

Fiber and your IPAA

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Fiber is recommended for all Americans, not just those undergoing the IPAA surgery. Fiber aids in the prevention of chronic diseases, prevents constipation, helps control blood sugar levels in diabetics, and may even reduce the risk of certain cancers and lower blood cholesterol levels.

The amount of dietary fiber you need, however, varies at each step of your IPAA surgery process. Your surgeon will discuss fiber diet changes with you at your postoperative visits. Typically your doctor will recommend that you maintain a low fiber diet while you have the ileostomy and for 4 weeks after the ileostomy is closed. After this 4-week period, your doctor may recommend a high fiber diet to help decrease the amount of water in your stool, increase stool bulk and decrease stool frequency.

What is fiber?

Fiber is the portion of plant products that cannot be digested by the body. It is found predominately in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, legumes and nuts. Many probiotic substances (non-digestible food ingredients that stimulate the growth and activity of bacteria in our digestive systems) are part of, or come from, dietary fiber.

What does fiber do?

- Provides nutrients and energy for production of "good" bacteria in the colon
- Prevents growth of pathogenic or "bad" bacteria
- Regulates bowel movements
- Helps increase stool weight/bulking
- Decreases and/or prevents diarrhea
- May be involved in immune function

Two different types of fiber

Soluble (hemicelluloses and gums):

- Dissolves and thickens in water to form gels
- Breaks down into short fatty acids (nutrients for the colon) in the colon via fermentation by bacteria
- Examples: bran, oatmeal, beans, peas, rice bran, barley, citrus fruits and apples

Insoluble (lignan, cellulose):

- Does not dissolve or thicken in water
- Not as well fermented as soluble fiber
- Examples: wheat, bran, nuts and corn (skins, seeds, outer kernels)

Low fiber diet (0-10 grams of fiber per day)

Time period: while you have an ileostomy and for the first 4 weeks after your ileostomy is closed

Objective: to minimize obstruction and irritation

Type of fiber: some soluble fiber and little to no insoluble fiber

- Chew foods slowly and thoroughly

High fiber diet (20 to 36 grams of fiber per day)

Time period: about 4 weeks after your ileostomy is closed. Your doctor will tell you when to start

Objective: to increase stool bulk, decrease amount of water in stool, increase stool transit time and decrease stool frequency.

Brands of fiber supplements

Brand	Website	Fiber Source	Varieties
Citrucel®	www.citrucel.com	cellulose	powder, capsule
Metamucil®	www.metamucil.com	psyllium	powder, capsule, wafers
Benefiber®	www.benefiber.com	Guar gum	powder, chewables, caplets
Konsyl®	www.konsyl.com	psyllium	powder
Fiberchoice®	www.fiberchoice.com	fructan	chewable
Fibercon®	www.fibercon.com	calcium polycarbophil	caplets

Which brand of fiber supplement?

This will depend on your personal preferences. Some of the powders only have certain flavors and you need to mix with a glass of water and drink before it gels. Do you like the taste of the drinks? Benefiber® has no taste and does not gel and can be mixed with all liquids (not just water). Do you like the taste of the chewable? Do you like to take pills? Do you like the taste of the wafers? Dr. James Becker has seen some good results with using sugar-free Citrucel powder.

Advice for using other types of supplements:

- Read the recommended dosage and start slowly with a gradual increase.
- Benefiber® has no taste and does not gel and can be mixed with all liquids (not just water).
- Citrucel® sugar-free (or any powder type):
 - Start with 1 teaspoon in the morning and 1 with your evening meal
 - After two weeks use 2 teaspoons in the morning and 2 with your evening meal
 - After four weeks use 1 tablespoon (1 scoop) in the morning and 1 tablespoon (1 scoop) with your evening meal
- Capsules and chewables:
 - Start with ½ or 1 each day
 - After two weeks take 1 in the morning and 1 in the evening
 - After four weeks take 2 in the morning and 2 in the evening
- Metamucil® wafers:
 - Start with ½ a wafer in the morning and ½ a wafer in the evening
 - After two weeks gradually increase to 1 wafer in the morning and 1 wafer in the evening
 - After four weeks increase to 2 wafers in the morning and 2 wafers in the evening

Tips for transitioning to a high fiber diet

- Slowly increase fiber intake by 5 grams per week
- Watch your serving sizes
- Watch for signs of intolerance, such as gas, bloating, abdominal pain or diarrhea
- Drink plenty of water and other fluids – try to drink about 8 cups per day
- Remember to add fiber into your diet slowly. It may take a month or two to adjust to the changes in your diet and fiber supplements.
- Fiber supplements affect everyone differently. If you cannot tolerate powdered fiber, try another type.
- Cut back on fiber intake if you have signs of intolerance (gas, bloating or diarrhea). You will need to experiment with how much you use to find the dose that works best for you.

Other diet tips to help decrease liquid stool

- Limit the amount of lactose in your diet
- Avoid or cut down simple sugars and concentrated sweets

- Avoid or cut down on spicy foods
- Avoid alcohol and caffeine
- Eat larger meals earlier in the day
- Only make one change to your diet at a time. Otherwise, you will not know which change affected your stool pattern.
- Take multivitamin and/or mineral supplements, according to your doctor's instructions.

Foods that loosen stool

Cookies, cakes pastries candy, jelly jam, syrup , soda, ice-cream, sherbet, popsicles, pudding and flavored yogurt, caffeinated beverages

Foods that thicken stool

Creamy peanut butter, pretzels, white rice, bananas, cheese, applesauce, tapioca pudding, marshmallows, pasta

Other Tips:

- Eat 3 regular meals
- Avoid overeating at one time
- If a certain food causes you to have liquid stool or bloating, avoid it for two weeks, then try it again on a day you are feeling relaxed
- It may be helpful to keep a food and symptom diary for a month to keep track of what you eat and how you feel, both emotionally and physically. We have one on our website: <http://www.bmc.org/Documents/Post-Op-IPAA-Diary-SingleSided.pdf>
- Don't drink liquids at the same time you eat. Wait about 30 minutes after drinking a liquid to eat, and about 30 minutes after eating to drink.

Loperamide (Imodium®)

- An over-the-counter antidiarrheal medication
- Can also be prescribed by your doctor after your ileostomy closure
- Can be used while transitioning to a high fiber diet
- Slows the movement of your intestines, which enables more water to be absorbed by your body and results in less watery stool and fewer bowel movements
- You can slowly start to decrease the amount of loperamide (Imodium®) you take once your body adjusts to the amount of fiber you ingest. You will probably want to continue taking your loperamide at bedtime to help you get through the night – you do not have to stop using loperamide completely.
- Start with 1 capsule with meals and 1 before bed. If 1 does not work well enough, try 2 capsules with meals and 2 before bed. Do not exceed 8 capsules or 16 mg in one day.

References:

- *Changing from a Low Residue to a High Fiber Diet Transition Guideline* from Boston Medical Center's Nutrition and Weight Management Center
- *Guidelines for a High Fiber Diet* from Boston Medical Center's Nutrition and Weight Management Center
- Hurd LB, King M. *Dietary Guidelines for Ileoanal Pouch Surgery* from <http://www.ipouch.org/diet.html>, obtained from web July 31, 2011