

**University Hospital South Manchester**

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# Oesophageal Stents

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Review  
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Living with a stent



## I've had an oesophageal stent inserted... Now what?

An oesophageal stent is a small tube inserted into your oesophagus (food pipe) to widen it and make it easier for you to swallow. You should find now that you are able to swallow better, but it may still be slightly difficult for the first few days. This leaflet contains information on what to expect after your stent has been inserted.

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## Essential contact numbers

### Your GP

Specialist nurse (Tina Foley)	<b>0161 291 2547</b>
Dietitian	<b>0161 291 2701</b>
Radiology department	<b>0161 291 6224</b>

### Other useful contacts for information, support or advice:

The Oesophageal Patients Association      **0121 407 9860**  
Macmillan Cancer Support                      **0808 800 1234**

Further information and support can be accessed via the oesophageal patients association:

<http://www.opa.org.uk/>

Alternatively, our staff members will be happy to answer any queries or address any concerns you may have, and can be contacted on the numbers listed on the following page.

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### Other sources of information

More information about oesophageal stents can be found on the British Society of Interventional Radiology's website:

<http://www.bsir.org>

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## Immediately after your stent insertion

You may experience some discomfort in your chest, or between your shoulder blades. This is common and can be managed with painkillers, which should have been given to you when you were discharged. If you find that the pain is unbearable, or getting worse rather than better, do contact your GP or call the radiology department.

You may also find that you are having more heartburn than normal. This can be managed again with medication. You should have been provided with this; however if it continues to bother you or the medication does not help, contact your GP for help.

Some patients feel slightly sick for a few days after the procedure. This should get better. We recommend you take small but frequent meals. If you find it is getting worse or really bothersome, do let your GP or the radiology department know.

## What about food?

On the day of stent insertion, you are allowed to have sips of water or fluid, as long as the doctor is happy for you to do so.

On the second day, you can begin with soft and moist foods, such as soup and porridge.

In the days after that, as you feel more confident, you can slowly increase your intake. It is important that you slowly move

on to more solid but moist food. Make sure that you take regular sips of fluid when you eat.

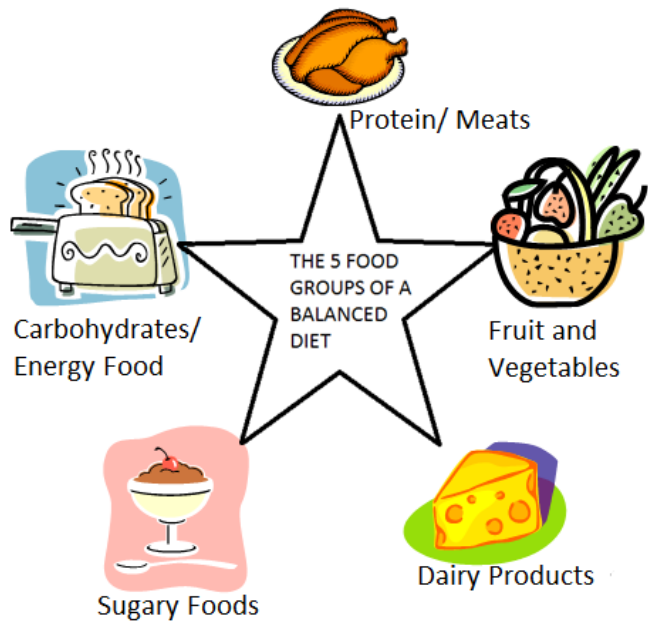
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## Diet

Immediately after insertion of your stent, you should stick to fluids and liquidised foods. This is because your stent is still slowly expanding to its final size.

Once you feel more confident, it is important to move on to more solid and nutritious food.

We recommend you eat a balanced diet, with food from each of the different food groups as shown here in the picture below:




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Space for your own notes

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## Taking your medication

You can still take your medication if it is in small tablet form or can be crushed. Alternatively, speak to your pharmacist to see if a liquid form is available.

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## Complications

### 1. Bleeding

Very rarely, your stent may cause some irritation and bleeding. Contact your GP if you find you are coughing up blood or if you find your stools are black.

