

Feeding Your Child with Short Bowel Syndrome

What is short bowel syndrome?

Short bowel syndrome is a medical condition in which the body cannot absorb enough fluids and nutrients. This can happen because part of the small intestine may be missing — usually due to surgery or illness — or because the intestine is not working right.

What are symptoms of short bowel syndrome?

Symptoms of short bowel syndrome are:

- Diarrhea (loose poop)
- Bloating or swelling
- A lot of gas and/or bad smelling poop
- Poor appetite (not very hungry)
- Weight loss or trouble gaining weight
- Fatigue (tiredness)
- Vomiting (throwing up)

Special Diet Considerations for Children with Short Bowel Syndrome

Problems with Eating and Drinking (“Oral Aversion”)

Oral aversion is when a child does not eat or drink. Some children with short bowel syndrome may have trouble chewing and swallowing. **If you are worried about your child’s ability to eat**, call the Center for Advanced Intestinal Rehabilitation (CAIR) team at 617-355-5275 to find out how to get your child into a feeding therapy program.

Food Allergies

Children with short bowel syndrome are more likely to have food allergies. The most common foods that can cause an allergy are:

- Eggs
- Fish
- Milk
- Peanuts
- Shellfish
- Soy
- Tree nuts
- Wheat

Introduce these foods to your child’s diet one at a time. Then, look to see if they cause any allergic reactions.

Lactose

Lactose is the sugar found in dairy products. It is broken down in the body by an enzyme found in the small intestine. If your child’s small intestine is not working the right way, he or she may not feel well when eating foods with lactose.

- ✓ **Choose lactose-free foods**
- ✓ **Limit the amount of lactose** your child eats
- ✓ **Check food labels for lactose ingredients**, such as milk, whey, milk solids, milk powder, caseinate and curd. Many foods such as breads, sauces, lunch meats and desserts have lactose in them.

Soluble Fiber

Soluble fiber helps to slow down digestion, the body’s process for breaking down food. Soluble fiber also slows down the process for the time it takes for food to move through the body. Eating more foods with soluble fiber can help to reduce the amount of diarrhea (loose poop) that your child has. Foods high in soluble fiber are:

- Avocado
- Banana
- Beans and lentils
- Carrots
- Citrus fruits
- Oatmeal
- Peas
- Potatoes
- Squash
- Sweet potato

Ostomies

As your child eats more foods, **be aware of how much is coming out of your child’s ostomy**, as your child could become dehydrated. Foods high in fiber can clog ostomies. Other foods may cause gas or bad smelling poops. If your child has an ostomy, you should give him or the foods in the table below **in small amounts**:

May cause ostomy to clog	May cause gas or bad smelling poops
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Celery • Corn • Dried fruit • Nuts and seeds • Peas • Popcorn • Raw pineapple • Skins of fruits/vegetables 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asparagus • Beans/legumes/lentils • Broccoli • Cabbage • Cauliflower • Eggs • Fish • Onions

Family Education Sheet • Feeding Your Child with Short Bowel Syndrome

What should my child eat?

A well-balanced diet can help your child's body to get the key nutrients it needs and can help with his or her short bowel syndrome symptoms.

Dos:

- ✓ Do give your child new foods **one at a time**
- ✓ Do **write down any symptoms** that your child may have after eating new foods
- ✓ **Do talk to your dietitian** if your child is having trouble eating specific foods or food groups

This table tells you what foods and drinks to give your child

Eat and drink more of:	Eat and drink less of:
Carbohydrates <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rice • Potato • Breads • Pasta • Unsweetened cereals (hot or cold) 	Carbohydrates <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pastries and donuts • Candy • Cakes and cookies • Sweetened cereals (hot or cold)
Fruits and Vegetables <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unsweetened canned fruit • Most raw fruit • Most vegetables that are raw, canned or cooked 	Fruits and Vegetables <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sweetened canned fruit • Skins, peels and seeds <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Vegetable that cause gas, such as asparagus, broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower, onions • Creamed vegetables • Dried fruit • Jam and jelly
Protein <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meat, fish, or poultry that is: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Baked ❖ Grilled ❖ Poached ❖ Steamed • Tofu • Eggs • Beans and lentils 	Protein <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fried meat, fish or poultry
Fats <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oils • Avocado • Mayonnaise 	Fats <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dairy-based fats, such as butter, cheese and cream
Drinks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water • Oral Rehydration Solutions, such as Pedialyte and CeraLyte • Crystal Light • Low sugar sport drinks, such as Gatorade G2 and Powerade Zero • Unsweetened iced tea • Milk and formula • Sugar-free Kool-Aid 	Drinks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Soda • Fruit juice • Lemonade • Sports drinks • Sweetened iced tea • Flavored milk • Kool-Aid

This sheet is available in Arabic and [Spanish](#).