

**National helpline: 0121 704 9860**

# Swallowing & Nutrition

- when it's difficult



The Oesophageal  
Patients Association

Caring for the cancer patient and their family

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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**

Radiotherapy for oesophageal problems can affect taste, make the throat feel tender and very dry, and sometimes nausea and tiredness can add to your difficulties and make you a little depressed. All these matters improve when the treatment stops, but taking the best nourishment you can while it lasts will help recovery. Use the suggestions in this leaflet and ask the hospital dietician for help if needed. Medicine can be given to reduce nausea.

Generally hot, spicy foods should be avoided and ask about alcohol if you normally enjoy a drink. Fizzy drinks, fruit drinks and even beer may sting as may very hot drinks, but nevertheless try to take plenty of fluids including milk.

### **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 Build-up 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.

**Alternative diets:**

Diets based on such things as carrot juice and large doses of vitamins have been advocated by some people in recent years for cancer sufferers but there is not much evidence that they are successful though some people may find them enjoyable. A well-balanced diet is generally recommended.

## 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 eat:**

- Let others do the cooking.
- If you are on your own you may be able to have Meals on Wheels for a while.
- 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

These can be helpful if you need extra nourishment. There are many different ones to give you 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 readily available at chemists but more concentrated ones can be prescribed for certain conditions; a selection of these is listed below. The dietician at your hospital is the best person to advise on the product most suitable for you and if you have a prescribed supplement it is important that the dietitian should monitor your progress. Ideas for using supplements are given in the recipe section and manufacturers also supply recipe leaflets for their products. If you are having supplements prescribed ask your GP to write "Variety of flavours" on the prescription form - the pharmacy can order a mixture of items for you to try.

### **Oral Nutritional Supplements:**

These are high in protein and calories, including vitamins and minerals. They 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. Cartons of sweet and fruit based supplements can be frozen and eaten as ice-cream or sorbets. Some can be bought from the chemist whilst most you can get from your GP on prescription.

### **Liquids:**

#### Milk based

*Available in sweet/fruit based flavours e.g. vanilla, strawberry, forest fruit.*

- Ensure Plus Compact/TwoCal/Fibre
- Fortisip Compact/Protein/Savoury/Multifibre
- Fresubin Original/Energy/Energy Fibre/Protein Energy
- Resource energy/fibre

#### Juice Based

*Available in sweet/fruit based flavours e.g forest fruit, apple, orange.*

- Fortijuice
- Fresubin Juicy
- Ensure Plus Juice
- Resource Fruit

**Puddings:**

*Available in sweet/fruit based e.g chocolate, banana, vanilla.*

- Ensure Plus Creme
- Forticreme complete
- Fresubin Creme/YO Creme
- Prosource Jelly
- Resource Dessert Energy

**Liquid Shots:**

*Available in neutral and fruit based flavours e.g strawberry.*

- Calogen Extra
- Polycal Liquid
- Procal Shot
- Prosource Liquid
- Fresubin 5Kcal shot

**Powders:**

*Available in neutral, savory, soup and sweet flavours. To be mixed with water and/or full fat milk or added to food.*

- Build up
- Fresubin Powder Extra
- Complian Shake
- Shandishake
- Calshake
- Vitasavoury Soups - chicken/golden vegetable/leek and potato/mushroom
- Pro-cal powder
- Super soluble maxijul

**Fortified Milk:**

A useful supplement easily made at home, used like ordinary milk but giving more protein and energy. Mix 4 tablespoons of milk powder with a pint of milk (easiest to do in a blender).

## 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*

#### **Complan Soup**

- *1 tin or packet of soup*
- *3 heaped dessertspoons natural flavour Complan*

Heat enough soup for one serving, following the instructions on the tin or packet. Mix Complan with a little cold water to make a smooth paste. Remove soup from heat and slowly stir in the Complan.

#### **Complan Angel Delight**

- *1 packet Angel Delight*
- *3 heaped dessertspoons natural flavour Complan*
- *½ pint cold water*

Mix Complan with a little water to make a thin cream, then add the remaining water. Sprinkle in the dessert powder and whisk briskly.

#### **Complan Jelly Cream**

- *1 pint packet jelly*
- *4 heaped dessertspoons Complan (a flavour that blends with the jelly)*

Make the jelly in the usual way and leave until cold but not set. Mix Complan with a little cold jelly to make a smooth cream. Blend mixture into jelly, stirring slowly all the time. Pour into four individual moulds or dishes and leave to set.

