

# Eating When You Have Gastroparesis and Diabetes

## What is gastroparesis (gas-tro-pear-ee-sis)?

Gastroparesis is when food moves through your stomach more slowly than normal and takes longer to digest (break down). Some people with diabetes develop gastroparesis.



## What happens when you have gastroparesis?

You may have any of the symptoms below:

- a feeling of fullness after a few bites
- belching or burping
- bloating in your stomach area (abdomen)
- nausea and vomiting
- food or fluid from the stomach moving back into your throat (heartburn)

The symptoms of gastroparesis may cause:

- low appetite, which can lead to weight loss and poor nutrition
- constipation (when it's hard to have bowel movements)
- high or low blood sugar

## What can you do when you have gastroparesis?

Gastroparesis affects everyone in different ways. What helps you may not help other people. Below are tips you can try. Talk to your healthcare team about what might work best.

### Manage your blood sugar

Managing your blood sugar could make the biggest difference for your gastroparesis.

Having blood sugars within your target can help reduce your gastroparesis symptoms.

- Test your blood sugar before and after meals.
- Work with your doctor or healthcare team to decide:
  - what kind of insulin and diabetes medicine is best for you.
  - what time to take insulin and medicines.

### Eating meals and snacks

- **Eat 6 small meals a day.** Smaller meals keep you from feeling too full, and they will move out of your stomach more quickly.
- **Chew foods well.** This helps your stomach digest food more quickly. Avoid foods that are harder to chew, like corn, popcorn, nuts, and seeds.
- Clear broth, coffee, tea, and sugary foods are low in nutrition. **Save these foods for the end of your meal.**
- **Sit up for at least one hour after your meal.** Going for a walk after your meal can also help the food move through your stomach faster.
- **Choose foods that are lower in fibre.** Fibre stays in your stomach longer. It can make you feel full sooner. Fibre can make your gastroparesis worse and fill you up before you get the nutrition you need.
  - Remove the skins and seeds from fruits and vegetables before eating them.
  - Don't take fibre supplements.

- **Choose foods that are lower in fat.** Higher fat foods take longer to move out of your stomach.

Avoid:

- fried foods
- higher fat snack foods like potato chips
- foods made with cream
- higher fat cheeses
- fatty meat
- higher fat baked goods

Some people can tolerate the fat in liquids like 3.25% (homogenized) milk, milkshakes, smoothies, and nutritional supplements.

- **Use the food lists on page 3** to help you find foods you may tolerate.

### **Changing the texture of your food.**

- If solid foods make your symptoms worse, talk to your dietitian about changing the texture of your food.
- **Liquids and minced and pureed foods move out of your stomach faster than solids.** Eating more of these foods may reduce your symptoms.
- Cooking fruits and vegetables until soft can help you digest them.

**When your symptoms improve, talk with your dietitian about adding some foods back to your diet.**

### **Other things you can do:**

- **Limit alcohol and tobacco.** They can make food move out of your stomach more slowly.
- **Avoid peppermint, chocolate, and caffeine.** These foods can make symptoms such as heartburn worse.
- **Limit or avoid fizzy, bubbly (carbonated) drinks, like pop.** They can cause gas and bloating.

### **When should you talk to your healthcare team?**

- Talk to your doctor or pharmacist about all your medicines. Some medicines can slow stomach emptying. Others can improve your symptoms.
- Talk to your dietitian if you have kidney problems or are following a low potassium and/or low phosphorous diet. He or she can help you change your diet to meet your needs.
- Talk to your dietitian about taking a multivitamin or another kind of nutrition supplement. If you have trouble eating food from all four Canada's Food Guide food groups, a supplement may help.
- Talk to your healthcare team if you try some of the tips in this handout, but still don't feel better, or feel worse:
  - nausea and vomiting
  - losing weight without trying
  - blood sugar is higher or lower than usual
- If you feel very sick and can't call your healthcare team, call Health Link: dial 811.

