

Cancer Support Helpline: 0121 704 9860

# Swallowing & Nutrition

When it's Difficult



The Oesophageal  
Patients Association

Registered Charity No. 1062461

Caring for the cancer patient & their family

Registered Charity No. 1062461

Featuring New  
Recipes!

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# SWALLOWING - NUTRITION WHEN IT'S DIFFICULT

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Difficulty in swallowing is the most common symptom of oesophageal (gullet) cancer. There may be some pain in the form of a burning sensation when swallowing food or you may feel that your food is sticking in your throat or chest and you can't swallow it. This is usually caused by a mass or swelling blocking the oesophagus (gullet). Along with this swallowing difficulty the treatment you receive is also likely to affect your food intake as you may have chemotherapy as well as radiotherapy, a tube (stent) may be inserted into the gullet (oesophagus) to make a passageway through an obstruction; a stricture may need stretching (dilatation). Whatever the treatment, some thought will be needed as to what can be eaten, the nature of the food and its consistency. A diet of soft food can often become based on a theme of soup, jelly and ice cream, which can be very boring. This booklet aims to show that it need not be and helps to support and advise what can be eaten throughout the different treatment pathways.

## 2. IF YOU HAVE A TUBE (STENT) FITTED

Modern stents are made of a wire mesh, generally covered with a thin material. They are easy to insert being encased in a pencil-thin sheath before release opposite the constriction. They usually cannot be taken out again. They come in different internal diameters (usually 9-12 mm) and lengths to suit individual needs. Generally they are held in place by the constriction they are opening up. The aim of the stent is to improve your swallowing and allow you to drink and/or eat better than you have been able to recently but you will need to make changes to your usual diet.

### Looking after the stent:

- Don't rush eating.
- Have soft foods in small mouthfuls and chew it well.
- Drink a little during and after meals - fizzy drinks are helpful.
- Always eat sitting upright and try to stay upright for at least half an hour after eating.
- Don't tackle large lumps of food - cut them up small and chew well.
- Spit out anything not chewed.
- If you feel the stent is blocked, stop eating, drink a warm or fizzy drink and walk around.
- If the blockage persists for more than 3 hours ring your GP or contact the hospital where you were treated.
- Keep teeth and dentures in good order so that chewing is effective.

## **Foods to avoid:**

- Green salads and raw vegetables
- Fried egg white and hard boiled egg
- Fruit skins and pith of grapefruit and orange
- Tough meat and gristle
- Fish with bones
- White bread, crusty bread and toast
- Shredded Wheat and Puffed Wheat
- Hard chips and crisps
- Nuts and dried fruits

## **3. IF YOU ARE HAVING RADIOTHERAPY**

Having radiotherapy to the oesophageal area may make your throat feel sore and tender and affect your energy levels. It may also make swallowing more difficult in the short term so you may need to opt for soft foods and high calorie liquids through your treatment. You may also find reflux worsens and you may feel nauseous. These symptoms should improve when your treatment stops but trying to take the best nourishment you can through your treatment will help your recovery. Use the suggestions in this booklet and ask the hospital dietitian for help if needed. Medicine can be given to reduce nausea and help control reflux.

Generally hot, spicy foods should be avoided and ask about alcohol if you normally enjoy a drink. Fizzy drinks, fruit juice and alcohol may sting. Opt for less acidic fluids such as fruit tea, blackcurrant squash or milky drinks and make sure you drink plenty of fluid through your treatment.

## **4. IF YOU ARE HAVING CHEMOTHERAPY**

Chemotherapy can affect taste, reduce appetite and cause nausea and vomiting. Cold food and drinks may be more acceptable at this time as they reduce cooking smells. Tart and salty flavours (eg lemon, crackers) may help and it is important to keep up the fluid intake as dehydration can occur. Milk is good if you can tolerate it and fruit juice/Ribena to supply vitamin C, glucose drinks such as Lucozade, fizzy drinks, spring water and herbal teas (if your taste for tea and coffee has changed) are all useful. Fresh pineapple is good for keeping your mouth fresh and moist.

Make use of marinades, strongly flavoured sauces such as sweet and sour, pasta or curry, herbs, spices and seasoning as long as you have not got a sore mouth or mouth ulcers. If you get any cravings go along with them.

Take energy supplements (see page 7) and for the section on feeling sick see page 6. It may help to suck a boiled sweet or a mint while the chemotherapy is being given. The second and subsequent doses of chemotherapy may be better tolerated but taste may be more affected particularly if fungal infections occur.

## 5. A BALANCED DIET

To get everything you need from your food you should eat at least two foods from each of the following groups every day.

**Group 1:** Bread, cereals and porridge, rice, pasta, potatoes.

**Group 2:** Meat, poultry, fish, eggs, milk, cheese, yoghurt, nuts, peas, beans and lentils.

**Group 3:** Vegetables, salads, fruit, fruit and vegetable juice. Try to include a glass of fruit juice every day.

The body needs to be well nourished in order to be able to fight infection. Normally it has stores of some nutrients, such as iron, which will cover your needs for a short time if you are not eating properly, but will eventually run out.

If you eat less food than you need your body can use up its fat stores first, but eventually the muscles will weaken and this will make you feel tired. Also your body tissue will be damaged more easily than normal and it will not heal as well. This is especially important if you have surgery and/or radiotherapy/chemotherapy. It is important to try to prevent weight loss whilst having chemotherapy/radiotherapy/pre and post surgery and gaining weight might help to improve energy levels and strength. The dietitian at your hospital will be pleased to advise you if you need more information about diet.

Each of the following sections must be read in conjunction with the general advice appropriate to your treatment, eg fizzy drinks may not suit during radiotherapy, milk intolerance may be experienced following oesophagectomy and gastrectomy.