#### **Build-Up Milk Jelly**

- *1 sachet strawberry Build-Up*
- *1 packet strawberry jelly*
- *½ pint milk or fortified milk or vanilla Ensure*

Dissolve jelly in a little boiling water and make up to  $\frac{3}{4}$  pint with cold water. Mix Build-Up with the milk. When jelly is cold but not set, stir it slowly into the Build-Up. Pour into individual dishes or moulds and leave to set.

*Alternative flavours. Vanilla Build-Up with various jelly flavours, or chocolate*



# The Oesophageal Patients Association

Caring for the cancer patient and their family

## Oesophageal and Gastric Cancer Support

*Reg Charity No. 1062461*

**Helpline number 0121 704 9860**

**[www.opa.org.uk](http://www.opa.org.uk) - [enquiries@opa.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@opa.org.uk)**



Telephone helpline service Mon-Fri 9am—3pm including access to former patients.

We can arrange guidance and support and put you in touch with a local group member who is recovering (or has recovered) from a similar condition.



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

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

### **We are able to offer support in the following areas:-**



Information literature which is medically approved and written by former patients who know how you are feeling



Newsletters with up to date information, with both patient and medical input



Regional support groups in many areas



Hospital visitors in some areas



We understand that its not just patients that need support. Carers, and their family members, friends and loved ones can also benefit from our support.

# Ways you can Donate

## By bank transfer

Recipient bank: HSBC Bank,  
34 Poplar Road, Solihull, B91 3AF  
Sort Code: 40 - 42 - 12  
Account Number: 02301636

## On your mobile

Text OPAS14 then  
£2, £5 or £10 to  
70070

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Donate to us online at [www.opa.org.uk/donate](http://www.opa.org.uk/donate)

## By regular Standing Order payment

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: \_\_\_\_\_

## Your Details

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

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

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

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

*giftaid it*  Tick the box to add an extra 25p to every £1 you give at no extra cost to you

I confirm I have paid or will pay an amount of Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax for the current tax year (6 April to 5 April) that is at least equal to the amount of tax that all the charities that I donate to will reclaim on my gifts for the current tax year. I understand that other taxes such as VAT and Council Tax do not qualify. I understand the charity will reclaim 25p of tax on every £1 that I have given.

**All donations are gratefully recieved and can help us to give patients the support they need as well as raising awareness of Oesophageal Cancer.**

**Please send this form to:**

**Fundraising Dept. The OPA, 50 High Street,  
Henley-in-Arden, Warwickshire, B95 5AN  
Or email to: [enquiries@opa.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@opa.org.uk)**



**The Oesophageal  
Patients Association**

Caring for the cancer patient and their family

Registered Charity Number 1062461  
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# Personal Information

*Please complete as much information as you wish*

Name:.....

Address:.....

.....

.....

Postcode:..... Tel No:.....

Email address:.....

Age at Diagnosis:..... Occupation:.....

## Additional Optional Information

*Please tick/delete whichever is applicable*

I am a patient

Please register my details with your Association

Please include me on your mailing list

I have / have not had surgery for oesophageal / gastric cancer

Date of surgery:.....

Name of hospital which is treating me / has treated me:.....

.....

Name of consultant:.....

Date of treatment:.....

Month & Year of diagnosis:.....

Treatments given [ e.g. Chemotherapy / Radiotherapy / Stent (tube in oesophagus) / Laser / Photodynamic Therapy (*please specify*) ]

.....

.....

***NB Personal membership details supplied are confidential to the OPA and are not available to any other organisation without the prior written permission of the individual. Information is stored strictly in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998***

Please return this slip  
in a sealed envelope to

**Patient Support  
OPA  
50 High Street  
Henley-in-Arden  
Warwickshire  
B95 5AN**

## **Build-Up Yoghurt**

- *½. sachet Build-Up*
- *5oz carton natural full-fat yoghurt*

You may find Build-Up too sweet: mixing it with plain yoghurt gives it a much sharper flavour.

## **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.

## **Ensure Banana Shake**

- *1 banana*
- *1 can chilled Ensure*

Peel and slice the banana. Place in blender, add Ensure and blend until smooth.

