

Food and Hydration After Surgery

[00:00:00] What you eat and drink after surgery matters more than you think, not just for healing, but for how you feel every single day.

[00:00:09] Welcome back to Leaks, Laughs, and Life with Urostomy. I'm Dawn, and this is where we talk about what urostomy life looks like, learning it, living it, and figuring it out as we go.

[00:00:20] Before we get into this, a quick note. I am not a medical professional. I'm sharing what I have learned through my own experience. So take what fits and always check with your doctor for what's right for you.

[00:00:34] As I was putting this episode together, I realized this is one of those topics that gets talked about in pieces. A little bit about food here, a little bit about hydration there, maybe supplements sprinkled in the mix, but in real life, it's all connected. So if you're wondering what you're going to be able to eat after surgery, we will be discussing that in a minute.

[00:00:58] Just a reminder, if you [00:01:00] ever want to go back and visit any of this, I keep everything organized on my website, including show notes and other resources, so you can find what you need when you need it.

[00:01:10] Let's start off by saying this: What works for one person may not work for another, and there is no perfect list.

[00:01:17] This is less about rules and more about awareness. It is about learning your body in real time.

[00:01:24] For the longest time before my surgery, I could not drink much water or anything for that matter because of my interstitial cystitis. Have you felt it? Everything is affected when you're dehydrated. Energy drops, your output changes, things just feel off. I'm sure some of you can relate.

[00:01:44] After my surgery, everything started with hydration. After monitoring my intake for the past 11 years, it was amazing to be able to drink fluids again, like full on chug a 16-ounce glass of water rather than just taking a couple sips. [00:02:00] One thing that I learned is that water helps get things moving in the right direction in your intestines.

[00:02:06] It also plays a huge role in preventing UTIs. And I learned that if I don't drink enough water, that's when the UTIs creep in. If my urine output is dark, I am not drinking enough to flush my kidneys.

[00:02:21] I generally drink about 96 ounces of water a day. I make sure the color of my pee is like light lemonade, but not clear. Because if it's clear, I'm drinking too much, and then I'm flushing out all the electrolytes in my body, which that needs to stay hydrated.

[00:02:39] Hydration is not just something you're supposed to do. It's something that directly impacts- It's how your body functions every single day, because our cells are made up of water, and every part of our body needs it to function properly.

[00:02:54] So after going through the UTI that almost turned septic, I looked at [00:03:00] hydration very differently. That experience shifted everything for me. It was no longer something I would, uh, get to when I remembered. It became something I had to stay on top of for consistency, and still do.

[00:03:14] I did an entire episode on that whole UTI experience, if you haven't listened to it and are wondering what that's about, because I did not know what to look for at the time. I did not know any of the symptoms. So if it's something you're concerned about, go back and listen to, I think it was episode six, UTIs, um, the Danger No One Warned Me About. You can find it on my website, and it's free to listen to. It will give you a much clearer picture of what to watch for.

[00:03:44] Now, when it comes to food, this is where people start looking for a list of what they can and cannot eat, and I get that. But what I've learned is it's not that simple. It's going to depend on how your intestines are behaving.

[00:03:59] Some [00:04:00] people are extremely lucky and get to move to solid foods within a couple of weeks. Some of us aren't so lucky. It was about four months before I was able to eat really well-cooked foods. Nothing raw, no fruits or fresh veggies or salads, no red meats. They were just too hard to digest.

[00:04:22] And then there are the foods that may cause more gas or mucus for some people, but not for others.

[00:04:27] And the only way you are really going to figure it out is by paying attention and finding those little discoveries about what your body will or will not tolerate. Make sure you write them down so you can look back for reference. It's really, really necessary.

[00:04:46] One of my discovery moments was where certain foods would make things feel more uncomfortable or create weird things, and it stopped being about avoiding everything, and I started trying to [00:05:00] notice patterns. Because it's not about a restriction, it's more about awareness.

[00:05:06] Like, what are those huge blobs in my urine? Why is my nighttime hose getting plugged up? What is causing that? I'm looking back and thinking, "Oh. Hmm. Yep, that's what I ate. Shouldn't eat it as much of that anymore or drink more water. Maybe it'll help." I'll explain that in a second.

