

Care Gram

Gastroparesis Diet

Gastroparesis is a condition that causes food to empty from the stomach into the intestines at a slower rate. It is believed that gastroparesis may be caused by damage to the nerves that control the stomach. People with gastroparesis can have bloating, nausea, vomiting, or may feel full after eating only a small amount of food.

Getting proper amounts of calories and nutrients to stay healthy while not worsening symptoms is a challenge with gastroparesis. Diet can be an important part of managing gastroparesis. Making changes to eating habits and food choices can help speed up stomach emptying and reduce symptoms.

Changing Your Diet – First Steps

Your doctor may refer you to a dietitian to plan a diet tailored to your needs. Please call Central Scheduling at (220) 564-4722 to schedule an appointment with a dietitian.

The following may help reduce symptoms:

- Eat small frequent meals 4 to 6 times daily.
- Chew food thoroughly.
- Limit foods high in fat (refer to better food choices on the following pages).
- Limit foods high in fiber (refer to better food choices on the following pages).
- Avoid carbonated beverages and alcohol.
- If symptoms are severe, liquids or semi-solid food may be better tolerated. Choose liquid supplements or blended foods.
- Liquids empty better than solids. Liquid nutritional supplements such as Ensure Enlive® or Boost® can provide added calories and nutrients. Many stores carry comparable brands that are less costly.
- Drink plenty of fluids to stay hydrated.
- Gentle exercise (such as walking) after a meal may reduce symptoms.
- Avoid laying down for 2 hours after meals.
- Keep a journal of food intake to help you identify foods that worsen symptoms.
- Avoid using tobacco products. Contact the Tobacco Cessation Clinic at (220) 564-7848 (QUIT) if you need help to quit.
- If you have diabetes, it is very important to maintain good blood sugar control.
- Follow the 3-Phase Dietary Plan

3-Phase Dietary Plan

- Phase 1 Liquid Diet – Mostly liquids and semi-solid foods that are easy to digest.
- Phase 2 Soft Diet – Builds on phase 1 by adding a small amount of fat and fiber fat into the diet. Foods high in fat tend to empty the stomach slowly so fat intake should be limited to 40 grams per day.
- Phase 3 Maintenance Diet – A long-term diet that includes foods found in Phase 2 with additional fat and fibrous foods incorporated. Cook foods well and until tender and easy to digest. Fat intake should be limited to 50 grams per day.



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Page 1 of 6

Duration

The severity and frequency of symptoms will determine the duration of each phase of the diet. Due to the low nutrition content of phase 1, it should not be used for more than 3 days without additional nutritional support. If your symptoms are still active after that time, check in with your healthcare provider for direction.

Phases 2 and 3 may be used for 4 to 6 weeks at a time. Over this duration, you may find it helpful to use a food journal to track the day, time, and quantity of all foods and beverages consumed as well as monitoring your body's response to each phase.

Phase 1 Allowable Foods

Milk and Dairy

Recommended

- Skim milk
- Fat-free, non-dairy milk substitutes
- Fat-free yogurt without fruit or seeds

Avoid

- All others

Vegetables

Recommended

- Vegetable juice – V8 or tomato

Avoid

- All raw and cooked vegetables

Fruits and Juices

Recommended

- Juices without pulp – apple, cranberry, and grape

Avoid

- Citrus juices, juice with pulp, prune juice
- All fresh, frozen, canned, and dried fruits

Breads, Cereals, and Grains

Recommended

- Cooked, refined cereals – cream of rice, cream of wheat, grits, and farina
- Plain saltine, oyster, graham, and animal crackers

Avoid

- All others

Meat and Meat Substitutes

Recommended

- None

Avoid

- All

Fats and Oils

Recommended

- None

Avoid

- All

Sweets and Desserts

Recommended

- Gelatin (Jell-O)
- Popsicles and fruit ice
- Sugar, honey, sugar substitutes
- Fat-free custard and pudding
- Milkshakes made with skim milk or fat-free non-dairy substitutes
- Fat-free ice cream and sherbet

Avoid

- All others

Beverages (sipped slowly throughout the day)

Recommended

- Sports drink – Gatorade or Powerade
- Carbonated beverages/soda
- Crystal Light, Vitamin Water, Propel
- Coffee and tea
- Nutrition supplements – Boost, Ensure, Carnation Instant Breakfast

Avoid

- All others

Soups

Recommended

- Fat-free broth and bouillon – beef, chicken, vegetable
- Fat-free strained cream soup made with skim milk or water – cream of chicken, cream of mushroom, cream of celery, tomato

Avoid

- Broths containing fat
- Soups made with cream or whole, 2%, or 1% milk

Phase 1 Sample Menu

Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 ounces of juice • 1 cup cooked cereal • 4 ounces skim milk • 8 ounces coffee or tea 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 ounces of juice • 1 cup fat-free broth • 4 plain saltine crackers • 1/2 fat-free pudding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 ounces of juice • 1 cup strained cream of soup made with skim milk • 4 plain saltine crackers • 1/2 cup gelatin
Morning Snack	Afternoon Snack	Evening Snack
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 ounces fat-free yogurt 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8 ounces nutritional supplement such as Boost or Ensure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1/2 cup fruit ice

Phase 2 Allowable Foods

Milk and Dairy Products

Recommended

- Skim and 1% milk
- Fat-free and low-fat, non-dairy milk substitutes
- Fat-free and low-fat yogurt without fruit/seeds
- Low-fat cheeses and cottage cheese

Avoid

- Whole and 2% milk and milk products
- Full-fat, non-dairy substitutes

Vegetables

Recommended

- Vegetable juice – V8, tomato, etc.
- Well-cooked vegetables without skins, seeds, or hulls – potatoes, carrots, beets, green beans, squash, asparagus, etc.