## **Chocolate Diablo**

- *1 tablespoon drinking chocolate*
- *1 teaspoon instant coffee*
- *1 can Ensure*
- *Pinch cinnamon*

Mix chocolate, coffee and cinnamon, add 2oz Ensure and stir until smoothly mixed. Stir in the rest of the Ensure and heat to required temperature, stirring all the time. Do not boil.

*Alternatively, use chilled Ensure, mix as before and blend (with a scoop of ice cream if liked).*

## 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, Cruscha 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).

### Tomato Yoghurt

- *5oz carton plain yoghurt*
- *¼ pint tomato juice*
- *2oz high energy powder, eg Maxijul or Caloreen*
- *2-3 fluid oz hot water*

Dissolve the high energy powder in the hot water; mix all ingredients by hand or in a blender; flavour with Worcestershire sauce, celery salt or just salt and pepper; chill well and serve in a tall glass with a straw.

### Yoghurt Cooler

- *5oz carton fruit yoghurt*
- *¼ pint milk*

Mix together by hand or in a blender. Serve in a glass with a straw.

### Jelly Whip

- *1 packet jelly*
- *1 small tin evaporated milk*

Chill the tin of milk in the fridge for a few hours. Dissolve jelly in ¼ pint hot water and allow to cool. Whisk evaporated milk until it forms peaks and stir into the cool but not set jelly. Pour into individual dishes and place in the fridge to set.

## Lemon Water Ice

- *Grated rind and juice of one lemon*
- *2 oz. sugar*
- *2 tablespoons of honey*
- *1 teaspoon of gelatine*
- *½ pint of water*

Heat sugar and water together, allow to boil for five minutes. Dissolve gelatine in a little hot water. Mix lemon rind, juice and honey into the hot syrup, add gelatine, stir well. Cool, stirring occasionally, then freeze. When beginning to set at the edges, whisk with a fork, pour into individual dishes and complete freezing.

## Frozen Fruit Mousse

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

- *¾lb. fruit*
- *3 - 4 oz. sugar*
- *½ 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, Enlive*)  
0800 252 2882 - [www.abbottnutritionuk.com](http://www.abbottnutritionuk.com)
- **Fresenius** (*Calshake, Fresubiu, Provide Xtra*)  
01928 594200 - [www.fresenius-kabi.co.uk](http://www.fresenius-kabi.co.uk)
- **Nestle** (*Caloreen, Clinutren*)  
0208 6675130
- **Novartis** (*Resource, Benefiber*)  
01403 210211
- **Nutricia** (*Fortifresh, Fortisip, Nutrison, Polycal*)  
01225 711688 - [www.nutricia.co.uk](http://www.nutricia.co.uk)

## **WHO WE ARE**

The Oesophageal Patients Association 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 for 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 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 Association 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 Association 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 Association.

## **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.

**OPA Patient Helpline: 0121 704 9860**

## Information

OPA Publications

- **A Guide to Life After Oesophageal/Gastric Surgery - Oesophagectomy & Gastrectomy**  
*(Informative guide for Oesophageal & Gastric patients following surgery)*
- **Swallowing & Nutrition - when it's difficult**  
*(For those not having an operation but perhaps having a stent inserted or other treatments)*
- **Oesophagogastric Cancer - The Patients Pathway**  
*(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)*

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

## Ways you can help

We receive no government funding, nor do we make any charge to patients 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.

It costs the Oesophageal Patients Association several hundred pounds per day to run the national telephone helpline, provide regional meetings, train volunteers and produce our support literature.

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, 50 High Street, Henley-in-Arden, Warwickshire, B95 5AN.**



## The Oesophageal Patients Association

Caring for the cancer patient and their family

### **Helpline Tel: 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)

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

Our thanks to Ewen Griffiths, MD FRCS Consultant Upper GI Surgeon, Laura Nicholson, Upper GI Dietitian and Reena Mair, Dietitian at University Hospitals Birmingham NHS for reviewing the content of this booklet.

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Revised Jan 1990, June 1994, Aug 2001, Oct 2006, June 2012, Sept 2013. Oct 2015, Nov 2016, Nov 2017.

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Published by the Oesophageal Patients Association

The OPA, 50 High Street, Henley-in-Arden, Warwickshire, B95 5AN