



# LINX Post- Surgery Diet

- **Day 1 After Surgery**

- Soft chopped foods: tender meats, cooked vegetables, peeled fruits, beans, yogurt
- Remember to eat solid foods, avoid only liquids meals (soups, protein shakes)
- Eat about 1 cup of solid food every 2-3 hours while awake
  - This can help exercise the LINX device to open and close. Think of “eating” as a type of physical therapy for your esophagus to help decrease dysphagia (difficulty swallowing).
- Take small bites and chew well. You may take small sips of water or low calorie beverage in between bites.

- **Day 2 After Surgery and Beyond**

- Eat a regular healthy diet: lean meats, raw/cooked colorful vegetables, salads and fruits, high fiber grains and beans.
- Avoid dry foods: bread, crackers.
- Continue to eat small frequent meals (1-2 cups per serving of solid food) every 2-3 hours.
- Continue to take small bites and chew well & take small sips of water in between bites.
- If you try a new food and have trouble with swallowing, hold off on that food and try it again in a week.
- Usually for 3-4 months, you can tolerate most foods without difficulty.

- **What to Expect: Weeks 1-6**

- Laparoscopic surgery requires inflating your abdomen with carbon dioxide gas. This may cause pain in the back, neck and shoulders, but symptoms usually go away after 5-7 days. Walking and Gas-X may help relieve bloating and gas pain.
- As your body heals from the surgery, scar tissue will begin to form around the LINX device. This scar tissue forms a layer of tissue (capsule) around the device which prevents it from moving or slipping.
- During the first 7-10 days, swallowing solid foods may be easy. However, after 7-10 days, inflammation will increase, making swallowing more difficult.
- During this time, we suggest you:
  - Continue to eat solid foods every 2-3 hours to help exercise the LINX device to open and close.
  - Focus on solid foods, but avoid dry foods (crackers, pizza crust, bagels)
  - Continue taking small bites of solid food and chew very well
  - Take sips of warm water before and during meals to help with swallowing. This can help ease food down by relaxing the esophagus.
- These symptoms occur during the first 2 weeks and may persist up to 6 weeks after surgery.
- Chest pain may be caused by spasms of the esophagus. This pain is sometimes described as “sharp” or “stabbing” but does not last long. These are all known and expected symptoms! You should continue eating frequently, as this can help decrease these symptoms.
- If you feel nauseated, choose bland foods: soft cooked potatoes, applesauce, bananas, rice.

- **What to Expect: Weeks 6-12**

- Continue to eat small frequent meals, every 2-3 hours to help exercise the LINX device, with sips in between bites. Avoid consuming only liquids (soups, protein shakes). You will still need solid food to help stretch the device.
- Dysphagia and pain will decrease due to resolving inflammation and swelling.
- After 3 months, a low fat-low sugar diet is recommended and a regular eating schedule may be resumed.

## Hoag-USC Digestive Disease Center

### Post-Operative LINX Education

- **Day of surgery:**

- A soft diet is recommended **only** for the day of your LINX placement; a regular diet can be started the day after. **We want you to start a normal diet right away and to experiment with your foods!** The soft food diet allows you to ease into solid foods.

- **Weeks 1-6:**

- You will likely have had a **hiatal hernia repair** during the time of your laparoscopic LINX surgery. Your body will immediately begin to heal from the repair and scar tissue will also begin to form around the LINX device. The scar tissue forms a capsule around the device preventing it from migrating.
- *Laparoscopic surgery requires inflating your abdomen with carbon dioxide gas. **This commonly causes pain in the back, neck and shoulders that subsides after 5-7 days. Walking and medications like Gas-X will help relieve the gas.***
- *Due to the 2-step process of the surgery, **you may experience some difficulty swallowing, chest pain, or increased belching that is common and expected!***
- During this time, we suggest you:
  - Take small bites of solid food and chew food very well
  - Have fluids close by to facilitate swallowing and passage of food
  - **EAT FREQUENTLY: 5-7 small meals/day or a small snack every 1-2 hours**
  - Minimize the amount of dry food intake (i.e. chips, hard bread, crackers)
- The majority of these symptoms occurs during the first 2 weeks and **may intermittently persist up to 6 weeks after surgery.**
- To prevent the LINX device from scarring into a fixed position, **“PHYSICAL THERAPY”** will be required. **Eating is considered physical therapy for LINX!** By eating solid foods frequently, you are **exercising the device to open and close** as the scar capsule is forming. Every time you swallow a bolus of food, the device opens and closes which stretches out the scar tissue.
- Similar to exercising a knee after surgery, constant movement will allow the device to stay mobile within the scar tissue and can prevent long-term problems with swallowing. **This results in optimum healing of the LINX.**
- **\*\*\*If you are having significant difficulty swallowing such that you are not able to tolerate solid foods, please contact our office immediately; there are medications that can reduce these symptoms. Staying on a regular solid food diet is key as your body is scarring around the LINX.\*\*\***
- If you experience food “sticking” or difficulty swallowing, drinking warm tea or water before or during meals will help by relaxing the esophagus and easing the food down.
- Occasionally, **chest pain is caused by spasms of the esophagus;** your esophagus is a muscle and like any other muscle in your body it may spasm as a result of the surgery. This pain is sometimes described as “sharp” or “stabbing” but does not last long. **These are all known and expected symptoms!** You should continue eating frequently, as eating often alleviates these symptoms.

- **Weeks 6-12**
  - Dysphagia and pain will subside during this time as much of the inflammation will be resolving and the body is nearing full recovery from the surgery.
  - We strongly recommend continuing the diet of solid foods and **5-7 small meals throughout the day** or a **small snack every 1-2 hours** until 3 months after surgery. After 3 months, resuming a regular schedule of eating is OK.
- **PPI Use (All Antacid Medications):**
  - The LINX surgery should stop the need for antacid medications such as Nexium, Protonix, or Prevacid. However, we recommend gradually tapering off these medications over 6-8 weeks after surgery. Your surgeon or nurse practitioner will instruct you how to do so.
- **Activity:**
  - No lifting heavy (10 lbs. or greater) for 2 weeks after surgery. However, if you had a hernia repair at the time of LINX placement, no heavy lifting for 6 weeks.
- **Wound Care:**
  - Showers may be permitted the day after surgery. Do not scrub the abdomen. Pat the incision sites dry after showering. Do not rub or pick at the incisions or surgical glue.
- **When to call the Doctor:**
  - Fever greater than 101-degrees Fahrenheit
  - Uncontrolled abdominal or chest pain
  - If you can only tolerate swallowing liquids and unable to swallow solid foods
  - Severe shoulder pain lasting more than five days
  - Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
  - Bleeding, oozing or drainage out of incision sites

For any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact our office at any time (949) 764-5350