



Liver reduction diet for before your surgery

Information for patients from General Surgery

Your surgeon has asked you to follow a liver reduction diet before your procedure. This leaflet will explain the following.

- Why this diet has been recommended for you.
- What a liver reduction diet is.
- What the side effects could be.
- Plus, it gives an example of a possible diet plan.

We hope the leaflet will help to answer some of the questions you may have. If you have any further questions or concerns, please speak to your surgeon.

Why do I need to follow a liver reduction diet?

Your surgeon feels you would benefit from this diet. They want to make sure you can have laparoscopic rather than open surgery.

- **Laparoscopic surgery** means keyhole surgery. It allows a surgeon to use small cuts and a camera for procedures inside the tummy or pelvis.
- **Open surgery** means cutting the skin and tissues, so the surgeon has a full view of the structures or organs involved.

The main benefits to having a laparoscopic instead of open surgery.

- Smaller cuts, which mean less pain and less blood loss.
- Speedier recovery after surgery, and quicker return to normal activities.

However, if your liver is too big it can block your surgeon's view whilst they are performing laparoscopic surgery. If they are not able to see properly:

- your procedure might be stopped
- you could end up having open surgery, or
- your liver could bleed heavily, leaving your surgeon no option but to do open surgery.

What is a liver reduction diet?

A liver reduction diet is a specially designed diet which is low in calories, carbohydrates, and fat.

How does the diet work?

By following this diet, your body will reduce its glycogen stores. Glycogen is a form of sugar stored mainly in the liver and muscles. If you follow this diet, your liver will shrink as the glycogen is removed.

How long do I need to follow this diet for?

You only need to be on this diet for two weeks before your surgery, or as recommended by your surgeon.

Do not follow this diet after your operation. After your surgery you can eat and drink as normal.

What are the side effects of this diet?

You might experience one or more of the following side effects in the first few days. This is because your body is getting used to having fewer calories in your diet.

- You might feel **more tired than usual** during the first week. To help with this, eat smaller meals regularly throughout the day.
- Ketosis is caused by your body burning fat instead of carbohydrates. This results in the production of ketones. This can lead to **bad breath, headaches, mild dizziness, and nausea (feeling sick)**. While on this diet, brush your teeth more often and use mouthwash.
- You may get **constipation** as a result of eating and drinking less fibre. Constipation is not pooing as often as normal, or finding it hard to poo. Make sure that you drink at least two to three litres of fluid each day. If constipation continues, take one to two sachets of Macrogol per day.

If you are worried about any of the side effects listed above, please speak to your surgeon.

Please tell your surgeon, dietitian, or specialist nurse if you have any of the following.

- Diabetes
- Renal (kidney) failure
- Gout
- Epilepsy
- Low blood pressure

- Migraines
- You are pregnant or breastfeeding
- You have suffered a stroke in the last six months.

Example of a diet plan

- **Breakfast**
 - A small bowl of cereal, or
 - A slice of toast with a scraping of margarine.
- **Lunch**
 - A slice of bread or two crisp breads
 - Salad (without dressing)
 - Tomatoes
 - A small portion of meat, fish, cheese or two eggs.
- **Dinner**
 - A small potato or two tablespoons of pasta or rice
 - Vegetables
 - A small portion of meat, fish, cheese, eggs, Quorn, or tofu.
- **Liquids**
 - Have 160 ml of semi-skimmed milk for drinks and cereals.
 - Drink as much water, tea, coffee, and low-calorie squash or fizzy drinks as you want.
 - Drink two to three litres of water each day.
 - Do not drink more than one glass of fruit juice each day.
 - Do not drink alcohol.
- **Snacks**
 - One low fat low sugar yoghurt each day.
 - Two portions of fruit, such as an apple, pear, banana or orange.

Do not eat a special or large meal before surgery, as this will undo all your hard work.

Contact details

If you have any problems or would like more information, please contact your surgeon or a member of the surgical team.

- Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother (QEQM) Hospital, Margate
Telephone: 01843 225544
- If out of hours, contact your GP.

This leaflet has been produced with and for patients.

Please let us know:

- If you have any accessibility needs; this includes needing a hearing loop or wanting someone to come with you to your appointment.
- If you need an interpreter.
- If you need this information in another format (such as Braille, audio, large print or Easy Read).

You can let us know this by:

- Visiting the Trust web site (<https://www.ekhuft.nhs.uk/ais>).
- Calling the number at the top of your appointment letter.
- Adding this information to the Patient Portal (<https://pp.ekhuft.nhs.uk/login>).
- Telling a member of staff at your next appointment.

Any complaints, comments, concerns or compliments, please speak to a member of your healthcare team. Or contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service on 01227 783145 or email (ekh-tr.pals@nhs.net).

Patients should not bring large sums of money or valuables into hospital. Please note that East Kent Hospitals accepts no responsibility for the loss or damage to personal property, unless the property has been handed into Trust staff for safe-keeping.

Further patient information leaflets are available via the East Kent Hospitals' web site (<https://www.ekhuft.nhs.uk/patient-information>).

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