### **Notes:**

# Foods to choose and limit when you have symptoms

	Choose	Limit or Avoid
<b>Carbohydrate foods</b>		
<b>Grains and Starchy Vegetables</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>bread, crackers, and other grain foods made with white flour; rice cakes</li> <li>cold cereal: with less than 2 grams fibre per serving</li> <li>hot cereal: cream of wheat, quick oats</li> <li>white rice and pasta</li> </ul> <p><b>Starchy Vegetables:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>parsnips, potatoes, pumpkin, squash, sweet potatoes</li> </ul> <p><b>Remove skins, cook, and blend or strain, if needed.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>high fibre breads, baked goods and grain products</li> <li>high fat crackers, cookies, donuts, muffins, pastries</li> <li>cereals: bran cereals, cereals with nuts and raisins or dried fruit, granola</li> </ul> <p><b>Starchy Vegetables:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>corn, dried cooked beans and lentils, peas, potato skin, split peas</li> </ul>
<b>Fruit</b> If needed, cook, and blend and/or strain.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>whole fruit <b>without skins or seeds:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>apples, apricots, bananas, mangoes, melons, nectarines, papayas, peaches, pear, plums</li> </ul> </li> <li>canned or cooked fruit</li> <li>fruit juice or nectars</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>fruits <b>with skins or seeds:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>apples, berries, cherries, grapefruit, grapes, kiwi, oranges, pears, persimmons, pineapple, pomegranate, rhubarb</li> </ul> </li> <li>dried fruit: dates, figs, raisins</li> </ul>
<b>Milk and Alternatives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>milk (all types), evaporated milk, fortified soy beverage, kefir, pudding, yogurt</li> <li><b>Fortified almond, rice, and coconut beverages are much lower in protein than milk and fortified soy beverages.</b></li> </ul> <p><b>For cheese, see Meat and Protein Alternatives.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>whipping cream</li> <li>yogurt or other dairy products with nuts, skins or seeds</li> </ul>
<b>Other Carbohydrate Choices</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>baked goods made with white flour and no nuts, seeds, or dried fruit.</li> <li>ice cream, frozen yogurt or sherbet, made without nuts or seeds (lower fat may be better tolerated)</li> <li>pretzels</li> <li>seedless jams and jellies, honey, syrup</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>carbonated drinks such as pop</li> <li>cookies with nuts, seeds, or dried fruit</li> <li>high-fat desserts (cakes, pies, cookies, pastries)</li> <li>higher fat snack foods like chips and cheese snacks</li> <li>popcorn</li> </ul>
<b>Foods with little or no carbohydrate</b>		
<b>Vegetables</b> Remove skins, cook and, if needed, blend or strain.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>beets, carrots, cauliflower, eggplant, mushrooms, rutabagas, tomato sauce, turnip, zucchini</li> <li>vegetable juice</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>asparagus, beans (yellow or green), bok choy, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, celery, chard, cucumber, kale, lettuce, okra, radish, salads, sauerkraut, spinach, tomatoes</li> </ul>
<b>Meat and Protein Alternatives</b> Minced or pureed, if needed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>cheese, less than 20% M.F. (milk fat)</li> <li>cottage cheese, fat-free or 1% M.F.</li> <li>eggs, fish, lean meat or poultry</li> <li>tofu</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>high fat meat and cheeses; chicken wings</li> <li>breaded and deep-fried foods</li> <li>wieners, sausages, high fat deli and processed meats</li> </ul> <p><b>For dried beans and lentils, see Starchy Vegetables.</b></p>
<b>Fat</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>all types of fat, but in small amounts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>coconut, nuts, and seeds</li> </ul>
<b>Extras</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>low fat broth</li> <li>low fat or fat-free gravies, condiments</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>pop, club soda</li> </ul>

# Sample meal plan

The sample meal plan below might give you some ideas about what your meals and snacks can look like. If you want, you can write your own meal plan in the blank space.

Sample Meal Plan	My Meal Plan
<b>Breakfast</b>	
¾ cup (175 mL) cooked cream of wheat 1 cup (250 mL) 1% milk ½ large banana 1–2 scrambled eggs	
<b>Snack</b>	
½–1 meal replacement or 1 fruit smoothie (recipe below) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 cup (250 mL) fresh or frozen fruit</li> <li>• ½ cup (125 mL) plain 1% or 2% M.F. yogurt</li> <li>• ¼ cup (60 mL) 1%, 2%, or 3.25% milk</li> </ul>	
<b>Lunch</b>	
½ cup (125 mL) chicken noodle soup ½ turkey sandwich on white bread with 1 tsp (5 mL) reduced fat mayonnaise ½ cup (125 mL) unsweetened applesauce 1 cup (250 mL) 1% milk	
<b>Snack</b>	
¾ cup (175 mL) no sugar added low fat yogurt ½ cup (125 mL) pears canned in water	
<b>Supper</b>	
½ cup (125 mL) cooked carrots ½ cup (125 mL) mashed potatoes 1 tsp (5 mL) non-hydrogenated margarine 3 ounces (90 g) fish ⅔ cup (150 mL) flavoured kefir or yogurt	
<b>Snack</b>	
½ cup (125 mL) cottage cheese, 1% M.F. ½ cup (125 mL) strained or pureed fruit 1 slice white toast with 1 tsp (5 mL) non-hydrogenated margarine	

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