.

Spreadable low fat cheese.

Small cubes of low fat cheese.
### Meal ideas for soft stage

#### Soft breakfast ideas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Porridge made with milk</th>
<th>Rice Krispies with milk</th>
<th>Cornflakes with milk</th>
<th>Poached egg on 1 slice of thin toast</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weetabix with warm milk</td>
<td>Soft boiled egg with thin sliced well toasted bread</td>
<td>Stewed fruit with small pot of natural yoghurt</td>
<td>Ready Brek made with milk</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Soft lunch / evening meal ideas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tuna paté on crisp bread/crackers</th>
<th>Homemade soup</th>
<th>Mashed avocado on crispbread/toast</th>
<th>Inside of jacket potato mashed down with cream cheese stirred in</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tinned or fresh mackerel served on crispbread/melba toast</td>
<td>Poached fish with peeled new potatoes and broccoli</td>
<td>Minced beef and bolognaise &amp; serve with the inside of a small jacket potato</td>
<td>Cod in white sauce with boiled potatoes &amp; vegetables</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Soft stage snack ideas

- Grated apple
- Mashed banana on toast
- Yoghurt
- High protein milk with added skimmed milk powder
- 1-2 crispbread with topping e.g. cream cheese, pâté etc.
- Small bowl of cereal
- Soup
- No added sugar milky drink

Solid stage meals

Continue to include foods from the above but begin to introduce foods with a more normal texture.

You will find moist, tender meats which are chopped easier to manage and will likely struggle with dry/tough textures.

Breakfast ideas

- Porridge/Ready Brek
- Rice Krispies with milk
- Cornflakes with milk/yoghurt
- Poached egg on toast
- Weetabix with warm milk
- Soft boiled egg
- Fruit with small pot of natural yoghurt
- Baked beans on toast
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lunch / evening meal ideas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Paté on crisp bread/crackers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jacket potato with tuna/beans / chilli</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Filled pitta bread with cold meats and/or houmous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Omelette with new potatoes and small salad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tinned or fresh mackerel served on crispbread</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chicken casserole with boiled potatoes and carrots</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grilled vegetable burger in a pitta bread and salad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White fish in parsley sauce with boiled potatoes &amp; vegetables</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vegetable stir fry with tofu and noodles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poached salmon with cous cous and broccoli</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chicken curry, rice and vegetables</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beef stew</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cottage pie and vegetables</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slice of roast chicken with potatoes, gravy and vegetables</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grilled fish cake and vegetables</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grilled fish, boiled potatoes and vegetables</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Snack ideas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Babybel light</th>
<th>Low fat spreadable cheese on crisp bread</th>
<th>Low fat cottage cheese on crackers</th>
<th>Glass of semi or fully skinned milk</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low fat yoghurt with fruit</td>
<td>Chopped hard boiled egg and finely chopped tomato on melba toast</td>
<td>Wafer thin ham on crackerbread</td>
<td>Breadsticks with houmous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paté (spread thinly) on water biscuits</td>
<td>Banana – on its own or mashed onto a crispbread</td>
<td>Rice cakes with smooth peanut butter</td>
<td>Low fat spreadable cheese with breadsticks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toast with pease pudding</td>
<td>Tinned sardines on toast</td>
<td>Crackerbread with cooked chicken</td>
<td>Breakfast cereal with milk or yoghurt topped with a little fruit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milky coffee</td>
<td>Sugar free Angel Delight made with milk</td>
<td>Banana smoothie (banana blended with milk/yoghurt)</td>
<td>Chopped fruit</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Remember it is normal not to be able to tolerate certain foods. For example, bread, steaks, chops, tough meats, some fruits and vegetables. Everybody is different.....
If you are finding that the foods you cannot eat are more than those you can and/or swallowing even tender foods is difficult please contact us for advice.

**Contact details**

If you need further information please contact us:

Bariatric specialist dietitians
Telephone: 0191 293 2707
Monday to Friday normal office hours.
Alternative Formats
If you would like a copy of this information in large print, another language, audio tape or other format please call the Contact Centre on 03 44 811 8118

Other sources of information

NHS 111

NHS Choices
www.nhs.uk/pages/homepage.aspx

NICE (National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence)
www.nice.org.uk

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)
Freephone: 0800 032 0202
Text: 01670 511098
Email: northoftynepals@nhct.nhs.uk

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