

Dietary and Oral Hygiene Advice Following Oral Surgery

It is important to that you have adequate nutrition for recovery and healing after surgery.

Oral surgery can cause jaw stiffness, swelling and discomfort causing difficulty in coping with your normal diet. You should restrict yourself to liquids and soft foods for the first 4 to 7 days, and then gradually return to your normal diet as soon as you can however soft foods such as ice creams and yoghurts may be more comfortable for the first couple of days. A small amount of weight loss is expected.

It is important to ensure that you consume a variety of foods to provide your body with the nutrients it requires. These food groups are:

- Milk, and Milk Products
- Meat, Poultry, Fish, Eggs
- Cereals
- Fruits and Vegetables
- Fats and Oils

Many everyday foods can be made softer by mashing, mincing or blending them. However, remember that when you blend food, liquid must be added, so you may feel full before you have eaten the amount of food you would have had in a solid meal therefore it is important to eat small amounts more often, i.e. Breakfast, morning tea, lunch, afternoon tea, dinner and supper. Also it is essential to drink plenty of fluids; water, juice, milk, cordial.

A liquid diet is generally lower in fibre than a regular diet; in that case we recommend a fibre supplement. You can try Metamucil, Fybogel or Benefibre, which dissolves completely and can be added to various liquid foods to increase fibre intake.

If you need semi-solid food and a blending machine is not available, then commercial baby food can be used, or food can be rubbed through a sieve.

Here are some food ideas to get you started.

- Smoothies – Milk, yoghurt, ice cream and fruit can be added to smoothies to increase their nutritional value and make them more filling.
- Porridge – Porridge is high in fibre and has a low Glycemic Index which makes you feel fuller for longer. You can add milk, stewed fruit and fibre powder to porridge.
- Cereals – Weet-Bix and All Bran with milk and fruit is a good breakfast idea.
- Milk Drinks – Milo, Actavite, Sustagen and Up and Go
- Custards – with added pureed fruit is a good morning snack.
- Pureed Fruit – Can be bought or made using apples, pears, banana, peaches, mangoes, or any combination. A small amount of water will need to be added in order to get a smooth consistency.
- Yoghurt – Pureed fruit and cereals can be added to yoghurts to make it more filling and tasty.
- Eggs – Scrambled, add milk and a small amount of butter as well as some herbs for a tasty and filling meal. Poached eggs are also a good option as they too are soft.
- Soups – Either tinned or home made. If homemade, minced meat and vegies can be added to soups for extra protein and blended to make it easier to eat.
- Mashed potato – Add milk and butter for creamy mashed potato, serve with gravy for extra flavour. Sweet potato is also a tasty alternative.
- Steamed Vegetables – If cooked until soft can be mashed up for easier eating, choose a variety of vegetables to keep it interesting

It is best to vary the foods that you eat, to try a bit of everything, that way your body will get a variety of different vitamins, minerals and nutrients that it needs. Also it will stop you from becoming bored and dissatisfied with the diet.

Oral Hygiene

Do not rinse your mouth or brush your teeth for the first 6 hours after oral surgery. After that, rinse gently with warm salt water (1/2 tsp. salt in a glass of warm water) every 4 hours. Brush your teeth gently, but avoid the area of surgery for the first 2 days.