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Dietary Recommendations for Gastroparesis

Gastroparesis is the medical term for delayed stomach emptying. The purpose of the gastroparesis diet is to reduce symptoms and maintain adequate fluids and nutrition. There are three steps to this diet.

Eating smaller meals and eating more frequently allows the stomach more time to empty.

For example instead of eating 2-3 large meals daily, eat 5-6 small meals per day.

Step 1 consists of liquids, which usually leave the stomach quickly by gravity alone. Liquids prevent dehydration and keep the body supplied with vital salts and minerals. It is inadequate in all nutrients except sodium and potassium, and should not be continued for more than three days. It includes:

- Plain saltine crackers
- Fat-free consommé and bouillon soups
- Gatorade & soft drinks (sipped slowly throughout the day)

Step 2 provides additional calories by adding a small amount of dietary fat. Fatty foods and oils need to be restricted because they delay stomach emptying. However, patients can usually tolerate less than 40 grams by this point. It may be inadequate in Vitamins A & C and the mineral iron. A multivitamin supplement is usually prescribed.

Recommended:

- Skim milk, products made with skim milk, low-fat yogurt, low-fat cheeses
- Fat-free consommé & bouillon soups, fat-free broths containing pasta/noodles and “allowed” vegetables, soups made from skim milk
- Breads & cereals, cream of wheat, pasta, white rice, egg noodles, low-fat crackers
- Eggs, peanut butter (max of 2 Tbsp/day)
- Vegetable juice (tomato, V-8); well-cooked vegetables without skins (squash, beets, carrots, mushrooms, potatoes, spinach, strained tomato sauce, yams)
- Apple juice, cranberry juice, grape juice, prune juice, pineapple, canned fruit without skins (applesauce, peaches, pears)
- Any type of fat, but only in small amounts
- Hard candies, caramels, puddings & custards made from skim milk, frozen yogurt, fruit ice, ice milk, gelatin, jelly, honey, syrups
- Gatorade, soft drinks (sipped slowly throughout day)

Step 3 is designed for long-term maintenance. Fat is limited to 50 grams per day, and fibrous foods are restricted because many plant fibers cannot be digested. It may be inadequate in Vitamins A & C and the mineral iron. A multivitamin supplement is usually prescribed.

Recommended:

- Skim milk, products made with skim milk, low-fat yogurt, low-fat cheeses
- Fat-free consommé & bouillon, fat-free broths containing pasta/noodles and “allowed” vegetables, soups made from skim milk
- Fruit juices, canned fruits without skins (applesauce, peaches, pears)
- Eggs, peanut butter (2 Tbsp/day), poultry, fish, lean ground beef
- Any type of fat, but only in small amounts
- Breads & cereals, cream of wheat, pasta, white rice, egg noodles, low-fat crackers
- Vegetable juices (tomato, V-8), well-cooked vegetables without skins (squash, beets, carrots, mushrooms, potatoes, spinach, strained tomato sauce, yams)
- Hard candies, caramels, puddings & custards made from skim milk, frozen yogurt, fruit ice, ice milk, gelatin, jelly, honey, syrups
- Gatorade, soft drinks (sipped slowly throughout the day), coffee, tea, water [note: non-caloric beverages should be limited if patient cannot maintain adequate caloric intake]
- Eat smaller, more frequent meals- i.e. 5-6 small meals per day instead of 2-3 large meals, so the stomach has more time to empty.

These dietary recommendations are specifically meant for the condition which it treats.