[00:05:26] Because gas and mucus are also a part of this process, something I wish I would've known about earlier, because when it first happens, it feels like something's wrong, like really wrong, but it's not.

[00:05:37] It's your body adjusting and doing what it normally does.

[00:05:43] Things that can help are staying hydrated, slowing down when you eat, and really chew your food, paying attention to what you eat if the mucus and the gas increases, [00:06:00] and making sure to write that down. But more than anything, it's understanding that this is something you learn over time.

[00:06:07] For me, eating any type of starch like rice, breads, noodles, potatoes, they all create so much mucus that sometimes my nighttime hose gets plugged, and I have to get it flowing again by bending the hose back and forth until the urine moves through.

[00:06:25] And then there is gas. Yeah, fun. The kind that balloons up in your pouch, and the very first time it happens, you're wondering, "What the heck is going on here?"

[00:06:36] Well, our stomachs and the ileal pouch are made from small intestines, right? Small intestines produce gas. They're just doing their job.

[00:06:44] And things for me that produce more gas were beans, the brassicas like broccoli and cauliflower, and starches.

[00:06:54] And did you know that Coloplast makes a balloonless pouch?

[00:06:58] [00:07:00] They make all the difference in the world.

[00:07:01] No more worrying about the pouch becoming so big it might pop.

[00:07:06] One of the reasons I created both of my books is because when you're trying to figure out what works for your body, it helps to have something you can go back to. And the handbook walks you through what to expect and what to look for, and the journal gives you a place to track what you are experiencing, so you can start to see patterns and notice what discoveries have been made prior or what you're feeling.

[00:07:33] Because in the moment, it is so easy to miss. And another piece that made the difference for me was how I was eating, not just what I was eating, like being more mindful, slowing down, smaller portions, not overwhelming my system.

[00:07:51] And when I did this, I noticed a huge difference, especially when I started eating the raw vegetables like [00:08:00] salad and red meat as well.

[00:08:02] Making sure that I chewed everything really well helped tremendously, and that's really the theme of all this is small adjustments, paying attention, and learning as you go.

[00:08:14] When it comes to supporting your body and preventing UTIs, I also started incorporating supplements such as a product that's D-mannose and a cranberry mixture, and also drinking no sugar cranberry juice and lots of water. Again, not as a fix, but as support.

[00:08:34] Because after going through that experience almost going septic and with that UTI, I realized I would much rather be proactive than reactive.

[00:08:44] This information will be in the show notes on my website, so you can , reference it later, because I know it can feel like a lot to take in all at once.

[00:08:53] Here's the bigger picture. This is not about following a strict set of rules, it's about discovering [00:09:00] what's working best for your body, and it's going to take some time, so just be patient and have some fun with it. Think of it as you're a detective and you're discovering- clues to a mystery.

[00:09:15] There are going to be moments where something does not sit right or where something feels off or where you're not sure what caused it, and this is where tracking really comes in handy, especially if you've felt that way before or if you happen to feel that way again, you can look back and see.

[00:09:33] And day by day, you're figuring it out, and over time, you become more intuitive. You notice what works, what does not, and you start to feel what your body needs. And this is where things begin to feel more manageable.

[00:09:50] If you've noticed certain foods or habits that have made a difference for you, I would love to hear about that because that's how we all learn from each [00:10:00] other.

[00:10:01] And if you're looking for more support, Everything is in one place on the website at leakslaughslife.com, including past episodes of the podcast, and there are links to the books, which are available on Amazon, and show notes, and a blog.

[00:10:18] A little side note, next week there will not be a podcast because I'm going to be on vacation. I am taking my first big trip in nine years. I'm excited, I'm scared, and I will share all of the information with you on Sunday, May 24th.

[00:10:41] Yep, Sunday, May 24th. Had to double-check the calendar.

[00:10:44] So until then, thank you for being here, It means you showed up on purpose, and that means more than you know.

[00:10:51] Enjoy your week, or couple weeks, and we'll see you on the 24th.