

gold coast
spine

What to expect...

Cervical spine surgery and your diet

You will be undergoing cervical surgery with Dr Matthew Scott-Young. Some discomfort with eating will occur. As a result, the food you eat during your admission needs to be carefully selected.

Please read this information before your admission.

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Step 1: Lighten up your diet

To assist with your postoperative recovery and return of healthy bowel function, it is important that you follow a healthy, light diet before your surgery.

In the week before your surgery, it is recommended that you adjust your diet to decrease intake of red meats, breads, white rice and potato. You should eat fish, white meat, salads and vegetables.

It is also recommended that you stay well hydrated in the days leading up to the surgery, as this will assist with your post-operative recovery.

Step 2: Hospital Admission

Swallowing difficulties

Some patients experience difficulty swallowing after anterior cervical surgery. This is known as dysphagia and this condition can occur when your surgeon moves the muscles that assist with swallowing, causing them to become irritated.

The dysphagia should subside over the weeks and/or months following your surgery.

In a small number of cases, dysphagia can become a long term or permanent problem and may need specialist treatment and advice.

To assist in minimising swallowing difficulties and to keep swelling and inflammation down, you will be asked to apply **ice packs** to the neck as much as possible. You should also drink regular sips of **cold water** and suck on **ice chips** as much as possible. Cold water and ice chips will be available on the ward. Ice packs will be provided by Physio Next Door at your pre-operative appointment.

IMPORTANT: when eating you need to –

- have a sip of cold water to prepare the muscles.
- have small bites of food ensuring that you chew each bite well before swallowing.
- have a sip of cold water between each bite of food.

Post-operative cervical diet

After your surgery you will be given a 'Cervical Diet' in hospital. The diet will consist of **soft, easy to chew foods**. You should also choose foods and beverages that are high in protein to assist in healing and recovery. It is also important to keep your fluid intake high.

Typical cervical diet

Breakfast: Scrambled eggs, weetbix, fruit yoghurt, baked beans

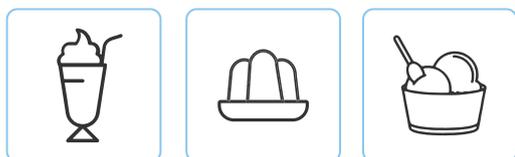
Lunch: Soup, soft vegetables, soft sandwiches

Dinner: Soup, casseroles, mashed potatoes, lasagne

Snacks: Protein shakes, custard, ice-cream, diced fruit tub

IMPORTANT: family members and friends must not bring unapproved food or fluids to you in hospital. We recommend you share this information with them.

OK to eat or drink...



Soft, easy to swallow foods and cold drinks.

DON'T eat or drink...



Hot drinks and food that is more difficult to chew and swallow. e.g. potato chips, fast food, etc.

Step 3: Diet on returning home

On leaving the hospital, you should maintain a well-balanced high protein rich food diet and fluid intake. Ensure that the diet is soft and easy to chew and that you are drinking fluids regularly, especially cold water.

Keep using ice chips and ice packs as required.

Step 4: Maintaining a healthy weight

Maintaining a healthy diet and weight after your surgery will play an important part in your recovery and the long term success of your surgery and will provide ongoing benefits to your overall health.

For more information on what to expect about your cervical surgery, we recommended looking at [Sam's case study on our website](#).

Questions? If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact our nursing staff on (07) 5528 6477.