

Stoma Blog

Intro

Many people with stomas are told to eat refined, processed and white foods as a way to decrease blockages and manage the stoma.

The problem with many highly processed diets is that they are lacking in the nutrients we need for healing, gut health, and general wellbeing, as well as being high in processed sugars, additives and harmful fats.

We need specific nutrients for healing, energy, immunity, hormonal health and digestion and it's vital that we get this from the foods we eat.

In this blog, I aim to give you some simple information about how you can balance your diet, while still managing your stoma. With an aim to increase nutritious foods, support digestion and reduce inflammation.

Everyone is different, so find what works for you

Dietary advice can vary depending on where your stoma is fitted, and what you can personally tolerate. You may also find that you tolerate different foods depending on where you are in your journey.

This guide will help you to understand the importance of specific foods, but essentially you will need to work out what is best for you.

Mediterranean Diet & root vegetables

We need to aim for plenty of colour on our plate to help provide antioxidants, vitamins, minerals, and healthy fibre to keep our bowels healthy.

The Mediterranean diet is based on the traditional cuisines of countries that border the Mediterranean Sea such as Greece and Italy.

The diet is high in plant-based foods such as whole grains, vegetables, legumes, fruits, seeds, nuts, herbs, fish, and olive oil.

Let's break it down and start to think about the foods that you might be able to tolerate.

Vegetables:

If you don't currently eat many vegetables, you will need to start building them up slowly to decrease any symptoms you may incur.

Some green leafy green vegetables such as kale or cabbage can cause gas and can be quite fibrous and hard to break down. Try including softer greens such as spinach and rocket but be aware that too many greens may lead to loose stools.

Root vegetables are a great source of fibre which helps to reduce constipation and feed the beneficial bacteria in the gut. Try including carrots, parsnips, butternut squash and sweet potato.

Next aim for a rainbow on your plate, try to include as many different coloured vegetables as you can.

Wholegrains contain important nutrients such as B vitamins which are needed for energy, vitamin E which is important for immunity and healthy skin, and magnesium which is needed for energy production, sleep, and relaxation.

Brown basmati rice is generally well tolerated, quinoa is a great grain as it is high in protein. Pasta is available in many different types such as buckwheat, brown rice and wholegrain and this can also be varied to increase nutrient intake.

Legumes and beans can cause bloating and excess gas in some people, but it is worth experimenting with these. Bean pate and hummus is often well tolerated. Smaller beans such as aduki beans and mung beans, as well as red lentils tend to cook down well, and can be used in soups, stews and added to dishes such as Bolognese and bean chilli. Legumes are high in protein, which is needed for healing, to help stabilise energy levels and for normal cell growth. They also contain quality fibres that help to reduce cholesterol and feed beneficial bacteria in our gut.

Oats are a lovely grain to include as they are very soothing for an inflamed gut. Porridge is a great way to start the day, a small amount of cinnamon sprinkled on top can add sweetness.

Nuts and seeds:

These can be problematic when eaten whole and can often lead to blockages. You may want to consider using nut butters such as cashew, almond, and peanut. These can be spread on wholemeal bread or oat cakes, or you can add a dollop to your morning porridge. If you have a coffee grinder you can also grind nuts and seeds and add these to your porridge. Nuts and seeds contain nutrients such as magnesium, vitamin E and B-vitamins, as well as protein, fibre, and good quality fats.

Cooking methods

You may find that you tolerate food more when it has been well cooked. Stews and thick soups are a great way to ensure that plant fibres are well broken down. A slow cooker is a great way to introduce well cooked foods and provides easy meal options for busy days.

Stewed apples for gut health

Stewed apples have been shown to contain many benefits such as reducing inflammation, feeding beneficial gut bacteria, support immunity and even improve mood! Try cubing some organic apples with their skin on. Steam in a pan with a small amount of water and the lid on. Once softened the apples can be blended and placed in a mason jar to cool (keeping the water which will be full of nutrients). The apple puree will keep in the fridge for a week or so and can be added to plain yoghurt, porridge or used as a sweetener when baking.

Healthy fats

Fats are needed for hormone production, brain and joint health and support energy and cell function. We need to ensure we have the right fats in our diets. Processed foods such as cakes, pastries, biscuits, and shop bought bread contain unhealthy fats which result in inflammation within the body.

Focusing on healthy fats helps to reduce inflammation and supports the bodies healing processes. And contrary to popular belief, fats don't make you fat. Sugar and processed carbohydrates do!

Healthy fats include avocado, oily fish, nuts, and seeds (these can be ground or use nut butters), coconut oil and olive oil

A little about me

I am Sarah Cox, Nutritional Therapist and Health Coach.

I specialise in digestive health disorders, and I am passionate about using simple, nutritious foods to support health and wellbeing.

If you would like to learn more, please do check out my website

www.brighternutrition.co.uk

Email me on sarah@brighternutrition.co.uk

You can also join my Facebook group 'The Digestive Health Hub'

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/2474482889517140>