

How to Eat After Surgery

If you just had surgery for your Crohn's, your doctor may recommend you modify how you eat for a length of time until your digestive system is healed. The changes you make will vary depending on the type of surgery you had:

• **Partial or total removal of the ileum** – The last part of the ileum is responsible for absorbing vitamin B12, and a lack of B-12 results in anemia. So if this was removed, you will want to keep a close eye on this. If your B-12 is low, talk to your doctor about taking a supplement. The ileum also absorbs bile salts, which come from your liver to transport and absorb fat. If you don't have an ileum, these salts can spill over into your colon, giving you watery diarrhoea. But don't worry, your doctor may prescribe medication for this.

• **Short Bowel Syndrome** – If your small intestine is 200cm or less after surgery, it's considered a short bowel, which means you have less area that can absorb nutrients and you may have to go on a specialist diet. If you have an extremely short bowel, long term parenteral nutrition (via intravenous drip) may be recommended.

• **Ileostomy** – If you had your colon removed, you should be able to maintain your same time over time, although you may need extra fluid and salt to avoid dehydration, especially in hot weather. Talk to your doctor about what your dietary needs are.

There are, however, certain foods which you may find helpful to avoid such as:

- Nuts, fruit skins and some vegetables which may cause blockages
- Fizzy drinks and vegetables such as cabbages and beans that can cause gas
- Beer, chocolate and some fruit which may cause diarrhoea

• **Internal Pouch** – If you had surgery to create an internal pouch (also known as an ileal-anal pouch), you should be able to eat a normal diet, but you note the following:

• Coconut, spicy foods, some fruit and food with pips can cause anal irritation. They may also cause colicky pain (abdominal cramps), which is usually only temporary

• Alcohol may also cause dehydration (if taken in excess) and you may find that beer and red wine increase pouch output

Don't Forget

You can track your symptoms in this app!