

DIET GUIDE: INTESTINAL STENT

A stent is a flexible mesh tube that is placed through the constricted area of your intestine to allow food and beverages to pass without restriction. The stent gently expands to hold the narrowed area of the intestine open and should make digesting foods and beverages easier. The narrowed area may be due to a tumor or stricture. The stent will not be as wide or as flexible as your normal intestine, so you will need to take care with certain foods and in the way you eat to prevent blocking the stent. As the stent expands it may cause some mild discomfort in the stomach area, which normally subsides after 72 hours. Over the counter pain relievers should be sufficient. However, if the pain persists or worsens contact our office at 623-300-9011

WHAT FOODS SHOULD I AVOID?

The stent has been placed to allow you to eat as normally as possible. However, it is possible for the stent to become blocked. To minimize the risk of blocking the stent, it is important to think about the foods that you are eating. The most common reason for stents to block is from food that is swallowed without being sufficiently chewed or from foods that do not break down enough when chewed, such as foods high in fiber. The following foods can be difficult to break down, despite chewing, and so are more likely to cause your stent to become blocked: Breads and toast- they absorb fluid and expands in your stomach, tough gristly meat, hard boiled or fried egg, Fish with bones/skin, Pith/skins in fruit (e.g., orange, grapefruit, pineapple, grapes, sweet corn), stringy vegetables (e.g., green beans, celery, asparagus), potato or apple skins, salad items (e.g., salad leaves and lettuce), raw vegetables, potato and corn chips; Ice cream or yogurt with chunks of fruit, cereal or nuts.

HOW CAN I PREVENT BLOCKING THE STENT?

Tips when eating include; Take your time, relax and eat your meals slowly. Minimize distractions. Follow our diet guide. Meals should be smaller than you are used to and more frequent – aim for five or six small meals per day rather than three big meals. Cut your food into smaller pieces than you would normally eat, take small mouthfuls, and chew each mouthful thoroughly. Don't be afraid to spit out lumps that can't be chewed. Have plenty of sauces, gravy, or cream with your meals to increase moisture. This will make food easier to swallow and pass through your stent. Sit upright at mealtimes and avoid lying down for 30 minutes to one hour afterwards. If you wear dentures, make sure they fit correctly, so you can chew your food well.

WHAT IF MY STENT BLOCKS?

If you feel that your stent is blocked, follow these basic guidelines: Do not panic and stop eating solid food. Walk around. If the stent blockage has not cleared after one or two hours contact our office at 623-300-9011 or proceed to the nearest emergency department.