### **If you need more energy:**

- Add extra sugar or glucose to drinks, cereals, desserts and fruit.
- Use high energy drinks like Ribena and fruit syrups mixed with water or milk or straight from the bottle on ice-cream. Fizzy drinks are good but not the low calorie kinds.
- Put melted butter on vegetables, meat and fish and in sauces and milk puddings. Spread plenty on bread, toast and scones. etc.
- Grate cheese into sauces, mashed potatoes and soup.
- Spread jam, honey or marmalade on toast. Stir honey into yoghurt or stewed fruit and have honey or golden syrup on porridge.
- Have mayonnaise on salads and in sandwiches, cream in soups, sauces and desserts, and cream cheese on bread or biscuits.
- Keep snacks by you so that you can eat whenever you feel like it, eg fruit, cheese, biscuits, chocolate, sweets.
- Keep ice-cream, ice cubes, full fat yoghurt and other desserts in the fridge for times when you fancy something cold.
- Use special energy supplements from the chemist, flavoured drinks or flavourless powders which are added to foods and drinks (see section on food supplements).

### **If you need more protein, e.g. after surgery:**

- Add milk powder to porridge, soups, sauces and scrambled eggs. Use evaporated milk on cereals and desserts.
- Keep grated cheese in a plastic container in the fridge, ready to put on vegetables, potatoes, soups, sauces, pasta and fish.
- Put minced meat or flaked fish into soups.
- Mix four tablespoons of milk powder into a pint of milk and use this for all your drinks and cooking. Use it instead of water when making condensed or packet soup (see section on food supplements).

### **If you need more vitamins and minerals:**

- These are only needed in very small amounts and you are unlikely to be short of anything if you are eating a reasonable quantity and variety of foods.
- Dairy produce (milk, butter, cheese, eggs, yoghurt) and cod liver oil are rich in vitamins A and D; bread, biscuits, nuts, wheatgerm, malt extract and Marmite are good for vitamin B; most vegetables and fruit contain vitamin C, especially citrus fruits and blackcurrants.
- Balanced food supplements like Meritene Energis and Complian contain a wide range of vitamins and minerals.
- Multi-vitamin and mineral tablets are readily available from chemists. If you are not eating meat because your taste is impaired see your GP for a blood test as you may be anaemic and need extra iron. Other sources of iron are beans, pulses, eggs and green vegetables, best eaten together with some form of vitamin C (such as a glass of orange juice) which helps absorption of the iron.

### **Do anti-cancer diets work?**

There has been a lot of publicity about alternative diets for treating cancer over the past few years. Many dramatic claims for cures have been made. It is understandable that people may want to know about diets that seem to offer the hope of a cure. However, there is no evidence that these diets can shrink a cancer, increase a person's chance of survival, or cure the cancer.

Some people get satisfaction from following these types of diet, but others find them expensive, unpleasant to eat and time-consuming to prepare. Some diets may lack important nutrients or be unbalanced in other ways, and may even be harmful. Some of the diets can be difficult to follow and you might be left feeling guilty if you find it hard to follow the instructions.

It can be confusing to have conflicting advice about what to eat. Dietitians, doctors and specialist nurses recommend a well-balanced and enjoyable diet as the best way to keep healthy. If you do choose to follow a specific diet, it might be worth speaking with a dietitian to check whether you are missing any important nutrients.

## 6. EATING PROBLEMS

If the ability to swallow is reasonable it may only be necessary to cut food up small or to process or liquidise those items which present problems, such as meat. However, if food needs to be of a softer consistency it may be simpler to blend the whole meal. Processing sufficient food for several meals and freezing it in plastic tubs will save time.

A microwave oven is useful for reheating food that has gone cold, as may occur if you are eating slowly.

### **Not hungry:**

- A drink of sherry before meals helps to increase the appetite, but check with your doctor first if you are on medication.
- Eat little and often.
- Make meals as attractive as possible with garnishes, eg parsley or other fresh herbs, tomato, lemon, etc, as appropriate.
- Nourishing drinks can be used to increase nutritional intake- examples on page 19.
- Make foods such as soup, mashed potato, sauces and milk puddings more nourishing by mixing in milk powder, cream, evaporated milk, grated cheese or butter/margarine as appropriate.

### **Too tired to cook:**

- Let others do the cooking.
- If you are on your own you may be able to have Meals on Wheels for a while. Wiltshire Farm Foods ([www.wiltshirefarmfoods.com](http://www.wiltshirefarmfoods.com)) and Oakhouse foods ([www.oakhousefoods.co.uk](http://www.oakhousefoods.co.uk)) can help!
- Use convenience foods; prepare food to freeze when you are feeling well to use when you are tired.
- You may feel more like eating after a rest or nap.
- Have food that is nutritious but easy to eat.
- Eat small meals with snacks in between.

### **Indigestion and heartburn:**

- Have small regular meals.
- Drink 30 minutes or so after meals. Not with them
- Chew your food well.
- Sit upright when you eat and stay like that for a little while afterwards to help the food to go down.
- Peppermint sweets may help.
- Avoid fatty or fried foods.
- Don't eat within one hour of going to bed.
- Drinking milk or eating yoghurt may help.

**Feeling too full:**

- Eat little and often.
- Have snacks between meals.
- Chew slowly.
- Drink after, not with, meals.
- Medication (metoclopramide or domperidone) taken 30 minutes before meals may assist stomach emptying.

**Feeling sick:**

- Try to eat little but often.
- Have something dry like a biscuit first thing in the morning.
- Don't eat fatty or highly spiced foods.
- Keep meals fairly dry and drink an hour or so after eating.
- Try cold foods and drinks - there's no smell to upset you. Acid flavours like chilled tinned grapefruit are easier to take, or have ice lollies or fizzy drinks such as lemonade, cola or Lucozade or fruit juice mixed with soda water or lemonade.
- Drink plenty of fluids.
- Try salty foods. Ginger flavoured foods can also help.
- Drink through a straw.
- Keep away from the smell of cooking.
- Wear loose clothing.
- Have plenty of fresh air in your room.
- Try to go for a walk before meals.