### 2. Blockage

Your stent may become blocked by food, by the tumour growing or if the stent moves. If you find that food is not passing through, try not to panic. It may help to take sips of a fizzy drink, and to walk around. **If after three hours you still cannot swallow, contact your GP or specialist nurse to inform them of the problem.**

## Recommended foods

Food Group	Examples
Carbohydrates (energy foods)	Breads: ✓ Toast (well-buttered) Pasta: ✓ Well cooked pasta with plenty of sauce Potato: ✓ Well cooked potatoes, mashed with butter and grated cheese and milk Others: ✓ Well cooked couscous ✓ Oat porridge ✓ Cereals with plenty of milk
Protein (meats, fish and alternatives)	Meat: ✓ Chopped finely and taken with sauce or gravy ✓ Slow cooked to tender and eaten in

	<p>small chunks with sauce or gravy</p> <p>Fish:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Soft fish without bones, with sauce</li> <li>✓ Fish fingers but chopped finely and eaten with plenty of sauce</li> </ul> <p>Egg:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Hard boiled eggs MUST be well mashed or grated with a sauce such as salad cream (see foods to avoid on page 6)</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: right;">3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Fried eggs : only the yolk can be eaten</li> <li>✓ Scrambled eggs</li> <li>✓ Poached eggs</li> </ul> <p>Vegetarian alternatives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Soya mince with sauce</li> <li>✓ Well cooked beans</li> </ul>
Fibre (fruit and vegetables)	<p>Fruit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Fruit juice</li> <li>✓ Soft fruit (peeled)</li> <li>✓ Tinned fruit</li> </ul> <p>Vegetables:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Beans, peas or lentils cooked well into a stew</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Any other vegetables cooked well until soft (stew, soup, casserole)</li> </ul>
Dairy	<p>Milk:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ A fantastic source of protein and calcium – recommended to have a glass daily</li> </ul> <p>Cheese:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Grated</li> <li>✓ Melted into a sauce</li> </ul> <p>Yoghurt:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Smooth yoghurts with no chunks</li> </ul>
Puddings, desserts, sweets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Soft sponge cakes with plenty of custard or cream</li> <li>✓ Ice cream</li> </ul>

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## Eating your food

### Dos

- Aim to eat a balanced diet including food from each food group as shown on page 3 of this booklet.
- Try to eat small but regular meals (six times a day).

- Ensure that you drink at regular intervals while you are eating.
- Take your time and chew the food well.
- Sit upright while eating.
- Eat food that is of soft and moist consistency.
- If you find that you are having problems with acid and heartburn, sleep with two or more pillows to prop you up.

## Don'ts

- Don't rush your food – make time for your meals.
- Don't lie down while eating.
- Don't eat food that is hard, lumpy or dry as it may stick to the stent.
- Don't continue eating if you feel that food is getting stuck in your throat.

## What if I don't feel like eating anything or I am still losing weight?

At times, you may just not feel like eating much at all. If so, or if you find yourself losing weight, here are some tips to increase the nutritional and calorie content of what you eat. This means you get more out of eating in small quantities.

- **Milk**  
Whisk three-four tablespoons of dried milk powder into one pint of full cream milk. You can have this on its own or use this in other milky drinks such as hot chocolate or malty milk drinks if you prefer. We recommend that you take two pints of this fortified milk each day.
- **Grated cheese**  
This is a good addition to foods like soups, mashed potatoes or vegetables to boost their energy content.
- **Cream**  
Adding cream to your food (such as soups, mashed potato and desserts) increases its protein and energy content.



## Foods to avoid

Certain foods are more likely to get stuck due to their texture or consistency. We do not recommend any of the following foods:

- apples (unless peeled and chewed carefully or stewed)
- green salad
- untoasted bread
- fish that may have bones
- tough meats, such as liver and steaks
- raw vegetables
- fruit skins and pips
- dry, puffy or flaky biscuits or pastry
- fried egg white
- hard boiled eggs (unless mashed first or grated with a sauce such as salad cream).

## Suggested meal plans

Any of the food listed in the 'recommended foods' section on page 4 can be used to create a meal. However, if you would still like some ideas for inspiration, here are some suggested meal plans to guide you:

### Breakfast

- Oat porridge
- Creamy, smooth yoghurt, with soft peeled fruit
- Cornflakes in plenty of milk

- Glass of milk or fruit juice or tea.

## Mains

- Roasted meat, chopped finely and served with plenty of sauce or gravy
- Cheese and potato pie
- Corned beef hash
- Poached fish, flaked in sauce
- Casserole with gravy
- Stews with lots of gravy

Served with mashed potato with butter, milk, grated cheese or a combination; and pureed or stewed vegetables.

- Stewed or mashed fruit (e.g. banana) with ice cream or custard
- Sponges with lots of cream or ice cream or custard
- Milk puddings.

## Snacks

- Breakfast cereal with milk
- Toast with lots of butter
- Baked potato (skin removed) with fillings such as grated or cottage cheese, tuna or baked beans
- Digestive biscuits with butter and cheese
- Soup with fortified milk or cream.

## Drinks

It is important that you drink plenty to remain well hydrated. We recommend that you have between six and eight cups of fluid a day, taking regular sips of fluid during your meal.

- Milky drinks such as malted milk drinks, chocolate milk, milky coffees
- Water

## Desserts

- Ice cream (smooth), with fruit puree and cream for extra taste
- Custard
- Mousse