Avoid

- Raw vegetables
- Cooked vegetables with skins, seeds, or hulls – corn, peas, broccoli, cauliflower, etc.

Fruits and Juices

Recommended

- Juices without pulp – apple, cranberry, and grape
- Canned fruits without skin
- Fresh ripe banana and seedless melon

Avoid

- Juice with pulp and prune juice
- Canned fruits with skins
- All other fresh and dried fruits

Breads, Cereals, and Grains

Recommended

- White bread, English muffins, bagels, biscuits, and other refined bread products
- Pancakes, waffles, refined dry cereals (Rice Crispies, Corn Flakes, Special K, etc.)
- Cooked refined cereals – cream of rice, cream of wheat, grits, farina
- White rice, white pasta, and egg noodles
- Saltine, oyster, graham, and animal crackers
- Pretzels

Avoid

- Whole grain breads and bread products made with bran, rye with seeds, or whole wheat
- Oatmeal, bran cereals, granola, and shredded wheat
- Brown, rice, wild rice, oats, barley, quinoa, and whole wheat pasta
- Popcorn
- Breads or rolls with nuts, seeds, or fruit

Meats and Meat Substitutes

Recommended

- Eggs
- Creamy peanut butter – limit to 2 tbsp per day
- Tofu

Avoid

- Beef, poultry, pork, lamb, and fish
- Dried beans, peas, and lentils
- Nuts, seeds, and crunchy peanut butter

Fats and Oils

Recommended

- Any tolerated – limit to 2 tbsp per day

Avoid

- None

Sweets and DessertsRecommended

- Gelatin (Jell-O)
- Popsicles and fruit ice
- Sugar, honey, sugar substitutes, jelly, and seedless jams, and hard candy
- Fat-free and low-fat custard, pudding, ice cream, sherbet, and frozen yogurt
- Milkshakes made with skim milk or low-fat milk products or non-dairy substitutes

Avoid

- Full-fat desserts – cakes, cookies, pies, and ice cream
- Desserts, jams, and candies containing nuts, seeds, coconut, dried fruits, or fruits with skins

Beverages (sipped slowly throughout the day)Recommended

- All

Avoid

- None

SoupsRecommended

- Fat-free or low-fat broth and bouillon
- Broth soups with rice/noodles and allowed vegetables
- Cream soups made with skim or 1% milk

Avoid

- Broths containing fat
- Soups made with cream, whole, or 2% milk

Phase 2 Sample Menu

Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 cup dry cereal • 4 ounces skim milk • 1 small ripe banana • 8 ounces coffee or tea 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 cup tomato soup made with skim milk • 4 plain saltine crackers • 1/2 cup gelatin • 4 ounces juice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 cup Campbell's Chicken Noodle Soup • 4 plain saltine crackers • 1/2 cup canned fruit (in juice) • 4 ounces skim milk
Morning Snack	Afternoon Snack	Evening Snack
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 slice white toast • 2 tbsp smooth peanut butter 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 string cheese • 1 ounce pretzels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1/2 cup fat-free sherbet

Phase 3 Allowable Foods

The following foods may be added to the foods allowed in Phase 2:

Vegetables

Recommended

- Raw vegetables without skins, seeds, or hulls

Avoid

- Raw and cooked vegetables with skins, seeds, or hulls

Fruits and Juices

Recommended

- Juices
- Fresh and canned fruits without skins

Avoid

- Fresh fruits with skins
- Dried fruits

Meat and Meat Substitutes

Recommended

- Lean, tender cuts of beef, pork, poultry, and lamb
- Fish, canned tuna

Avoid

- Fatty cuts of beef, poultry, pork, and lamb

Fats and Oils

Recommended

- Any tolerated – limit 2 tbsp. per day

Avoid

- None

Soups

Recommended

- Fat-free or low-fat broth and bouillon
- Soups with allowed foods

Avoid

- Broths containing fat
- Soups made with cream or whole milk

Phase 3 Sample Menu

Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 slice white toast with 1 tbsp. seedless jelly • 2 eggs scrambled • 4 ounces of juice • 6 ounces fat-free Greek yogurt • 8 ounces coffee or tea 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 ounces canned tuna (packed in water) • 2 tbsp. light mayonnaise • 2 slices white bread • 1/2 cup canned fruit (in juice) • 4 ounces skim milk 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 ounces baked chicken breast • 1 medium skinless baked potato • 1 tbsp. fat-free sour cream • 1/2 cup cooked carrots • 1 white dinner roll with 1 tbsp. margarine • 4 ounces juice
Morning Snack	Afternoon Snack	Evening Snack
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 large graham cracker squares • 4 ounces skim milk 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 string cheese • 1 small ripe banana 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1/2 cup low-fat vanilla frozen yogurt