**Diarrhoea:**

- Drink plenty of fluids (sip drinks regularly) to prevent dehydration. Take at least 8 to 10 cups of fluid daily.
- Limit or avoid alcohol, strong tea and strong coffee.
- Limit or avoid spicy, greasy and fatty or fried foods.
- Avoid very hot or very cold food and drinks.
- Limit use of artificial sweeteners such as sorbitol and xylitol which are often found in chewing gum, sugar free mints and drinks. These can make diarrhoea worse.
- Eating slowly and chewing food well is important.
- It may help your symptoms if you avoid drinking fluids at the same time as eating.
- Eat little and often
- If it persists seek medical advice.



## 7. FOOD SUPPLEMENTS

### Oral Nutritional Supplements:

Oral nutritional supplements can be helpful if you need extra nourishment. There are many different ones that provide extra energy, protein, vitamins and minerals. They come as powders or liquids, to be taken as drinks or added to food and drinks or used in cooking. Some are available to purchase over the counter and the most common of these are Complan, Meritene Energis and Nurishment. Others are available on prescription and a selection of these are listed below. The dietitian at your local hospital is the best person to advise you on the products most suitable for you and for the dietitian to monitor your progress. If you are having supplements prescribed ask your GP to write “variety of flavours” on the prescription form so the pharmacy can order a mixture of flavours for you to try. Most of the companies who make the supplements have recipe ideas for alternative serving ideas on their websites. See the web links later in the booklet.

Oral nutritional supplements can be taken as drinks between meals or in place of a meal if you cannot manage food and can also be used in cooking. Bottles of milk and fruit based supplements can be frozen and eaten as ice cream or sorbet. Juice or fruit based supplements can be frozen into ice cube trays and added to a glass of squash. They can also be diluted with water or soda water if you find them too sweet or made into a jelly by adding one bottle as part of the cold water once the jelly cubes have been dissolved. Milk based supplements can be mixed with ice cream or diluted with milk if you find them too sweet.

### Liquids:

#### Milk based

*Available in sweet or fruit based flavours such as vanilla, strawberry, forest fruits.*

- Ensure Plus / Compact / Twocal / Compact Fibre
- Fortisip Compact / Compact Fibre / 2kcal / Compact Protein / Extra / Yoghurt Style
- Fresubin Original / Energy / Energy Fibre / Protein Energy
- Resource Energy / Fibre
- Altraplen Compact
- Aymes Complete

#### Juice Based

*Available in sweet or fruit based flavours such as forest fruits, apple or orange.*

- Fortijuice
- Fresubin Jucy
- Ensure Plus Juice

**Puddings:**

*Available in sweet or fruit based flavours such as chocolate, banana, vanilla, mint chocolate. These can be mixed with ice cream if you find them too thick.*

- Ensure Plus Crème
- Forticreme Complete
- Fresubin Crème / Yo Crème
- Prosouce Jelly
- Nutricrem
- Aymes Crème

**Liquid Shots:**

*Available in neutral and fruit based flavours such as strawberry*

- Calogen Extra
- Polycal Liquid
- Procal Shot
- Prosource Liquid
- Fresubin 5kcal shot
- Altrashot

**Powders:**

*Available in neutral, savoury, soup and sweet flavours To be mixed with water or full cream milk.*

- Fresubin Powder Extra
- Complian Shake
- Scandishake
- Calshake
- Vitasavoury soup – chicken / golden vegetable
- Aymess Shake / Smoothie / Savoury
- Foodlink Complete / Complete Fibre

*The following powders can be added to food to boost their calorie / protein content.*

- Pro-cal powder
- Super Soluble maxijul

**Fortified Milk:**

Add 2 oz (4 tablespoons) of milk powder to one pint of full cream milk to increase its calorie and protein content and use in drinks or on cereal. Keep in the fridge and use within 24 hours.

## 8. SOFT NUTRITIOUS FOODS AND SOME WAYS TO TAKE THEM

- Milk puddings
  - Soufflés
  - Porridge
  - Pancakes
  - Egg custard
  - Mousses
  - Full fat yoghurt
  - Milk jelly
  - Creme caramel
  - Fromage frais
  - Milk shakes
  - Omelettes
  - Scrambled eggs
  - Ice cream
  - Shepherd's pie
  - Pasta dishes (liquidise, if necessary, after cooking)
  - Braised meat
  - Lentils
  - Grated cheese
  - Cottage cheese
  - Cream cheese
  - Dahl
  - Taramasalata
  - Moussaka
  - Peanut butter
  - Avocado
  - Hummus
- Fruit mashed or blended - stewed apple, banana, strawberries, melon, ripe pears etc.
  - Cartons of fresh stock can be bought in supermarkets - more nutritious than stock cubes.
  - Angel Delight made with fortified milk and served with fruit, eg butterscotch flavour with stewed apple or chocolate with mashed banana.
  - Use milk, cream, fruit juice, sauces, stock or gravy as appropriate to soften the consistency of foods.
  - Many soup recipes are suitable as long as a processor/blender is used.
  - There are many varieties of prepared sauces, in tins, jars or packets. Soups, especially if condensed, also make good sauces.
  - Poached or flaked fish in sauce.
  - Grilled bacon or ham, processed, in scrambled eggs or omelettes.
  - Instant mashed potato, enriched with butter or cheese, for when the family is having chips or roast potatoes.
  - Fish pates - salmon, tuna, smoked mackerel, made softer with milk, cream, mayonnaise or stock.
  - Herbs to add flavour - eg thyme, basil, oregano, parsley, mint, chives.
  - Cranberry sauce, red currant jelly and chutney to add piquancy to meat dishes
  - Pasta is very good - liquidise, if necessary, after cooking

## 9. RECIPES

### *Recipes using Food Supplements*

#### **Enriched Soup**

##### *Ingredients*

- 300ml tomato soup
- 3tsp Milk Powder Skim Instant

Mix the skimmed milk powder with a little milk to form a smooth paste. Heat the soup but do not boil, and slowly stir in the paste. Serve hot.

