

## Four Reasons You Should See a Dietitian

*Dietitians are the experts when it comes to tailoring diets and managing digestive health concerns. This is true also for those living with a stoma as you may have more individualised and specialised nutritional needs. Dietitian Melanie McGrice (pictured) explains how a consultation with an Accredited Practising Dietitian can benefit you.*



When was your last appointment with a dietitian? Years ago when your stoma was first made? Never? If you haven't seen one in the last year, it may be time to make another appointment. Let's discuss just some of the ways that a consultation with a dietitian can benefit you:

### 1. **Decrease headaches and muscle cramps by improving hydration**

Optimising fluid balance is important for people living with a stoma as fluid can be expelled before it has a chance to be re-absorbed. This is particularly relevant for people with ileostomies as the majority of fluid absorption occurs further down in the large bowel. Even a small amount of dehydration can cause headaches, fatigue, vertigo and/or muscle cramps. So if you've been experiencing any of these conditions, speak to your dietitian about tips and tricks to help your body absorb and retain more fluid.

### 2. **Fight fatigue**

Fatigue is a common issue for most Aussies, but it is exacerbated when your body isn't absorbing adequate amounts of key nutrients such as iron, Vitamin B12 or glucose. Keeping pace with a busy lifestyle with a compromised nutrient intake is like trying to drive a car low in oil or petrol. An assessment with your Dietitian can reveal key nutrients that you're not absorbing properly and ways for you to supplement these nutrients to help you combat fatigue.

### 3. **Minimise the effects of food intolerances**

Bloated? Nausea? Excessive gas? Food intolerances are a common issue for many Australians, but even more common in those with a stoma. Intolerances are a result of decreased capacity to digest fermentable carbohydrates such as fructose or lactose. Your dietitian will assist you to diagnose your type of intolerance and prevent further symptoms.

### 4. **Optimise long term health**

As your stoma becomes the new end point of your gastrointestinal tract, nutrients that should have been absorbed further down the tract may not be absorbed and nutritional deficiencies may develop. Depending on where the stoma is situated there can be varying degrees of malabsorption; nutrients such as iron, Vitamin B12, fatty acids and calcium can be compromised. Nutritional deficiencies can lead to a host of short and long term health problems – from mouth ulcers, poor wound healing and depression in the short term, to osteoporosis, infertility and increased risk of cancers in the longer term. Your dietitian can review your diet and provide approaches to optimise your nutritional intake.

We'd love to meet you to see how we can optimise your health and wellbeing. For more advice contact Nutrition Plus on 1300 438 550 or visit [www.nutritionplus.com.au](http://www.nutritionplus.com.au)