

Managing Your High Output Ostomy

There are a few extra things to keep in mind if you are following the Lyfe^{MD} program and have a high output ostomy. Patients just like you have found output management relies on 3 key factors:



If your ostomy output is more than 2000 mL a day, you have a high output ostomy. Follow the guidelines below and talk to your gastroenterologist. If your output is less than this, focus on the general Lyfe^{MD} guidelines.

Hydration: Drink the right type of fluids.

Step 1: Figure out how much oral rehydration solution (ORS) you need to drink.

- Aim for 50% of your output PLUS an extra 500-1000 mL.
- For example: If your output is 3000 mL/day, 50% of this is 1500 mL PLUS 500 to 1000mL is 2000-2500 mL. This means you should try to drink 2000-2500 mL of ORS each day.

Step 2: Figure out how much other liquid you should drink.

- Replace the other 50% of your output with liquids of your choice, to a maximum of 1000 mL.
- For example: If your output is 3000 mL/day, 50% of this would be 1500 mL but you should only drink 1000 mL of other liquids with your 2000-2500 mL of ORS.

My ostomy output is: _____ mL.

Half of this amount is: _____ mL. **This is the amount of other fluids I need (maximum of 1000 mL).**

PLUS 500 to 1000 mL is: _____ mL. **This is the amount of oral rehydration solution I need daily.**

- Do not limit your total fluid intake to control your output. This can lead to dehydration.
- Avoid drinks high in sugar. This includes juice, pop, sweetened coffee or tea and regular sugar sports drinks. The high amount of sugar in these drinks will dehydrate you and increase your output.
- Limit dairy drinks (i.e., milk, liquid yogurt) and caffeinated drinks (i.e., coffee, tea, pop, energy drinks) to 250 mL of each daily.

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Oral Rehydration Solutions (ORS): ORS includes low sugar sports drinks, store bought electrolyte replacements or homemade recipes (see below). The specific salt and sugar amounts in these drinks help fluids absorb in your gut and replaces electrolytes lost in your output. If using low sugar sports drinks, add 1 tsp (5 mL) salt for every 1000 mL you drink.

Homemade ORS Recipe:

- 4 cups (1000 mL) water
- 1 cup (250 mL) orange juice
- ½ tsp (2 mL) salt
- ½ tsp (2 mL) baking soda

Combine all ingredients and store in a clean container in the fridge for up to 1 week.

Nutrition: Replace your electrolytes

You lose electrolytes like sodium and potassium in your ostomy output. It is important to eat the right foods even when you use an oral rehydration solution.

Potassium

Choose at least 2 servings of potassium rich foods every day. High potassium options that fit well with the Lyfe^{MD} eating plan include:

- 1 small banana
- 1 medium white or sweet potato, peeled
- 1/3 avocado
- 1 large orange
- ½ cup (125 mL) beets
- ¾ cup (175 mL) beans, peas or lentils
- ¼ cup (60 mL) nuts or seeds or 2 Tbsp (30 mL) nut butters
- ½ cup (125 mL) homemade tomato sauces
- 1 cup (250 mL) coconut water

Sodium

- Increase sodium intake by adding extra table salt to your Lyfe^{MD} eating plan foods.
- A product called “half-salt” has both sodium and potassium and is another good option to add to meals.
- Limit processed food (e.g. deli meat, salty snacks, canned and frozen meals) and restaurant meals to 2 times a week. These foods are low in nutrients and can make symptoms worse.
- Another option is to take salt tablets as a medication. Talk to your doctor if you are interested in this.

Nutrition: Eat more soluble fibre and resistant starch

Soluble Fibre

Soluble fibre works with water to form a gel and thicken stool. Choose foods high in this type of fibre to firm up your stool and decrease output.

Try to include at least 10 g of soluble fibre each day. The Lyfe^{MD} eating plan foods below are good sources of soluble fibre. Each serving has about 2g of soluble fibre.

- 1 cup (250 mL) cooked oatmeal
- 2 medium bananas
- 2 medium apples, peeled
- ½ cup (125 mL) peeled white or sweet potatoes
- ½ avocado
- ½ cup (125 mL) cooked beans or chickpeas
- 1 medium orange or grapefruit (membranes removed)
- 1 cup (250 mL) cooked carrots or beets

Resistant Starch

Eat at least 1-2 cups (250-500 mL) of high resistant starch foods each day. Resistant starch also helps to reduce ostomy output and promote gut health. Some foods are rich in both soluble fibre and resistant starch. It is important to meet targets for both each day. Resistant starch rich foods include:

- Oats
- White rice
- Potatoes
- Beans/lentils
- Bananas or plantains

Cook and cool these foods before you eat them to increase the resistant starch content. They can be reheated again before you eat them.

Insoluble Fibre

Limit foods high in insoluble fibre by following the ideas below. Insoluble fibre adds bulk to stool and can increase output. These foods may also increase risk for a bowel obstruction.

- Whole grains (whole wheat bread, brown rice, bran, popcorn): choose white grain products instead of whole wheat.
- Skins and seeds of fruits/vegetables: remove skins and seeds if you can or choose options with a lower seed content. Avoid tough or stringy parts of fruit and vegetables (e.g. citrus membranes, broccoli stems, celery).
- Leafy green vegetables: Greens provide good nutrients so have them in small amounts, rather than removing them fully. Cook them well and avoid tough stems/ stalks.
- Dried fruit: choose soft, peeled fresh fruit over dried fruit.
- Nuts and seeds: choose nut butters or powders rather than whole nuts or seeds.



Nutrition: Two helpful tips for mealtimes

Do not eat solids and liquids at the same time

Sip fluids slowly and separate solids from liquids by at least 30 minutes.

Drinking liquids with meals can increase how fast food moves through your gut. Avoid drinking liquids during meals to help slow this movement. This allows more time for the nutrients from your meal to be absorbed.

Chew food really well

Chewing breaks food down like a grinder. This makes it easier for your body to absorb vitamins, minerals and other nutrients lower down in the gut.

Nutrition: Limit lactose containing foods

Limit lactose if you have trouble managing output. Lactose is a type of sugar found in dairy.

- Try unsweetened fortified plant-based milks such as almond, soy or oat milk.
- Dairy products like firm cheeses (cheddar, swiss, parmesan) and yogurt are lower in lactose than milk, cream or ice cream and may be easier on your gut. Limit these to one serving each day.
- Look for lactose free versions of your favourite dairy products (e.g. lactose free milk or lactose free yogurt).

Medication and Supplements

Medications

Medications can help control your output if it cannot be controlled with hydration and diet.

- Loperamide (Imodium) is offered over the counter and works to slow gut movement. This allows your body to absorb more fluid from stool before it reaches your ostomy. Start with 1 tablet twice daily and increase slowly as needed, up to 6-8 tablets daily.

Supplements

- Take a chewable multivitamin every day.
- Talk to your doctor about monitoring your calcium and vitamin D levels. You may need to take extra supplements.
- Try a fibre supplement that has psyllium or inulin to thicken stool (e.g. Benefibre, Metamucil). Mix 2 tsp (10 mL) into 250 mL liquid until dissolved. Take up to three times a day. Start small and increase the amount slowly.

Other prescription medications are available to help reduce output. Talk to your gastroenterologist about these options.