Evaporated milk, cream, or grated cheese, can be added to make the soup even more nutritious.

##### Nutrition Facts

Calories 147 kCal (7.4%) Total Fat 0.9g [1%] Total Carbohydrates 28.1g [12%] Protein 7.8g (17.3%)

#### **Decadent Chocolate Mousse**

##### Ingredients (makes two servings)

- 1 sachet instant chocolate dessert
- 4tbsp milk powder
- 150ml double cream
- 150ml whole milk

Whisk all the ingredients together with a fork or whisk until thickened.

##### Nutrition Facts

Calories 501 kCal (25%) Total Fat 37.1g [53%] Total Carbohydrates 30.8g [13%] Protein 11.8g (26.2)

#### **Naughty Custard or Rice Pudding**

Add 1 tablespoon milk powder and 2 tablespoons double cream (30mls) to ½ can custard or rice pudding. Whisk together with a fork.

Additional 180kcal, 3g protein per portion.

#### **Tastier Fruit & Jellies**

Add 2 tablespoons double cream, fortified custard/rice pudding, ice cream or thick and creamy yogurt to fruit and jellies.

#### **Luxury Mashed Potato**

Add 1 tablespoon grated full fat cheese and 2 teaspoons (10g) butter/margarine to one scoop of mashed potato (already mashed in the kitchen with whole milk, double cream and butter/margarine). Mash together with a fork. Additional 135kcal, 4g protein per scoop

#### **Ensure Instant Soup**

- 1 can Ensure
- 1 packet instant soup mix (eg Cup-A-Soup)

Heat Ensure but do not boil, add soup mix, stir well, blend and serve.

### **Meritene Energis Yoghurt**

- ½. *sachet Meritene Energis*
- *5oz carton natural full-fat yoghurt*

You may find Meritene Energis too sweet: mixing it with plain yoghurt gives it a much sharper flavour.

### **Fruit Boost**

Ingredients

- *150ml orange juice*
- *50ml pineapple juice*
- *1 banana*
- *1/2 cup strawberries*
- *1/2 cup raspberries*

Blend the ingredients for 15 seconds.

Nutrition Facts

Calories 259 kCal (13%) Total Fat 1.4g [2%] Total Carbohydrates 63.0g [27%] Protein 3.8g (8.4%)

### **Extra milky milkshake**

Ingredients

- *4 tsp chocolate milkshake powder or strawberry milkshake powder (Nesquik)*
- *2tsp Milk Powder Skim Instant*
- *200ml whole milk*

Blend together the chocolate or strawberry powder and skimmed milk powder with a little milk then add the remaining milk and mix thoroughly with a fork or whisk until completely blended. To increase carbohydrate content, Nesquik powder can be replaced with 2 teaspoons Crusha strawberry syrup.

Nutrition Facts

Calories 174 kCal (9%) Total Fat 6.9g [10%] Total Carbohydrates 20.2g [9%] Protein 8.4g (19%)

### **Super Shake**

Ingredients

- *200ml whole milk*
- *3 tbsp double cream*
- *30g ice cream*
- *4tsp milk powder (semi-skimmed)*
- *1 banana*
- *1/2 cup strawberries*

Blend the ingredients for 15 seconds. The strawberries can be replaced by other berries according to preference.

Nutrition Facts

Calories 505 kCal (25.3%) Total Fat 27.1g [39%] Total Carbohydrates 55.8g [24%] Protein 14.3g (32%)

*Both Meritene and Complan have recipe ideas on their websites –  
www.Meritene.co.uk/recipes and www.complan.com/recipebook/*

## Soups

### Stilton Cheese Soup

- *2oz butter*
- *1 onion, finely chopped*
- *2 sticks celery, finely chopped*
- *1 ½oz flour*
- *5 tablespoons white wine*
- *1 pints chicken stock*
- *½ pint milk*
- *4oz blue Stilton cheese, crumbled*
- *2oz Cheddar cheese, grated*
- *Salt and freshly ground pepper*
- *4 tablespoons double cream*

Melt butter in a saucepan, add vegetables and fry gently for 5 minutes. Stir in flour and cook for 1 minute. Remove from heat and stir in the wine and stock; return to heat and bring to boil; simmer for 30 minutes. Add milk and cheese, stirring constantly. Season, stir in cream, liquidise, reheat but do not boil.

### Smoked Fish Chowder

- *1lb smoked haddock fillet*
- *8oz potatoes, finely diced*
- *2 medium onions, finely diced*
- *6oz carrots, finely diced*
- *2oz butter*
- *2 level table spoons flour*
- *¼ pint single cream*
- *Salt and freshly ground pepper*

Simmer the fish in 2 pints water for 10 minutes until tender; drain and flake coarsely, discarding the skin and bones. Sauté onion in the butter until soft then stir in the flour; gradually add the strained fish stock and bring to the boil, stirring. Add diced potatoes and carrots, simmer for about 10 minutes until tender, stir in flaked fish and cream, season well; liquidise and sieve if necessary; reheat but do not boil.

## **Chicken and Vegetable Soup**

- *2 onions*
- *½lb carrots*
- *2 turnips*
- *¼lb mushrooms*
- *a few frozen peas and any other vegetables in season*
- *2oz butter*
- *1½ pints chicken stock*
- *Salt and freshly ground pepper*
- *Mixed herbs*

Finely chop vegetables; melt butter in saucepan and sauté onions until soft; add the other vegetables and chicken stock; bring to the boil and simmer until vegetables are soft; season, liquidise, sieve and reheat.

