

Department of Nutrition & Dietetics

Dietary advice for managing narrowing of the bowels/strictures

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A stricture (or narrowing) can occur when inflammation and or scar tissue cause the bowel wall to thicken, leading to narrowing of the bowel.

Strictures vary in length and degree of narrowing. Severe strictures can lead to obstruction of the bowel.

Possible symptoms : Abdominal pain, discomfort or cramps, nausea and vomiting.

If your doctor has informed you that you have a stricture or some narrowing of your bowel, you may be able to manage initially by making changes to your diet depending on the severity of your symptoms.

The diet is to be trialled under advice of your doctor. If you do not see any improvement to your symptoms please contact your consultant/colorectal nurse as soon as possible. Ask your doctor for advice on when to reintroduce fibre.

When the bowel has a stricture or a narrow part it may be more difficult for certain foods to move through the bowel. The severity of your symptoms, length of the stricture and extent of the narrowing will affect which foods can be tolerated. All food should be eaten slowly and chewed well. Generally foods that are softer and easier to digest will cause fewer symptoms.

The following pages list the foods that are most likely to be tolerated, those that need to be eaten with caution (and effect monitored) and those that are best avoided.

Remember that everyone is different and you may not tolerate certain foods that fall in the 'can eat freely' column. A food and symptom diary may help you work out your level of tolerance.

This information is not suitable for people with a narrowing of the oesophagus (gullet). If this applies to you please discuss with your Healthcare Provider.

Foods you can eat freely	Foods to eat with more caution can be eaten in small amounts and monitored effect.	Foods to avoid
Vegetables		
Well cooked or pureed root vegetables like carrots, swede parsnips, tomatoes without skin or pips (e.g tinned deseeded tomatoes), passata, tomato puree, vegetable juices.	Well cooked vegetables, with no stringy parts or stalks. If they can be passed through a sieve they should be suitable such as cauliflower and green vegetables like spinach, sprouts and broccoli. Skinned cucumber.	Sweetcorn, broad beans and raw vegetables such as peppers, radishes, celery, potato skins, cabbage, leeks, onions, lettuce and most salad leaves, mushrooms.
Beans and pulses		
Well cooked and smooth pureed lentils without skins for example smooth hummus or smooth lentil soup.	Soft, well cooked beans and lentils without skins, for example marrowfat peas, lentils, yellow split peas.	Firm beans and pulses with coarse skins like kidney beans, baked beans, soy beans or chickpeas.
Fruit		
Smooth fruit juice or smoothies (sieved). Cooked or stewed, peeled fruit. Tinned pears, peaches, apricots. Pureed fruit and fruit coulis. Melon with no seeds.	Seeded, peeled de-piped fruit such as pears, apples, peaches, grapes, plums, apricots, ripe bananas. Canned citrus fruit with no pith, skin or pips e.g mandarins or grapefruit.	All dried fruit. Strawberries, raspberries, blueberries, blackcurrant, gooseberries. Fresh grapefruit, pineapple, mango. Citrus fruits. Avoid all other fruits not listed.
Starchy foods		
Mashed potato or well cooked potatoes without skin.	Chips, roast potatoes, waffles.	Potato skins e.g. jacket skins, new potato skins, wedges.
White bread and other products made from white flour e.g. pasta, crumpets, English muffins. Plain and chocolate biscuits, cakes, scones (without raisins) and muffins. Yorkshire puddings.	Wholemeal and brown bread without seeds, and other wholemeal based products e.g. brown pasta, wholemeal muffins, wholemeal biscuits like digestives, smooth oatcakes.	Bread, bread products, biscuits and baked goods containing coarse grains, *seeds or nuts such as multigrain bread, seeded batch, rye crispbread, rough oatcakes, hobnobs, muesli bars and flapjacks.
Rice pudding, semolina, tapioca, plain couscous, polenta. Well cooked white rice.		Brown rice, wholemeal pasta, wholemeal cous cous.
Rice Krispies, Cornflakes, sugar puffs, ready brek.	Porridge, weetabix, oatibix.	Cereals containing nuts, seeds or dried fruit (such as muesli, fruit and fibre), shredded wheat,

Foods you can eat freely	Foods to eat with more caution can be eaten in small amounts and monitored effect.	Foods to avoid
Meat		
Well cooked and tender soft meat and poultry with fat and skin removed, (including minced and pureed versions). Wafer thin meats. Skinless sausages, sausage rolls made with white flour. Smooth pate.	Tough meat products such as beef burgers, faggots, corned beef and offal. Roast meats if not tender. Products coated in breadcrumbs e.g. chicken nuggets. Coarse pate.	Tough, gristly meat or skin. Sausage skins. Spare ribs. Crackling. Dried sausages with skins e.g. pepperoni, chorizo.
Fish		
Fish without bones. Fish in butter sauce, poached fish, fish pie. Fishsticks. Fishcakes with no hard bits or containing unsuitable vegetables in it.	Seafood – only soft and peeled e.g. crayfish, prawns, scallops.	Fish with bones e.g. sardines or whitebait. Fish skin. Mussels, clams, winkles and cockles.
Milk and milk products		
Milk (all types), cream, sour cream, creme fraiche, fromage frais, smooth yogurt. All types of cheese without rind.		Any milk products containing fruits, nuts, seeds.

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Puddings		
Plain madeira cake, sponges, swiss/chocolate roll. Custard, ice cream, milk puddings. Instant whip dessert. Jelly, meringue, profiteroles, chocolate eclairs.	Trifle Fruit pie (fillings must contain no skins/seeds)	Desserts containing fruit seeds and nuts.
Snacks		
Chocolate, boiled sweets, jelly sweets. Plain biscuits, crackers. Smooth mousse and yoghurt. Softer crisps e.g. quavers, wotsits, skips. English muffins.	Cereal bars e.g Nutrigrain/Tracker – avoid if contains seeds, nuts or dried fruit.	Cereal bars containing seeds, nuts or dried fruit. Nuts. Pork scratchings.
Other		
Clear, cream or strained soups. Sugar, honey, syrup, seedless jam, shredless marmalade, chocolate spread, Oxo, Bovril, salt, pepper, herbs. Smooth condiments e.g tomato ketchup, smooth mustard. Oil. Smooth peanut butter and other smooth nut butters. Boiled sweets. Plain tofu, textured vegetable protein (soya products).	Quorn - check individual products	Chocolate with fruit or nuts. Nuts, seeds, coconut. Marmalade with peel. Pickles and chutney. Bombay mix. Popcorn.

If you have any comments about this leaflet or the service you have received you can contact :

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If you would like this information in another format or language contact the above.

Potřebujete-li tyto informace v jiném formátu nebo jazyce, obraťte se prosím na výše uvedené oddělení

Jeżeli są Państwo zainteresowani otrzymaniem tych informacji w innym formacie lub wersji językowej, prosimy skontaktować się z nami, korzystając z ww. danych kontaktowych

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