

## Soft Diet Following Surgery

*This guide has been prepared for your use by registered dietitians. If you have questions or concerns, please call the nearest Aurora facility to contact a dietitian. Diet counseling is available to discuss your specific needs.*

### Why follow a soft diet?

The soft diet is used following surgery or for mild stomach problems. It is designed for people who can chew at least soft textures and do not require ground or chopped food.

### Important points to keep in mind

- Each person may tolerate foods differently. Avoid foods that you do not tolerate well, even though they may be allowed.
- If gas or bloating is a problem, limit or avoid raw fruits, raw vegetables and coarse breads and cereals.
- Eat smaller meals more often.
- If nausea and/or vomiting are a problem, try plain crackers or dry toast in small amounts.
- Use little or no seasoning. Highly seasoned foods, strong smelling foods and fried foods may not be well tolerated.
- Foods should be low in fiber.
- As tolerance to foods improves, food choices can gradually be increased to a general diet.

Food Categories	Choose Most Often	May Cause Distress
<b>• Breads, Cereals, Rice, and Pasta</b>		
5 to 8 servings per day 1 serving =  1 slice of bread 1 oz. ready-to-eat cereal ½ cup cooked cereal, rice, or pasta ½ bun, bagel or English muffin 1 small roll, biscuit, or muffin 3 to 4 small or 2 large crackers 1 six-inch tortilla	Enriched white, rye, and refined whole grain breads, soda crackers, graham crackers, rusk, zwieback, matzo, melba toast, dinner rolls  Dry and cooked cereals  Pasta, rice, barley  Plain muffins, pancakes, waffles	Breads, crackers and cereals with nuts or seeds  Seeded breads or crackers  Bran cereal, grape nuts, granola or other coarse cereals  Coarse whole grain products  Fried pastries and doughnuts

Food Groups	Choose Most Often	May Cause Distress
<b>• Vegetables</b>		
<p><i>2 to 3 cups per day</i></p>	<p>Cooked or canned vegetables such as asparagus, green and wax beans, beets, carrots, bean sprouts, peas, parsnips, squash, spinach, zucchini, mushrooms, tomatoes and celery</p> <p>Lettuce and tomatoes as tolerated</p> <p>All vegetable juices</p> <p>Cooked white or sweet potatoes without skin</p>	<p>Raw, fried or gas-producing vegetables (broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, onions, leeks, cauliflower, cucumber, green pepper, rutabagas, turnips, sauerkraut, dried peas and dried beans)</p> <p>Fried potatoes or potato skins</p> <p>Whole kernel corn</p>
<b>• Fruits</b>		
<p><i>1½ to 2 cups per day</i></p>	<p>All fruit juices</p> <p>Cooked, frozen or canned fruits</p> <p>Ripe/soft fruits without seeds</p> <p>Bananas</p> <p>Citrus without membranes</p> <p>Ripe melons</p>	<p>Other fresh or dried fruits and fruits with seeds, such as berries</p>
<b>• Milk, Yogurt and Cheese</b>		
<p><i>3 cups per day</i></p> <p>1 cup milk or yogurt 1½ oz. cheese = 1 cup</p>	<p>All milk and milk drinks</p> <p>Yogurt without seeds, berries or nuts</p> <p>Mild cheese, cottage cheese, plain cream cheese</p> <p>Ice cream, sherbet, custards, and pudding without berries, nuts or seeds</p>	<p>Cheese, yogurt or milk products that contain nuts, seeds or coarse dried fruits</p>
<b>• Meats, Poultry, Fish, Dry Beans and Peas, Eggs and Nuts</b>		
<p><i>5 to 7 ounces per day</i></p> <p>1 ounce = 1 ounce cooked meat <i>or</i> 1 egg, ¼ cup cooked dried beans, 1 Tbsp. peanut butter or ½ cup nuts</p>	<p>All lean, tender meats, fish, poultry and shellfish</p> <p>Meats that are baked, broiled or stewed</p> <p>Eggs and egg substitutes</p> <p>Creamy peanut butter</p> <p>Cooked soybean and other meat substitutes</p> <p>Tofu</p>	<p>Spicy or highly seasoned meats, fried meats and high-fat meats such as luncheon meats, brats, sausages or frankfurters</p> <p>Dried beans and peas</p> <p>Crunchy peanut butter</p>

Food Groups	Choose Most Often	May Cause Distress
<b>• Fats, Snacks, Sweets, Condiments and Beverages</b>		
Use sparingly	Broth, bouillon, mild-flavored soups Mayonnaise, gravies, mild sauces and mild salad dressings Butter, margarine, cream and cream substitute Nonstick vegetable spray Plain cakes and cookies without nuts, coconut, dried fruit or raisins Frozen pops, sherbet, fruit ice, gelatin Clear jelly, honey, syrup, molasses, hard candies, gumdrops and marshmallows Salt, sugar, cinnamon and mild flavorings in moderation Ketchup, mustard	Spicy or highly-seasoned soups Highly-seasoned salad dressings Sweets and desserts that contain nuts or coconut Fried pastries or other high-fat items Strongly-flavored seasonings and condiments (e.g., garlic, chili sauce, chili pepper, horseradish, pickles) Popcorn, nuts and coconut Fried snack foods Alcoholic beverages

**A registered dietitian can help**

Diet counseling with a registered dietitian may include information on:

- Help with label reading, shopping, preparing food, dining out and adjusting recipes
- Combining other diet restrictions if necessary

**For a list of Aurora facilities with a dietitian,  
please call Aurora Health Care toll free at 888-863-5502.**

*The information presented is intended for general information and educational purposes. It is not intended to replace the advice of your health care provider. Contact your health care provider if you believe you have a health problem. Aurora Health Care is a not-for-profit health care provider and a national leader in efforts to improve the quality of health care.*