

Dumping Syndrome following a Roux en y Gastric Bypass

Dumping syndrome is the name given to a collection of symptoms that occur following surgery to the stomach. It can happen after a gastric bypass procedure, but it can be avoided by making dietary changes.

There are two types of dumping syndrome. In early dumping the symptoms occur within 30 minutes of eating. In late dumping, they occur a few hours after eating.

What are the symptoms?

The symptoms vary from person to person but may include:

- Nausea
- Bloating
- Diarrhoea
- Sweating
- Shaking
- Dizziness
- Palpitations
- Feeling weak and tired
- Loss of concentration

Early Dumping

The stomach usually acts as a reservoir to store food while it is mixed with digestive juices, churned and broken into smaller particles. After a gastric bypass, undigested food moves quickly from the stomach pouch into the bowel, causing water to be drawn into the gut, causing a drop in blood pressure. This can cause you to experience:

- Nausea
- vomiting
- bloating
- abdominal cramping
- diarrhoea
- dizziness
- fatigue

You may experience one or several of these symptoms within 30 minutes of eating.
N.B. you may notice early dumping symptoms during the meal.

Late Dumping

This happens when the food delivered into the bowel is absorbed more quickly than usual. In response, the body releases insulin, a hormone which causes blood sugar levels to drop. This can cause you to experience:

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- weakness and feeling faint
- dizziness and sweating
- a loss of concentration
- the need to rest
- palpitations
- hunger and hypoglycaemia (low blood sugar)

You may experience one or several of these symptoms within 1 to 3 hours of eating.

What should I do if I get Dumping Syndrome?

If you do get symptoms of dumping syndrome, then try lying down for 30 minutes and allow the feeling to pass. The most important thing is to try to identify the cause of the dumping so that you can avoid it happening again.

How can I avoid dumping syndrome following a gastric bypass?

There are several reasons why you might experience dumping symptoms:

- eating too much
- eating foods that are high in simple sugars, e.g. sweets, chocolates, cakes, biscuits, sugary drinks including fruit juice and sugary milkshakes
- eating more carbohydrate or starchy foods than protein foods
- eating refined carbohydrates rather than wholegrain products, e.g, white bread, breakfast cereals such as Cornflakes or Rice Krispies.
- eating high fat foods, greasy food or rich foods, e.g. fried or processed foods, pastries, dressings and mayonnaise
- drinking with a meal or snack (or within 30 minutes)
- not chewing food well or rushing a meal
- Watch out for alternative names for sugar, e.g. glucose, sucrose, fructose, dextrose, honey or corn syrup
- Use low sugar drinks e.g. no added sugar squash and cordial

Think about exactly how you felt following eating and drinking. You may have easily identified one of the symptoms of dumping but overlooked others. Dumping can be mild or severe but in most cases is avoidable with a few small changes.

Speak to your Dietitian if you suspect you are getting symptoms of dumping syndrome or would like to discuss further.