## **Cream of Mushroom Soup**

- *½lb mushrooms, sliced*
- *¾ pint chicken stock*
- *1 small onion, chopped*
- *1oz butter*
- *1oz flour*
- *¾ pint milk*
- *2 tablespoons cream*
- *Salt and freshly ground pepper*

Place the mushrooms in a pan with the onion and stock, bring to the boil and simmer for 20 minutes until tender; liquidise. Melt butter in a pan, add the flour and cook for 1 minute; gradually blend in the milk and then the prepared mushroom purée and season to taste; bring to the boil and simmer for 5-10 minutes. Just before serving stir in the cream.

## Main Dishes

### Cheese Pudding (Serves 4)

- *½ pint milk*
- *Knob butter or margarine*
- *3oz fresh breadcrumbs*
- *4oz grated cheese*
- *3 eggs*
- *Salt and pepper*
- *Pinch dry mustard*

Grease a 2 pint baking dish. Put breadcrumbs into a bowl. Heat the milk and butter until just boiling and pour over the breadcrumbs; leave to cool for a few minutes. Separate the eggs; mix the yolks with the cheese and seasoning, and stir into the breadcrumbs. Whisk the egg whites until stiff and fold into the cheese mixture. Pour into the baking dish and bake at 375°F (190°C, Reg 5) until risen and brown (30-40 minutes). Serve at once.

### Cheesy Tuna Casserole (Serves 4)

- *7oz tin tuna*
- *1 tablespoon chopped onion*
- *2 eggs*
- *8oz cottage cheese*
- *2oz fresh breadcrumbs*
- *Salt and pepper*

Drain and flake the tuna; mix with cottage cheese, onion, breadcrumbs and seasoning. Beat the eggs and mix well with the fish mixture. Turn into a greased 1 pint casserole dish and bake at 350°F (180°C, Reg 4) until set (30-40 minutes).

### Fish Mousse (Serves 2)

- *4oz tinned salmon, tuna or kipper fillets*
- *3 fluid oz whipping cream*
- *2 tablespoons mayonnaise*
- *A little lemon juice*
- *Salt and pepper*
- *2 teaspoons gelatine*

Dissolve the gelatine in a little hot water. Flake the fish, removing any bones or skin; blend if necessary. Mix well with the mayonnaise and lemon juice and season to taste. Stir in the gelatine. Whip the cream until it forms peaks, and fold into the fish mixture. Pour into a serving dish and place in a fridge until set.



### **Ham Custard (Serves 2)**

- *4oz cooked ham, minced or chopped*
- *½ pint milk*
- *2 eggs*
- *Salt and pepper*

Grease a 1 pint baking dish and place the ham in it. Beat eggs, milk and seasoning and pour over the ham. Stand the dish in a shallow pan of hot water and bake at 325°F (170°C, Reg 3) until set (40-50 minutes).

*Variations; you can replace the ham with cooked chicken, grated cheese, or flaked cooked fish, and cooked vegetables may also be added.*

### **Macaroni Cheese (Serves 2)**

- *4oz macaroni (or cut spaghetti or other small pasta)*
- *½ pint cheese sauce (see Sauces)*
- *1oz grated cheese*

Cook the macaroni in lightly salted boiling water until just tender; drain and tip into a baking dish. Pour the cheese sauce over and sprinkle with grated cheese. Bake at 375°F (190°C, Reg 5) until brown (20-30 minutes).

*Variations; minced ham or chicken can be added, or vegetables such as sweetcorn or peas.*

### **Chicken Supreme (Serves 1)**

- *About 3oz cooked minced chicken*
- *Tinned condensed mushroom soup*

Mix together and heat gently in a saucepan. Serve with rice.

*Variations; chopped cooked vegetables can be added or other kinds of meat or fish can be combined with different varieties of condensed soup.*

## Puddings

### French Rice Pudding Serves 3-4

- *2oz ground rice*
- *2oz sugar*
- *1 pint fortified milk or milk and vanilla Ensure*
- *1 egg*

Heat milk and sugar in a saucepan until almost boiling; sprinkle in the ground rice, stirring well until just boiling. Simmer until rice is tender (3-4 minutes) and allow to cool slightly. Separate the egg and beat the yolk into the rice. Whisk the egg white and fold into the rice. Pour into a greased pie dish and stand it in a shallow pan of hot water. Bake at 350°F (180°C, Reg 4) until well risen (about 20 minutes).

### Apricot Fool (Serves 3-4)

12-16 oz cooked or tinned apricots (or other fruit)  
½ pint high protein custard (see Sauces)  
Sugar to taste

Drain the fruit well and sieve or blend to make a thick purée; sweeten to taste. Make the custard and whisk with the fruit. Pour into individual serving dishes. Chill, and serve with cream.

### Quick Milk Pudding (Serves 3-4)

- *2oz semolina, ground rice or flaked rice*
- *2oz sugar*
- *1 pint fort milk or milk and vanilla Ensure*

Heat milk and sugar until almost boiling. Sprinkle in the cereal, stirring well until just boiling. Simmer until cooked (3-4 minutes). Serve with jam, honey or golden syrup.

### Baked Egg Custard ( Serves 4)

- *1 pint fortified 4 milk*
- *3 eggs*
- *1oz sugar*
- *Grated nutmeg (optional)*

Heat the milk until almost boiling. Beat the eggs and sugar together and pour the hot milk slowly over them, stirring well. Pour into a greased 1½ pint baking dish and sprinkle nutmeg on the top. Stand the dish in a shallow pan of hot water and bake at 325°F (170°C, Reg 3) until set (30-40 minutes). The finely grated rind of an orange can be added to the custard mixture if liked.

## Sauces

***These recipes use fortified milk - see section on Supplements***

### **High Protein White Sauce**

- *1 pint fortified milk*
- *1½ oz butter or margarine*
- *1½ plain flour*

Melt the fat in a saucepan; add the flour and stir well. Cook gently for 1-2 minutes and remove from heat. Add the milk a little at a time, stirring well to make a smooth sauce. Return to heat, stir until sauce boils. For a savoury sauce season with salt and pepper; for a sweet sauce add sugar to taste.

