

After Bariatric Surgery: Dumping Syndrome

People who have had surgery on their stomach or intestine may have some problems after eating. If you have some of the symptoms listed below, you may have dumping syndrome.

Early symptoms (as early as 30 minutes after eating) happen when food and fluid pass into the small intestine too fast. The symptoms may include:

- nausea or vomiting
- stomach pain or cramping
- diarrhea
- feeling full or bloated
- a faster heartbeat

Late symptoms (usually 1–3 hours after eating) happen when there are changes in the amounts of insulin and sugar in your blood. Symptoms may also include:

- flushing or sweating
- feeling like you have to lie down right away
- feeling weak or dizzy
- feeling nervous or shaky
- a drop in blood pressure

Ideas to improve your symptoms

Eat 4–6 times every day

- Eat smaller meals. Eating large meals may worsen your symptoms.
- Spread your food evenly throughout the day.
- Eat slowly, chew food well, and relax during meals.

Do not drink liquids with meals or snacks

- Drink all liquids at least 30 minutes after you eat solid foods. Drink only a small amount at a time (½ cup or 125 mL). Sip the drink slowly as tolerated. Taking large sips or gulps may make your symptoms worse.

Limit foods high in sugar

- Reduce or avoid foods that have a lot of sugar in them.
- The back of this handout has a list of these foods under the “Limit” column.

Choose foods with fibre

Fibre can help slow the rate of food passing from your stomach to your small intestine, which may improve your symptoms.

- Choose a variety of fibre sources, including fruits, vegetables, bran, oatmeal, and whole grains.
- Too much fibre may cause problems for some people. Ask your dietitian for more information and if a fibre supplement is right for you.

Read the label

- Read the **Nutrition Facts table** on food labels to choose foods that are lower in sugar and higher in fibre.
- Look at the serving size found at the top of the table. The amount of sugar and fibre listed is for this amount of food or drink.

Nutrition Facts	
Per ½ cup (125 mL)	
Calories 140	% Daily Value*
Fat 0 g	0 %
Saturated 0 g	0 %
+Trans 0 g	
Carbohydrate 29 g	
Fibre 3 g	11 %
Sugars 2 g	4 %
Protein 6 g	
Cholesterol 0 mg	
Sodium 105 mg	5 %
Potassium 5 mg	0 %
Calcium 4 mg	0 %
Iron 1 mg	6 %
*5% or less is a little, 15% or more is a lot	

You can also try this tip

- Lie down for 20–30 minutes after eating. This may help slow the movement of food through your stomach and intestine.
- If you have heartburn, do not lie down—stay sitting up.

Foods to improve your symptoms

Every person is different. A food that causes dumping syndrome in one person may not cause symptoms for someone else. Use the chart below to find foods that may make your symptoms worse.

Write down all the foods you eat and drink, and your symptoms. This may help you to figure out which foods cause problems for you.

1. At first, **avoid** all foods listed in the "Limit" column.
2. Over time you may be able to tolerate foods that you could not tolerate right after surgery. **Slowly add foods back one at a time, as you can tolerate them.** When adding a food back to your diet, try a small amount at first.
3. Some people may have symptoms even after they have changed their diet. If your symptoms do not improve see your healthcare provider.

Groupings	Choose	Limit
Vegetables and fruit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All fresh and frozen vegetables All fresh, frozen, and unsweetened canned fruit 100% unsweetened vegetable juice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dried fruits, candied fruit, and fruit frozen or canned in syrup 100% pure fruit juice (limit to ½ cup or 125 mL per day)
Grain products	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unsweetened grains and bread products 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sweetened cereals, sweetened baked breads like donuts, cinnamon buns, and sweet rolls
Milk and alternatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Milk, fortified unflavoured soy milk, cream soups, artificially sweetened pudding and yogurt, cottage cheese, and other cheeses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hot chocolate mix, chocolate milk, ice cream, frozen yogurt, milkshakes, custard, pudding, yogurt sweetened with sugar, and flavoured soy beverage
Meats and alternatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meats, poultry, fish, seafood, eggs, nuts, peas, beans, lentils, and tofu 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None
Liquids and beverages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Water, sugar-free and artificially sweetened beverages Tea and coffee without sugar <p>See the list of artificial sweeteners below.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular pop, sugar-sweetened drink crystals, fruit drinks, fruit punches, iced tea, tea and coffee sweetened with sugar, flavoured syrup for hot or cold beverages and frozen slush drinks, liqueurs, or alcohol with sweet mixes
Sweets and desserts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Foods prepared with artificial sweeteners: diet jam and diet gelatin like sugar-free Jell-O® 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cakes, pies, cookies, sherbet, regular gelatin, syrup, sugar, brown sugar, licorice, honey, candies, chocolate, molasses, sweet buns, and rolls
Condiments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Soy sauce, lemon juice, vinegar, salsa, unsweetened condiments, and salad dressings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sauces with sugar like ketchup, BBQ sauce, sweet and sour sauce, jellies, jams, sweetened salad dressings, relish, sweet pickles, and teriyaki sauces
Sugars and sweeteners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Products with artificial sweeteners like aspartame, stevia, sucralose, acesulfame potassium (Ace-K), monk fruit, Equal®, Splenda®, Sweet & Low®, and Sugar Twin® 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sugars: glucose, sucrose, fructose, lactose, dextrose, honey, molasses, maltose, syrups, fruit juice concentrate Sugar alcohols: sorbitol, mannitol, maltitol, isomalt, and xylitol
Fats, oils, and high-fat foods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fats, oils, and high-fat foods such as deep-fried foods or gravies do not cause dumping syndrome. However, some people may have more bowel movements with these foods. 	