What is gastroparesis?

Gastroparesis means delayed emptying of the stomach.

This disorder affects how you digest your food. The movement of food through the stomach slows or may stop. The symptoms vary from day to day.

What are the signs of gastroparesis?

Signs may include:

- Nausea (sick feeling in your stomach) and vomiting (throwing up)
- Heartburn
- Bloating, belching
- Feeling full quickly
- Decreased appetite
- Weight loss
- Feeling tired
- Big changes in blood sugar levels.

What can I do to reduce symptoms?

- Eat 4 to 6 small meals a day.
- Eat less than 10 grams of fiber per day. Avoid high-fiber foods such as cabbage and broccoli. These stay in the stomach longer.
- Eat less of high-fat foods, including vegetable oils. High-fat foods leave the stomach more slowly.
- Take food supplements for extra calories and protein. (For examples Ensure, Glucerna or Carnation Instant Breakfast). Start with a brand that has 10 grams of fat or less per serving. You may slowly add higher-fat drinks, if your body can handle them.
- Chew your food well. Ground or pureed meats may be easier to digest.
- Sit up while eating. Do not lie down for at least 1 hour after meals.
- Take an easy walk after a meal. Regular, light exercise helps move food out of the stomach.
- Do not drink liquids with meals. Drink them between meals.
• Avoid stress. Stress can bring on or make symptoms worse.

• Keep a record of foods that cause problems. Try to avoid those foods.

• Talk to your doctor about all medicines and over-the-counter products you take. Some of them may slow your digestion.

• Eat foods with little odor, if food odors cause nausea. It may help to eat cold foods (such as sandwiches) or to cook meat outdoors.

• Avoid smoking, alcohol, caffeine, spicy foods and mint. These things may irritate your stomach and cause heartburn.

• Manage your blood sugar if you have diabetes. Let your doctor know if your blood sugar is often over 200.

Is there a diet that helps?

The diet that helps is different for each person. You will learn what works for you through trial and error.

There are four stages of eating. If your symptoms are severe, try starting at stage 1. If you have less severe symptoms, start at stage 2 or 3. Move through each stage as you are able.

If you have trouble with a stage, try going back to an earlier stage.

Stage 1: Liquids

Drink liquids slowly throughout the day. Drink only low-fat liquids that agree with you. You may eat plain crackers.

Stage 2: Pureed foods

Eat pureed foods. You can puree stage-3 and -4 foods in your blender. You may need to blend solid foods with a liquid.

Stage 3: Soft foods low in fat and fiber

Eat soft foods low in fiber. Begin to add a small amount of fat (less than 40 grams per day).

Stage 4: Solid foods low in fat and fiber

Begin to eat solid foods. This diet is long-term. Limit high-fiber foods and fat (50 grams per day).

If you need to gain weight, a diet low in fat or carbohydrates is not advised. Talk to your doctor or dietitian about adding extra calories to your diet.
### Foods for Stage 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Food group</th>
<th>Recommended</th>
<th>Limited</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Starches</strong></td>
<td>Cream of wheat, pasta, white rice, egg noodles, low-fat crackers</td>
<td>Oatmeal; whole-grain rice, cereals and breads</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fruits</strong></td>
<td>Canned fruit without skin; apple juice, cranberry juice, grape juice, prune juice</td>
<td>Canned fruit with skin; all fresh and dried fruits; citrus juices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Vegetables</strong></td>
<td>Vegetable juice; most well-cooked vegetables without skin</td>
<td>Raw vegetables; any vegetables with skin; cooked broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, cauliflower, celery, corn, onion, peas; sauerkraut</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Milk products</strong></td>
<td>Yogurt, low-fat cheese, skim milk and products made with skim milk</td>
<td>Whole milk, cream, half and half</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Soups</strong></td>
<td>Fat-free bouillon; soups made from skim milk; broths with pasta and allowed vegetables</td>
<td>Soups made with heavy cream, whole milk or broths made with fat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Desserts and sweets</strong></td>
<td>Hard candies, caramels; puddings and custards made from skim milk; frozen yogurt, fruit ice, ice milk; gelatin, jelly, honey, syrups</td>
<td>High-fat desserts (cakes, pies, cookies, pastries, ice cream); fruit jams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fats and oils</strong></td>
<td>Any fat in small amounts</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Proteins</strong></td>
<td>Eggs; peanut butter (2 tablespoons per day)</td>
<td>Beef, poultry, pork; dried peas, beans or lentils</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Foods for Stage 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Food group</th>
<th>Recommended</th>
<th>Limited</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Starches</strong></td>
<td>All breads, cereals and pasta not listed at right</td>
<td>High-fiber, whole-grain breads and cereals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fruits</strong></td>
<td>All fruits and juices not listed at right</td>
<td>Fruits with skin, raspberries, strawberries, blackberries, coconut, figs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Vegetables</strong></td>
<td>Vegetable juices; most well-cooked vegetables; raw vegetables not listed at right</td>
<td>Vegetables with skins; raw or cooked cabbage, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, celery, pea pods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Milk products</strong></td>
<td>Yogurt, low-fat cheese, skim milk and products made with skim milk</td>
<td>Whole milk, cream, half and half</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Soups</strong></td>
<td>All soups that agree with you</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Desserts and sweets</strong></td>
<td>Hard candies, caramels; puddings and custards made from skim milk; frozen yogurt, fruit ice, ice milk; gelatin, jelly, honey, syrups</td>
<td>High-fat desserts (cakes, cookies, ice cream, pastries, pies); fruit jams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fats and oils</strong></td>
<td>All fats that agree with you (in small amounts)</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Proteins</strong></td>
<td>Eggs, peanut butter, poultry, fish, lean ground beef</td>
<td>Tough meats (steaks, roasts, chops); dried beans, peas and lentils</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sample meal plan for Stage 4

**Breakfast**
- 1 cup Cream of Wheat
- 1 slice white toast
- 1 tablespoon peanut butter

**Morning snack**
- 6 ounces low-fat yogurt
- ½ banana

**Lunch**
- 8 ounces nutritional drink (such as Ensure, Glucerna, Carnation Instant Breakfast or Slim-Fast)
- ½ cup pasta
- 1 tablespoon fat-free Parmesan cheese
- 1 tablespoon low-fat butter

**Afternoon snack**
- ½ cup canned peaches
- ¼ cup low-fat cottage cheese

**Dinner**
- 2 ounces chicken or fish
- ½ cup cooked squash
- ½ to 1 cup mashed potatoes

**Evening snack**
- 1 cup low-fat pudding or frozen yogurt

**Liquids between meals**
Vegetable juice, Crystal Light, water mixed with fruit juice.

**Total menu:**
- 1630 calories
- 10 grams of fiber
- 49 grams of fat
- 71 grams of protein

**Resources**