*Variations, Cheese sauce; add 2-3oz grated cheese. Parsley Sauce; add 1-2 tablespoons chopped parsley. Egg Sauce; add a chopped hard boiled egg.*

### **High Protein Custard**

- *1 pint fortified milk*
- *2 tablespoons custard powder*
- *1-2 tablespoons sugar*

Mix sugar and custard powder to a smooth paste with a little cold milk. Heat the rest of the milk until just boiling. Pour onto the custard powder mixture, stirring well. Return to pan, stir until boiling and simmer for 1-2 minutes, stirring all the time.

### **High Protein Chocolate Sauce**

- *1 pint fortified milk*
- *1-2 oz sugar*
- *1oz cornflour*
- *½ oz cocoa powder*

Mix sugar, cornflour and cocoa powder to smooth paste with a little cold milk. Heat the rest of the milk until just boiling. Pour onto the cocoa mixture, stirring well. Return to pan, stir until boiling and simmer for 1-2 minutes, stirring all the time.

## When You Really Can't Face Food

You may be able to manage some of these drinks, jellies and frozen desserts. Keep some in the fridge and freezer for days when you don't feel like eating. Serve them well chilled and take drinks through a straw. You can also buy chilled and frozen desserts to use in the same way or freeze fruit flavoured supplements to make ice-cream or sorbets.

### Citrus Cup

- *Equal quantities of orange Polycal and lemonade.*

Mix and serve.

- *High Protein Milkshake*
- *½ pint fortified milk*
- *1 scoop vanilla ice-cream*

Put the ingredients into the blender and blend at low speed for a few seconds. Flavour with Ribena, Crusha syrup or fruit purée; for energy use maple syrup or honey. For iced coffee use a dessertspoon of coffee essence or a teaspoon of instant coffee with sugar to taste, and blend with milk before adding ice cream (vanilla, coffee or chocolate).

### Iced Peanut Butter & Coffee

Ingredients:

- *1 teaspoon coffee granules*
- *25ml boiling water*
- *275ml coconut milk*
- *50g peanut butter*
- *6 ice cubes*

Dissolve coffee and hot water. Blend ingredients together and serve.

Nutritional Content (1 portion)

366 kcal. 12.5g protein . 20.1g carbohydrate. 26.7g fat

### Eton Mess Shake

Ingredients: (1 portion)

- *2 meringue nests (approx. 30g)*
- *150ml soya milk*
- *2½ tablespoons strawberry milkshake powder*
- *2½ tablespoons strawberry jam*
- *1½ tablespoons icing sugar*

Blend ingredients together

Nutritional Content (1 portion)

492 kcal. 7.0g protein. 114.0g carbohydrate. 4.2g fat

### Simple Iced Coffee

Dissolve 2 teaspoons of instant coffee powder in 200ml fortified milk. Sweeten with 2 tablespoons sugar.

330kcal and 11g protein

### **Chocolate Dream**

Warm up 200ml fortified milk. Add 1 tablespoon drinking chocolate and sweeten with sugar to taste. For extra flavour try adding a teaspoon of coffee or a pinch of cinnamon. 230kcal and 17g protein

### **Simple Milkshake**

Mix 200ml fortified milk, 1 scoop of ice cream or 1 pot of yoghurt with fresh fruit or milk powder flavouring e.g. Nesquik, Ovaltine or supermarket brand  
Approx 300kcal and 10g protein

### **Cinnamon Spice**

Warm up 200ml fortified milk. Mix in 1 tablespoon golden syrup and a pinch of mixed spice and ground cinnamon.  
250kcal and 16g protein

### **Frozen Fruit Mousse**

*Best fruits to use: Fresh, tinned or frozen raspberries, strawberries, apricots, peaches, plums, blackcurrants and rhubarb.*

- $\frac{3}{4}$ lb. fruit
- 3 - 4 oz. sugar
- $\frac{1}{2}$  pint whipping cream or small tin of evaporated milk, chilled
- 1 teaspoon gelatine

If using firm fresh fruit, stew in a little water until soft; drain and make into a thick purée in the blender or by sieving; add sugar to taste. Dissolve gelatine in a little hot water; stir into the fruit and cool in the fridge. When just beginning to set whisk well. Whip the cream or evaporated milk and fold in the fruit; pour into individual dishes and freeze.

***Companies producing food supplements can be contacted for recipe ideas:***

- **Abbott (Ensure range) – <https://nutrition.abbott/uk/adult> - Phone 0800 252 882**
- **Fresenius (Calshake / Fresubin) - <https://www.fresenius-kabi.com/gb/> - Phone 01928 533533**
- **Nestle (Meritene / Resource) – [www.nestlehealthscience.co.uk](http://www.nestlehealthscience.co.uk) – Phone 0080068874846**
- **Nutricia (Fortisip / Fortijuice) – [www.mynutricia.com](http://www.mynutricia.com) – Phone 08457 623653**
- **Nutrinovo (Prosource) – <https://nutrinovo.com> – Phone 01304 829068**
- **Nualtra (Altraplen) – <https://nualtra.com> – Phone 0118 453 2853  
(Recipes at <https://nualtra.com/resources/recipes>)**
- **Aymes (Aymes Complete) - <https://aymes.com/> - Phone 0845 6805 496**

## **WHO WE ARE**

The Oesophageal Patients Association (OPA) is a national registered charity and was formed in 1985 when a few former oesophageal cancer patients met and found tremendous reassurance in sharing experiences. The members of the Association are all patients who have experienced oesophageal or gastric difficulties or are carers or families of patients. We have prepared medically approved booklets and fact sheets on the problems, which we can talk about at first hand, understanding the fears that can be generated, the pains that can be suffered and the effects on the digestive system that can be experienced.

## **WHAT WE DO**

Our objectives are to help new patients and their families to cope with any difficulties arising as a result of treatment, giving support and encouraging them to achieve a good quality of life. This is done by providing information booklets and leaflets on matters of concern, a telephone support line, arranging patient support meetings around the UK and, where possible, visiting patients in hospital or making contact during their convalescence.

