Nutrition after Whipple Procedure

It’s normal to have a lack of appetite after the surgery which may cause weight loss. It varies in each case. Below are some common problems people have after surgery. You may or may not have them.

**Gastroparesis**
This is when the stomach empties slowly after a meal. It causes you to feel full and bloated. It should go away by about 4-6 weeks after your surgery. To reduce symptoms:
- Eat small frequent meals.
- Avoid high fiber foods.
- Eat soft foods or liquids like Ensure®, Boost®, or Carnation Instant Breakfast® to help gain and maintain your weight.
- Reduce the amount of fat in your diet.
- Take a walk after eating. Light exercise can help move food through your system faster.

**Diarrhea**
The pancreas makes enzymes that help digest food. When part of the pancreas is removed, the amount of enzymes may also decrease which can result in diarrhea.

If you notice greasy, frothy stools that smell more than usual, talk to your doctor about taking pancreatic enzymes. You can also change your diet to help with this:
- Avoid high fat, greasy foods
- Eat 5-6 small meals/day

Another reason for diarrhea is “Dumping syndrome.” This is where food empties too quickly out of the stomach. You may feel shaky, sweaty, and lightheaded after eating and feel the urge of a bowel movement. To reduce symptoms:
- Avoid foods high in sugar
- Drink fluids in between meals
- Avoid really hot or cold food
- Eat 5-6 small meals/day

**Diabetes**
The pancreas makes insulin. People with uncontrolled blood sugars prior to surgery may have a chance that it will become worse once after surgery. This is because a portion of the pancreas is removed. Patients who have normal blood sugars have a small chance of diabetes.
Teach Back:

What is the most important thing you learned from this handout?

What changes will you make in your diet/lifestyle, based on what you learned today?

If you have any questions or have chronic weight loss after 4-6 weeks after your surgery, contact your dietitian or doctor.

If you are a UW Health patient and have more questions please contact UW Health at one of the phone numbers listed below. You can also visit our website at www.uwhealth.org/nutrition

Nutrition clinics for UW Hospital and Clinics (UWHC) and American Family Children’s Hospital (AFCH) can be reached at: (608) 890-5500

Nutrition clinics for UW Medical Foundation (UWMF) can be reached at: (608) 287-2770

Your health care team may have given you this information as part of your care. If so, please use it and call if you have any questions. If this information was not given to you as part of your care, please check with your doctor. This is not medical advice. This is not to be used for diagnosis or treatment of any medical condition. Because each person’s health needs are different, you should talk with your doctor or others on your health care team when using this information. If you have an emergency, please call 911. Copyright © 2016 University of Wisconsin Hospitals and Clinics Authority. All rights reserved. Produced by the Clinical Nutrition Services Department and the Department of Nursing. HF#496