



A/PROF CHRISTOPHER LIM
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HEPATOBIILIARY, PANCREATIC,
UPPER GI & GENERAL SURGEON



AFTER SURGERY: HIATUS HERNIA REPAIR

PAIN MANAGEMENT

- Some pain and discomfort are normal after surgery.
- Take paracetamol and anti-inflammatories as directed. Use opioids only if needed for breakthrough pain and stop as soon as possible.
- A nerve block given during surgery will help reduce pain for the first day.
- Simple measures like rolling onto your side before sitting up from can be helpful
- Pain should steadily improve each day

WOUND CARE

- Stitches are dissolvable. Do not pick at the skin glue; it will slough off over time.
- Shower as usual but avoid baths or submerging wounds for at least 2 weeks.

RETURN TO DAILY ACTIVITIES

- Light walking is encouraged from day one to help recovery and prevent blood clots.
- You may return to sedentary work after 1–2 weeks, depending on comfort.
- Do not drive for at least 7 days. Only drive when you can move freely, wear a seatbelt, and perform an emergency stop.
- Avoid heavy lifting, strenuous activity, or sports for 4 weeks.
- Listen to your body and increase activities gradually.

WATCH OUT FOR:

- Chest pain, shortness of breath
- Inability to swallow, uncontrolled nausea and inability to maintain a decent oral intake, severe or increasing pain, abdominal distension
- Fever >38°C, trouble urinating, or wound issues (redness, swelling, discharge).

CONTACT US ON: (02) 6196 6776

IN AN EMERGENCY: Call 000 or go to your nearest Emergency Department



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DIET

After surgery, the passage from your oesophagus to your stomach will be swollen and irritated. Adjusting the texture and type of food you eat will help reduce pain, discomfort, and bloating. Your oesophagus will gradually adapt, allowing a return to a normal diet.

General guidelines

- Eat and drink slowly. Avoid gulping
- Eat 6 – 8 small meals
- Avoid fizzy drinks, chewing gum or drinking through straws to reduce bloating/gas
- Choose nourishing drinks like milkshakes, smoothies, or nutritional supplements over tea, coffee, or alcohol.
- Sit upright when eating and remain upright for 30 minutes after meals
- Chew food well and avoid tough meats, raw fruits/vegetables, and plain bread initially.
- Maintain a balanced diet with a variety of foods as you progress

Diet progression stages

Please use in conjunction with table on page 3.

Days 1-3: FLUID DIET. You will begin with a free fluid diet while in hospital

Days 3-14: PUREED/MASHED DIET. If swallowing fluids is comfortable, you may progress to a pureed or mashed diet.

Days 14-28: SOFT DIET. If you tolerate the pureed diet well, you can move to a soft diet. If you experience any pain or discomfort, return to the previous diet texture and try again later.

After 4 weeks: REGULAR DIET. If you feel no pain or discomfort on the soft diet, you may gradually return to your regular diet when advised by your surgeon.

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Food Group	Fluid Diet 2-3 days (or as tolerated)	Pureed Diet for 2 Weeks (or as tolerated)	Soft Diet for 2 Weeks then transition to a normal diet
Bread, Cereals, Rice, Pasta, Noodles	Strained porridge or semolina made on milk. May add pasta and rice to soups but blend to a smooth fluid consistency	Smooth, lump-free cereals (e.g., porridge or cereal softened with milk) May add pasta and rice to soups – blend to a smooth consistency	Porridge or cereal softened with milk. Well cooked pasta and rice (Avoid plain breads, doughnuts, crackers, coarse/dry cereals)
Meat, Fish, Poultry, Eggs, Nuts, Legumes	Add, fish, and legumes to soups – blend to a smooth fluid consistency. Egg flips	Pureed meat, fish, poultry and legumes with gravy/sauce e.g. pureed casserole. Scrambled eggs	Soft, cooked meat, fish, and poultry with gravy/sauce e.g. casseroles, mince. All eggs. Baked beans Well-cooked lentils Soft tofu (Avoid solid meat, dry fish, raw nuts or seeds for 4 weeks)
Vegetables, Legumes	Vegetable juice Add vegetables and legumes to soups – blend to a smooth fluid consistency	Vegetable juice Pureed or mashed vegetables (using milk and butter)	Vegetable juice Mashed or soft cooked vegetables (Avoid raw vegetables, fibrous veg including corn and broccoli stalks).
Fruit	Fruit juice Add fruit to milkshakes – blend to a smooth fluid consistency.	Fruit juice Pureed or mashed canned, stewed or soft fresh fruits	Fruit juice Canned, stewed or soft fresh fruits e.g. banana, paw paw, mango, pear, watermelon. (Avoid fibrous fruit like pineapple, raw apples)
Milk, Yoghurt, Cheese	Milk, drinking yoghurt	Milk, cheese spread, plain yoghurt (No fruit/muesli/nuts) , ice creams	Milk, yoghurts, custards, soft cheese (Avoid hard cheeses)
Extra foods	Thin custard, plain ice cream, jelly, cordial, Milo™, flavoured milk	Mousse, crème caramel, flavoured milk, butter, baked egg custard	Creamed rice, biscuits dunked to soften, cake served with ice cream or custard, chocolate (Avoid hard lollies, dry cookies & biscuits, popcorn)

Modified version of the consensus document from Dietitian/Nutritionists from the Nutrition Education Materials Online, "NEMO", team.

https://www.health.qld.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0033/149685/gastro-fundo.pdf