Patients may be referred by other agencies, such as Macmillan, doctors or specialist nurses anywhere in the UK and can be helped by telephone on the National Helpline or put in touch with a trained former patient where possible. Talking about the problems with someone who knows what they are like (perhaps rather better than the doctor) can be a great relief and there is time to deal with all the questions that seemed too trivial to mention to the doctor or were forgotten at the time.

The Charity is represented on various committees involved with the management of upper GI cancers and research into new treatments. Patient involvement is increasingly recognised as a valuable input to the thinking and documentation on such matters.

## **MEDICAL SUPPORT**

The OPA is an independent registered charity with links to specialist hospitals and medical teams around the UK where oesophageal and gastric problems are regularly treated. The teams involving Upper Gastrointestinal surgeons, thoracic surgeons, gastroenterologists, oncologists, dieticians and physiotherapists have extensive experience of treatments and provide continual support and advice to the OPA.

## **MEETINGS**

Informal meetings for patients and carers (family or friends) are regularly held in regional centres around the UK. Problems are aired and suggestions for overcoming them are exchanged. The essential aim is to enable new patients to meet and talk to former patients who have recovered, are back to work if not retired, and lead relatively normal lives. If you have not already met a former patient member of the Association and would like to talk and meet with others, please telephone our Helpline number below.

**Cancer Support Helpline: 0121 704 9860**

## HOW YOU CAN HELP

We receive no government funding, nor do we make any charge to patients carers or their families for any support and advice provided. The OPA can only maintain its vital service through donations and other fundraising activities generated by the community it serves.

If you can support the work of the OPA at this time we would be indebted to you.

Cheques should be made payable to The OPA and sent to:  
**Fundraising Dept. The OPA, 6 & 7 Umberslade Business Centre,  
Pound House Lane, Hockley Heath, Solihull B94 5DF.**

## YOUR LEGACY COULD MAKE A DIFFERENCE



### **A message from our patron Fiona Wade:**

“ Your legacy will help to save the lives of future generations. Please consider making a gift in your Will to The OPA and help us to continue our fight against oesophageal and gastric cancers.

I lost my Father to oesophageal cancer. He was such an amazing person, the best father I could ever wish for and it was so sad and shocking when he was diagnosed. I had never heard of his type of cancer before and I always feel to this day that if we had been more aware of oesophageal cancer or reflux disease then, for sure, earlier diagnosis would have made a huge difference and maybe saved his life.

Early diagnosis by spreading awareness is absolutely key in saving lives from this cancer. So please help us carry on doing all we can to make people more aware and help us to save lives and to support every single patient who needs our help.  
Thank you.”

### **Your Legacy**

You can support The OPA by making a gift in your Will; one of the most effective ways to help ensure that our fight against oesophageal and gastric cancers continues our mission to save the lives of future generations.

The OPA has supported thousands of patients since it started over thirty years ago. By remembering The Oesophageal Patients Association (OPA) in your Will you can help us continue and to save the lives of future generations of family and friends. Your legacy will help to fight oesophageal and gastric cancers and support patients, carers and families to cope with this devastating disease.

The OPA supports people with life threatening cancers and works to save lives through our national campaign to create public awareness and early diagnosis. However, people of all ages should be made be aware regular heartburn or indigestion could be early symptoms of oesophageal or gastric cancers which can be dealt with through a straight forward procedure long before developing into cancer.

## HOW YOUR GIFT WILL HELP

Your gift will help the OPA to promote early diagnosis and will assist patients who are facing or recovering from an operation for one of the most unpleasant, life-changing and rapidly increasing cancers.

Early symptoms may only show as heartburn or indigestion, often resulting in late referral and diagnosis. Treatment by surgery is extremely complex with long operations that often involve restructuring the digestive organs in the chest, which is a traumatic procedure.

We can continue to give medically informed support to patients, carers & families through:

- Our cancer support helpline
- Online information and support
- Medically approved high quality information booklets & leaflets
- UK wide network of patient support groups & OPA buddies

Your gift will also help us to continue to work with the NHS to improve cancer treatment and outcomes and to continue our network of patient support groups across the UK.

### Making your Gift

The Oesophageal Patients Association is an independent registered charity. We receive no government funding and depend entirely on public support.

The Chairman and Trustees of The OPA will ensure that legacies are used to the greatest advantage and your gift will not be used for administration costs.

If you would like further information, please complete your details below and return to this address: The OPA, 6 & 7 Umberslade Business Centre, Pound House Lane, Hockley Heath, Solihull B94 5DF.

I am considering leaving a legacy to The Oesophageal Patients Association - please send me more information about your work

I have made a gift in my Will to The Oesophageal Patients Association - please keep me informed about news and events

Your support for the OPA is greatly appreciated and we would like to be able to keep you informed. Please fill out the section below and return it to us, to enable us to contact you with news and details of events. You can be assured that we will not pass on your details to any other organisation.

**Name:**.....

**Address:**.....

..... **Postcode:**.....

**Email address:**..... **Telephone:**.....

Or download this form from our website: [www.opa.org.uk](http://www.opa.org.uk) and email to us: [charity@opa.org.uk](mailto:charity@opa.org.uk)

This form puts you under no obligation to The Oesophageal Patients Association - it simply enables us to thank you and plan for the future of The OPA.

\*Please tick this box if you do not want to receive any further mailing from The Oesophageal Patients Association



# Your donation will make a real difference

## By bank transfer

Recipient bank: HSBC Bank,  
34 Poplar Road, Solihull, B91 3AF  
Sort Code: 40 - 42 - 12  
Account Number: 51354981

## To make an online donation visit:

<https://www.opa.org.uk/donations.html>

### By regular Standing Order payment –

Sort Code: 40-42-12

Account Number: 51354981

I wish to make regular donations to the Oesophageal Patients Association of *(tick appropriate box)*

£2  £5  £10  £25  £100,

or other amount:

Please state amount in words:

every *(tick appropriate box)*  Week  Month  Year starting on \_\_\_ / \_\_\_ / \_\_\_ until further notice.

