

## Gastroparesis Nutrition Therapy

Gastroparesis means slow stomach emptying. This happens when the nerves that send messages to your stomach are damaged or do not work properly. You might have a range of symptoms: bloating, fullness, stomach pain, nausea or vomiting.

The purpose of a special diet is to reduce the symptoms of gastroparesis while making sure you get all the nutrients you need and maintain your weight. It is important to schedule an appointment with a GI dietitian for a personalized plan.

### TIPS

- Eat small amounts throughout the day (4-6 small meals/snacks)
  - Use a small salad sized plate rather than a dinner plate
  - If decreasing the amount of food does not work, or if symptoms are severe, try liquid-type foods or purees.
  - Protein shakes (store bought or homemade) can be used as a meal replacement when solid foods are not tolerated.
- Chew foods well. This reduces the amount of work for your stomach.
- Reduce fiber. Fiber is hard work for the stomach and takes longer to empty.
  - Examples of high fiber foods: whole grains, oatmeal, brown rice, quinoa, nuts and seeds, legumes, beans, corn, raw vegetables, Brussels sprouts, cauliflower, broccoli, kale, fruit skin and seeds, oranges, pineapple, dried fruit, coconuts. Avoid large salads. Choose smaller sized salads with butter lettuce or baby spinach.
  - Do not take fiber supplements unless directed by your physician or dietitian.
- Eat protein-rich foods first and include protein with each meal and snack.
- Drink fluids apart from meals if you get full too quickly. Use low-sugar electrolyte beverages to stay hydrated.
- Avoid GI irritants: overly acidic, spicy, fried and/or greasy foods
- Sit upright while eating and remain upright for at least 2 hours to prevent reflux or regurgitation. Take a walk after meals.
- Slow down at mealtimes, relax, and practice mindful eating

### RECOMMENDED FOODS TO GET STARTED

- Soft protein-rich foods. Meats are most easily digested when prepared at low cooking temperatures, using moist cooking techniques. Consider using a slow-cooker, stewing, braising or poaching.
  - Good choices: fish, nitrate-free deli meats, stewed meats, ground lean meats, plain yogurt, eggs, custards, cottage cheese, smooth nut or seed butters

- Cooked or blended veggies. Vegetables should be well-cooked or well blended with seeds and skins removed.
  - Good choices: carrots, zucchini, green beans, sweet potato, winter squash, blended spinach or other greens
- Soft fruits. Fruits should be peeled with seeds removed.
  - Good choices: canned peaches or pears packed in water, unsweetened applesauce, banana, apple, pear, peach or other stone fruits.
- Shakes with whey or plant-based protein
- Soups and broths

## GASTROPARESIS SAMPLE MENU

<b>Breakfast</b>	2 eggs (add cooked veggies if tolerated) 1 slice sourdough toast with butter
<b>Snack</b>	Shake: 1 banana, ½ cup plain Greek yogurt, 1 cup milk or dairy-free beverage, optional cocoa powder and ice – blend, strain if necessary
<b>Lunch</b>	Tacos: 1-2 small tortillas, ground turkey, cheese, bib lettuce, cilantro
<b>Snack</b>	2 Tbsp smooth nut butter with peeled apple or rice crackers
<b>Dinner</b>	Baked fish or slow-cooked chicken in broth, mashed potatoes with gravy, cooked carrots and zucchini
<b>Snack</b>	½ cup pudding, custard or sorbet

## GASTROPARESIS SAMPLE LIQUID DIET

<b>Meats, fish, poultry, eggs</b>	Blend with broths, water, milk or cream, vegetable or V-8 juice, tomato sauce, gravies. Soft cooked eggs or eggs baked in custards. Stir eggs into boiling soup for added protein.
<b>Vegetables</b>	Blend with water, tomato juice, broth, or use puree baby vegetables – strain and thin as needed
<b>Starches</b>	Blend potatoes, pasta, or rice with soups, broth, milk, or gravies. Use hot cereals such as Cream of Wheat or rice, grits, instant quinoa or oat flakes. *Add whole milk, cream, butter, coconut cream, rice milk, honey, molasses or premade protein shakes for extra calories.

<b>Fruits</b>	Blend fruits with their own juices, water, or puree baby fruits – strain and thin as needed
<b>Mixed dishes</b>	Lasagna, stew, chili, spaghetti, stir fry – add adequate hot liquid of your choice, blend well and strain as needed

## **SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Gastroparesis diets must be individualized. This is because every case is different, and the degree of gastroparesis may range from severe to mild.

In addition, you may have another medical condition that needs to be considered. For example, if you have diabetes, you will need to make food choices that balance blood sugar and gastroparesis symptom reduction.

## **RESOURCES**

Association of Gastrointestinal Motility Disorders, Inc. (AGMD) [www.agmdgimotility.org](http://www.agmdgimotility.org)

Gastroparesis Dysmotility Association: [www.digestivedistress.com](http://www.digestivedistress.com)

University of Virginia Health System, Digestive Health Center website:  
[www.GInutrition.virginia.edu](http://www.GInutrition.virginia.edu) > Patient education Materials: Gastroparesis