

Dumping Syndrome

Dumping syndrome is when food leaves ('dumps' from) the stomach too quickly. This can happen after stomach or esophagus surgery or without an obvious cause.

Dumping syndrome can occur as early as 30 minutes after eating or up to 3 hours later.



30 minutes (½ hour)
to 3 hours

Signs of dumping syndrome may include:

- diarrhea
- difficulty concentrating
- drop in blood pressure
- faster heartbeat
- feeling:
 - bloated or full
 - like you need to lie down right away
 - nervous or shaky
 - weak or dizzy
- flushing or sweating
- low blood sugar
- nausea or vomiting
- stomach pain or cramping



Ways to manage

Management of dumping syndrome is mostly making changes to what and how you eat.

Mealtimes

- Eat 4–6 smaller meals during the day.
 - Spread meals evenly throughout the day.
- Eat slowly and chew your food well.
- Drink all fluids at least 30 minutes **before** you eat or 30 minutes **after** you eat.
- Try to limit drinking during meals.
- If you need a fluid with eating, have only small amounts (up to ½ cup or 125 mL).
- Drink slowly and take small sips.

What to eat

Foods higher in protein, fibre, and healthy fats can help slow movement of food into the intestine.

- Foods higher in protein, like:
 - eggs, fish, poultry, meat, wild meat, milk, cheese, and protein powders
 - tofu, fortified soy beverage, lentils, and beans
- Foods with fibre, like:
 - beans, fruits, lentils, vegetables, and whole grains
- Foods with soluble fibre may help to slow how quickly food moves into the small intestine.
- Examples of foods with soluble fibre include:
 - beans and lentils
 - fruits such as apples, avocados, grapefruits, pears, and ripe bananas
 - ground flaxseed
 - oat bran, oatmeal
 - psyllium husk or powder (such as Metamucil®)
 - vegetables such as squash and potatoes
- Foods with healthy fats at meals. These include:
 - fatty fish like salmon and sardines
 - oils like olive and canola

What to limit

- Limit alcohol. Alcohol can make your stomach empty quicker.
- Limit added sugars and sugar alcohols.
 - Added sugar is when sugar or sugar alcohols are added to a food or drink. These include regular pop, condiments, sauces, juices, candy, and certain diet foods.
 - The added sugar may be in the form of honey, molasses, corn syrup, syrup, fructose, or maltose.
 - Sugar alcohols are a type of sugar substitute. They can cause gas, bloating, and diarrhea. Common examples include:
 - isomalt
 - mannitol
 - xylitol
 - maltitol
 - sorbitol
 - Check ingredient lists on food labels to find added sugars and sugar substitutes.

Position your body

- Lie down for 20–30 minutes **after** eating. This slows down how quickly your stomach empties.
- **If you have heartburn or reflux**, stay upright after eating. Laying down may make your heartburn or reflux worse.

Try thickeners

Thickeners can be used to make foods and fluids thicker. They may slow down how quickly the food or drink leaves the stomach. Look for these products on labels:

- glucomannan
- guar gum
- pectin

You can add them to food or drinks like soups, smoothies, and nutrition supplement drinks.

Start with a small amount to learn how your body responds to it.

These thickeners can be found in health food stores or through online vendors.

Extra calories and protein

If you have a poor appetite or need extra calories and protein, nutrition supplement drinks and protein powder can help.

- Choose nutrition supplement drinks with less sugar, like Glucerna® or Boost Diabetic®.
- Choose unflavored protein powder to mix into mashed potatoes, soups, or casseroles.
- Protein powders (with no added sugar or sugar alcohol) can be added to smoothies, milk, or puddings.



For more information

Check out:

- Higher calorie and protein recipes (ahs.ca/MoreProteinRecipes)
- Nutrition Education (ahs.ca/NutritionHandouts) to find information on:
 - eating well after surgery
 - fibre facts and soluble fibre
 - protein foods

For more support



- Talk to your healthcare team if your symptoms don't improve.
- Call Health Link at 811 and ask to talk to a dietitian or complete a [self-referral form](#) on ahs.ca/811.
- Visit ahs.ca/Nutrition.