### Your bank details

To: (insert name and address of your bank) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Sort Code: \_\_\_\_-\_\_\_\_-\_\_\_\_

Account Number: \_\_\_\_\_

### Boost your donation by 25p of Gift Aid for every £1 you donate

Gift Aid is reclaimed by the charity from the tax you pay for the current tax year. Your address is needed to identify you as a current UK taxpayer.

### In order to Gift Aid your donation you must tick the box below:

I want to Gift Aid my donation of £ \_\_\_\_\_ and any donations I make in the future or have made in the past 4 years to the OPA.

I am a UK taxpayer and understand that if I pay less income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all my donations in that tax year it is my responsibility to pay.

### Your Details

Title: (Mr/Mrs/Dr etc.) \_\_\_\_\_ Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Tel: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_ / \_\_\_ / \_\_\_

## Any other Donations

I am pleased to send a donation of £ \_\_\_\_\_ Please tick here  if this is to be treated as a Gift Aid donation.

Title: (Mr/Mrs/Dr etc.) \_\_\_\_\_ Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Tel: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_ / \_\_\_ / \_\_\_

For online donations – Account number: 51354981 Sort Code: 40-42-12

Please send this form to: Fundraising Dept. The OPA, 6 & 7 Umberslade Business Centre, Pound House Lane, Hockley Heath, Solihull B94 5DF. Or email to: [enquiries@opa.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@opa.org.uk)

For further information please contact The OPA on 0121 704 9860 or email [charity@opa.org.uk](mailto:charity@opa.org.uk).

Registered Charity No 1062461

## WAYS YOU CAN DONATE



Online donations make things really simple, no need for you to collect money in person or worry about banking cheques etc. Online donations are becoming more popular, many donation portals also allow you to log in and check how your fundraising is going and check your progress.

The OPA accept payments via Paypal, bank transfer, Just Giving, Virgin Money Giving, debit or credit card or donations via mobile.



You can make a donation to the OPA via our paypal page - see <https://www.opa.org.uk/donations.html> and click the paypal link.



Account Payee: OPA Bank: HSBC Bank, 34 Poplar Road, Solihull, B91 3AF. Sort Code: 40-42-12. Account Number: 51354981



Visit the OPA's Just Giving page at <https://www.justgiving.com/oesophagealpatientsassociation>



<https://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/fundraiser-portal/userSignIn>

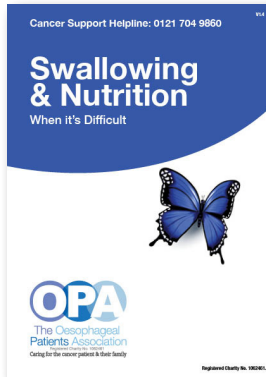


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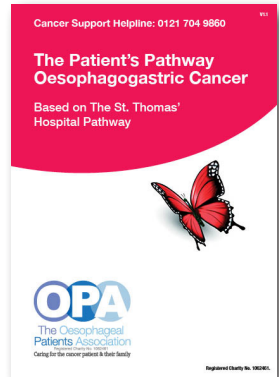


## Publications from the OPA.

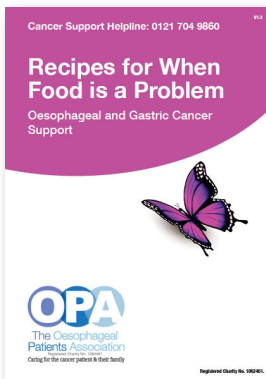
We are here to help those with or affected by Oesophageal and Gastric Cancer, here are some of our helpful booklets, they are free and can be posted or downloaded from our website.



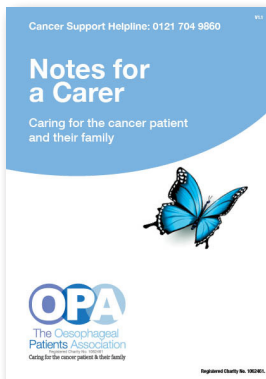
**Swallowing & Nutrition - when it's difficult**  
*(For those not having an operation but perhaps having a stent inserted or other treatments)*



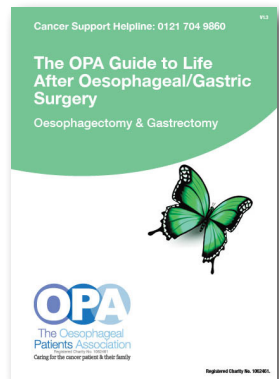
**The Patients Pathway - Oesophagogastric Cancer**  
*(Patients guide following diagnosis based on the St. Thomas' Hospital Pathway)*



**Recipes for When Food is a Problem**  
*(Recipe book for patients post surgery/treatment)*



**Notes for a Carer**  
*(Informative guide for carers of Oesophageal & Gastric patients following diagnosis)*



**A Guide to Life After Oesophageal/ Gastric Surgery - Oesophagectomy & Gastrectomy**  
*(Informative guide for Oesophageal & Gastric patients following surgery)*

These publications are available to patients and medical staff on request. There is no charge to individuals and no membership subscription. The OPA is supported entirely by donations.

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The Oesophageal  
Patients Association

Registered Charity No. 1062461

Caring for the cancer patient & their family



## **Cancer Support Helpline: 0121 704 9860**

9.00am - 3.00pm Monday to Friday.

(Answerphone for out of hours callers)

Email: [enquiries@opa.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@opa.org.uk)

Web: [www.opa.org.uk](http://www.opa.org.uk)

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Published by the Oesophageal Patients Association (OPA) Registered Charity No. 1062461  
6 & 7 Umberslade Business Centre, Pound House Lane, Hockley Heath, Solihull B94 5DF.