

Diet for Small Bowel Obstructions due to Adhesions

AVOID:

NO BEEF, pork, or other meat fibers which are hard to chew completely, and hard to digest. These large meat fibers are big contributors to a bowel obstruction, as they easily lodge in a twisted or kinked portion of the small bowel, then smaller pieces of food traveling through the digestive system become attached to it.

No fresh Oranges. No Orange rind or citrus rind. Juice with no pulp only. No pineapple.

No vegetables or fruits with skin, unless you remove the skin. For example, the tough skins of grapes, tomatoes, lima beans and other beans, peas, celery, etc. cannot be chewed completely and do not digest completely. These tough pieces can lodge in a twisted portion of the small bowel and contribute to an obstruction.

No nuts of any kind. No large seeds, such as in watermelon.

No fresh lettuce. Best to avoid fresh salads, and eat well cooked vegetables instead.

GOOD TO EAT:

1. Anything put through the blender to make a liquid drink.
2. ENSURE drink.
3. Chicken and Turkey with the skin removed.
4. Fish and seafood OK.
5. Cream soups (canned & homemade) which are soft with no tough ingredients.
6. Canned fruits and vegetables with no skins are good.
7. Fresh broccoli, cauliflower, green beans, squash, carrots, asparagus tips, cooked SOFT.
8. Pasta, rice, potatoes & sweet potatoes (no skins of baked potatoes).
9. Cooked oatmeal, bananas, strawberries.

This diet will not prevent all bowel obstruction due to adhesions, but may greatly reduce the severity of an attack and the frequency of the attacks. In my case, I suffered for 2-1/2 years with repeated attacks which came with no warning, and were very painful and lasted a long time. I had two surgeries to remove the adhesions, and within two months of each surgery, I again had attacks. I had no possible way to know that what I was eating had anything to do with my recurrent bowel obstructions. Since I have been on this diet I still get attacks, but they are far less severe and only last a day or two.

I have learned to recognize the first sign of a bowel obstruction: a tiny steady pain in the pit of the stomach that does not go away. If you can recognize this sign, DO NOT EAT ANYTHING, and only small sips of water for a day to two, until you can tell the stomach is starting to empty. If you continue to eat meals after the first sign of the pain, the obstruction will be far worse, far more painful, and last much longer.

I have also learned exactly what particle of food caused my last three attacks: One was caused by a large tough piece of clam in clam chowder at lunchtime. Before dinner the small pain started. Another was caused by a big chunk of tomato in Progresso Tomato Parmesan soup. Before dinner that day, the small pain started up. Another time I ate commercially prepared breaded shrimp baked in the oven for dinner, and by bedtime the small pain had started up.