

# What can I eat after my hiatus hernia operation?

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James Paget University Hospitals NHS  
Foundation Trust  
Review Date: February 2017  
EN 24 version 1

## Aim of information

This information provides you with advice about what you can eat following surgery for your hiatus hernia.

During your operation, a part of your stomach is loosely wrapped around your lower gullet (oesophagus). The wrap is designed to be loose so that it does not constrict your gullet. However, for several weeks after the operation the wrap will be swollen. This could cause some foods to become stuck in your lower gullet. The swelling will settle completely by six weeks, but until then, you must be careful about what you eat.

## Weeks 1-3: Clear fluids and soft sloppy diet

You can start drinking within a few hours of the operation. Drink in small amounts, avoiding big gulps. The clear drinks can include water, tea, most juices, squash and clear soups. You can even eat ice-cream as long as it has melted before being swallowed.

Avoid fizzy drinks and alcohol. Some people suggest that caffeine and citrus juices (such as orange juice) are also best avoided.

You can start eating a soft sloppy diet from the day after your operation. Sloppy food is any food that is moist, can be broken into pieces with a fork, and does not require a lot of chewing. Examples include cereals that have been softened in milk, smooth soup (no lumps) and pureed foods. You must not eat breads, crackers, biscuits, chunky meats such as steaks and dry meals such as cold cuts.

## Weeks 4 and 5: Soft diet

You can now start eating soft food such as well cooked pasta, minced meat, flaked fish, well cooked rice, pulses and vegetables with plenty of sauce.

## Week 6: Normal diet

If you have progressed without difficulty through the soft diet, you can start to eat a normal diet in the sixth week. Leave bread (especially white bread) and chicken until last as these have the greatest tendency to get stuck in your gullet.

If you are having difficulty with the soft diet, avoid a normal diet until you have your follow-up appointment in the outpatient clinic. You may need to remain on a soft diet for a little longer.

**For more information contact  
Department of Surgery**

**Telephone: 01493 452377**



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If you require a large print version of this booklet, please contact PALS on 01493 453240