Post Esophageal Surgery Diet

Why do I need this diet?
This diet is designed to include foods and drinks that will pass more easily through the area that was operated on. This diet will also help you consume enough calories and protein for adequate healing.

How long will I have to follow this diet?
You will need to follow this diet for approximately 3-4 weeks after surgery. The general progression of the diet is a full liquid diet followed by a soft diet. You will find explanations of each of these diets below. Once your body has had time to heal, you can slowly resume a normal, healthy diet. At your first post-operative appointment, your doctor or nurse will let you know if you can start eating different foods. Keep in mind that you may always need to eat smaller and more frequent meals.

General Guidelines
1. Eat 4-5 small meals a day.
2. Eat slowly, take small bites, and fully chew all food (once on soft diet).
3. Sit upright while eating and remain upright for 30-60 minutes after eating.
4. Take one chewable multivitamin with minerals per day.
5. Prepare foods so that they are moist, soft, and easy to swallow.
6. All drinks are allowed except those which are carbonated, such as soda, beer, and champagne. Discuss with your doctor how long you should avoid carbonated beverages.
7. Nutrition supplements or homemade milkshakes can be used to replace meals or snacks. You may need this if you feel like you are having trouble taking in enough calories or protein (particularly while on full liquids). Listed below are some examples of these supplements:
   o Carnation Instant Breakfast mixed with milk, Ensure, Boost, or store brand (Equate) – choose the “plus” kind for the most calories.
Diet Progression:
Your physician would like you to follow a full liquid diet for ____ week(s), followed by a soft diet until follow-up with your physician. Use the guidelines below to determine safe food/beverage choices during this time.

Full Liquid Diet:
- Water, coffee, tea, vegetable and fruit juices
- Broths, strained cream soups or blenderized soups
- Cream of wheat, grits and oatmeal
- Milk and yogurt (smooth)
- Milkshakes/smoothies (no chunks of fruit/nuts/cookie/brownie)
- Pudding/custard/gelatin
- Popsicles/sherbet/ice cream (no chunks of fruit/nuts/cookie/brownie)
- Nutrition supplements (Ensure/Boost/Carnation Instant Breakfast)

Soft Diet:
The soft diet incorporates all foods allowed on the full liquid diet as well as other foods that you should be ready to tolerate. The following list of foods is allowed on the soft diet (in addition to the above list of full liquids).

- Cottage cheese
- Soft eggs (scrambled or finely chopped)
- Tofu
- Moist fish
- All canned fruits, peeled fresh fruits, berries
- Well cooked, soft or pureed vegetables (including mashed potatoes and baked potato without the skin)
- Soft, moist rice, noodles, cereal softened in milk
- Fats (butter/margarine, mayo, dressings, gravies)

*You will need to avoid breads (including waffles/pancakes) as well as meats during the soft diet. Your doctor will inform you when you can reintroduce these foods.

Questions? Call UVA Health System Nutrition Services 434-924-2286.

For post esophagectomy:
- If diarrhea is a problem, limits foods and drinks that are high in sugars.
- Questions? Call Carole Havrila, RD (434) 243-9627