



Patient Education Sheet
Dumping Syndrome & Gastric Bypass Surgery

What is “Dumping Syndrome?”

Dumping Syndrome consists of a group of symptoms that can occur after gastric bypass surgery. After gastric bypass surgery, the stomach is no longer used, a new small pouch has been created. This new small pouch is directly connected to the small intestine. Sometimes, you may experience a rapid emptying or “dumping” of undigested food from the pouch into the small intestine. (This is most likely to happen after eating foods containing sugar.) The body responds by rushing a large amount of fluid into the intestine in order to try to dilute the dumped food. This causes many symptoms that can be very uncomfortable such as sweating, palpitations, lightheadedness, nausea & vomiting.

Types of Dumping Syndrome:

There are two types of Dumping syndrome early and late.

Early Dumping – usually occurs within 15-30 minutes after eating but can occur up to 60 minutes after a meal. It happens when the small intestine fills too quickly with undigested food from the pouch. This may cause bowel distention, plus a rapid movement of fluid into the intestine in an effort to dilute the intestinal contents.

Symptoms include

- abdominal bloating
- abdominal pain/cramping
- flushing
- rapid heart rate (palpitations)
- Light headedness
- fatigue
- nausea/vomiting
- sweating
- dizziness
- diarrhea

Late Dumping – is a form of low blood sugar (hypoglycemia). It usually occurs one to three hours after a meal. After the ingestion of sugar, blood glucose may rise rapidly because the small intestine is very effective at absorbing sugar. The pancreas responds by increasing the production of insulin causing blood sugar to drop quickly. This may lead to hypoglycemia (low blood sugar) which may cause weakness, sleepiness, and extreme tiredness it may also stimulate appetite.

Symptoms include

- weakness, fatigue
- dizziness, lightheadedness
- fainting
- shakiness
- anxiety
- sweating
- diarrhea
- rapid heart rate (palpitations)
- low blood sugar (hypoglycemia)

This process can also cause a cycle of eating. If a person takes in larger amounts of foods closely related to sugar (such as refined carbohydrates) they can experience hypoglycemia 1-2 hours after eating. This stimulates appetite, and the person takes in more food and so on.

How can I prevent dumping?

Keeping to the proper diet is the key to preventing dumping syndrome. The good news is that the foods that can cause dumping (mainly sugars, sweets and simple, refined carbohydrates such as white rice, white crackers, white bread) are foods that offer little in the way of nutrition and are best avoided on a weight loss diet.

About 8 out of 10 gastric bypass patients experience dumping. For some patients their tolerance to foods that cause these symptoms may improve over time. This means that some patients who cannot tolerate sugar immediately after surgery may be able to tolerate small amounts of sugar several years after the surgery.

Treatment / Prevention

1. Avoid added sugars in food and beverages – Be sure to read the ingredient list and avoid foods & beverages which contain the following sugar sources within the first 3-5 ingredients:

- Honey
- Sugar
- Cane sugar
- Stevia

- High fructose corn syrup
- Molasses
- Cane juice
- Corn syrup

2. Avoid refined carbohydrates. Choose high fiber, whole grain versions of grains, breads and cereals. Remember to follow the bariatric portion sizes.

Instead of this	Try this
White bread	Whole wheat bread
White rice	Brown rice
White pasta	Whole wheat pasta
White crackers	Wholegrain crackers or Wasa Crisp Crackers

3. Eat five or six small meals per day.
4. Include a good source of protein with all meals and snacks.
5. Do not drink fluids with your meals. Wait at least 30 minutes to drink beverages after your meals.
6. Avoid high-fat, greasy foods.
7. Lie down after eating – this may help food to pass through more slowly.

Any questions or problems please call:
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