

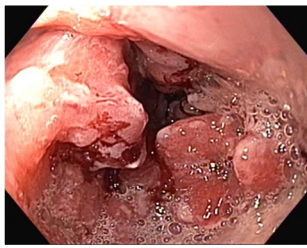
# Esophageal Stents

**YOUR GUIDE  
TO HEALTH**

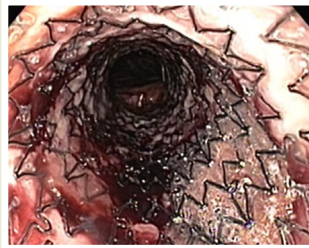


## What Is An Esophageal Stent?

An esophageal stent is a cylinder made of soft, flexible metal strands with an outer covering. Esophageal stents are frequently inserted into patients with narrow areas in their esophagus due to benign (noncancerous) or malignant (cancerous) strictures. Some patients have an esophageal stent placed if they have a hole or tear in the esophagus; in these patients the stent helps cover the hole or tear so that food stays in the esophagus and does not leak out as it moves to the stomach.



Before stent placement



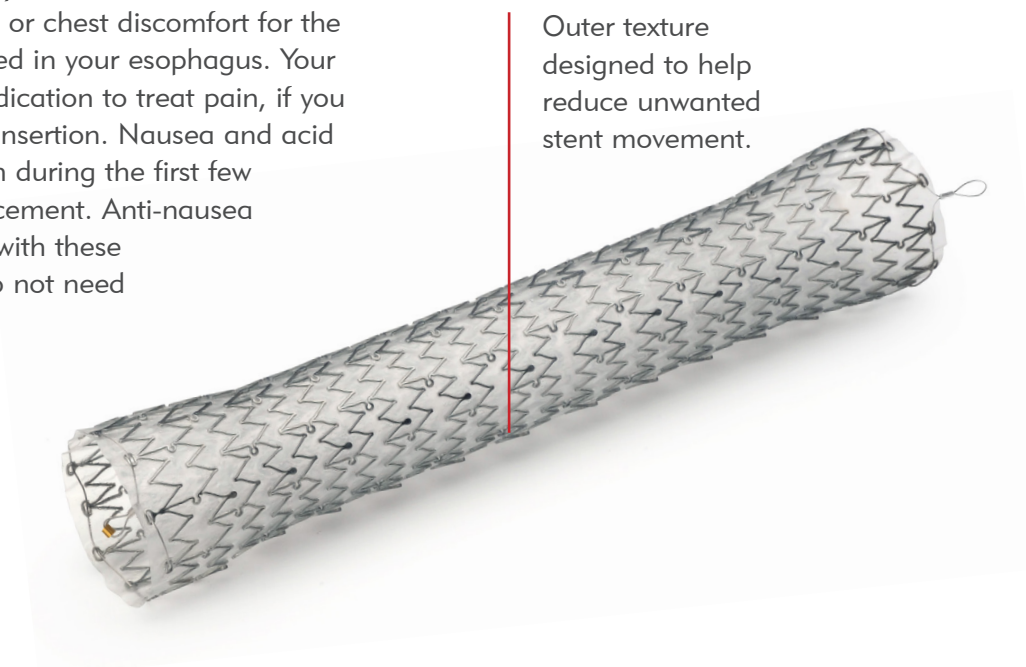
After stent placement

## How An Esophageal Stent Works

The stent exerts outward force at the narrowed or blocked area of the esophagus to help keep it open, and allows food and fluids to pass when swallowed.

## Adjusting To Life With An Esophageal Stent

An esophageal stent can be very helpful to patients in a variety of situations, but it takes time to adjust to the stent itself. It is common to have some esophageal or chest discomfort for the first 2-3 days after the stent is placed in your esophagus. Your doctor will likely give you some medication to treat pain, if you have any, on the day of your stent insertion. Nausea and acid reflux (heartburn) are also common during the first few days after an esophageal stent placement. Anti-nausea and antacid medications can help with these symptoms as well. Most patients do not need these medications after a few days.



## General Eating And Drinking Recommendations

**Take your time,** relax, and eat your meals slowly.

**Meals should be smaller and more frequent** than you were used to eating before you had your stent placement - aim for five or six small meals per day rather than three big meals.

**Cut your food into smaller pieces** than you would normally eat. Take small mouthfuls, and chew each mouthful thoroughly before swallowing.

**Have plenty of sauces,** gravy or cream with your meals. It will help make your food moist and easier to swallow and to pass through your stent.

**Take frequent sips of liquids** during and after each meal to help move food through your esophagus and keep your stent clear. Warm beverages are recommended, but all fluids are beneficial. For some people, carbonation may worsen symptoms of heartburn or acid reflux so try these carefully.

**Sit upright at meal times** and for one to two hours afterwards. Do not eat lying down.

## Beginning To Eat Again

Many people who require an esophageal stent have not been eating well for some time. While it is normal to be excited about eating too soon by mouth again, it is important that you not eat too much food too quickly. Eating too much soon after the stent is placed can lead to discomfort, nausea, and vomiting. While everyone is different and your doctor can give you specific recommendations, a good timeline to keep in mind is as follows:

- **First 24 hours after stent placement:** Drink clear liquids only. Examples of clear liquids include liquids you can see through such as jello, broth, ice pops, and soda. Coffee and tea are considered clear liquids if you do not put milk or cream in them. Do not drink orange juice or other citrus juices as they are very acidic and may cause discomfort. Do not eat solid food.
- **24-48 hours after stent placement:** Eat a full liquid diet. Examples of full liquids include any clear liquids, milk, plain ice-cream (without candy or nuts in it), custard and pudding. Do not eat solid food.
- **48-72 hours after stent placement:** Try eating soft solid foods, such as cooked noodles, oatmeal, cottage cheese, soups, smoothies, and mashed potatoes. Take small bites and eat slowly. Your esophagus and stomach are still adjusting to the stent, and need to get used to moving food through it.
- **After this point, if you are doing well,** you can try to slowly advance your diet and eat more normal foods.

## Foods That Should Be Avoided

Patients with an esophageal stent should try to avoid large, bulky vegetable matter. This can be hard to swallow, and in rare instances, can lead to the stent becoming clogged. Foods to avoid include corn, leafy salads, stir-fry vegetables, and fried vegetables (including crispy french fries and hash browns). If you feel like food is stuck in your esophagus or your stent, call your doctor.

## General Activity Guidance

Patients with an esophageal stent can engage in a wide range of activities including all normal movements of everyday life. Walking, climbing stairs, bathing, dressing, and sleeping are all activities you can perform after esophageal stent placement. In general, you should try to avoid heavy lifting or activities that would cause you to have to bear down (i.e., weightlifting, etc.) while the stent is in your esophagus.

## Acid Reflux Management

Some patients with an esophageal stent can develop acid reflux (heartburn). If this happens, call your doctor. Your doctor may prescribe you antacid medication which can be used once or twice a day as needed. If you develop acid reflux, try to avoid acidic foods such as citrus fruits or juices, tomatoes or tomato sauce, coffee and tea, alcohol, chocolate, and peppermints. Also, do not eat 2 hours before bedtime as lying down with a full stomach can worsen acid reflux symptoms.

## Pain From Your Esophageal Stent

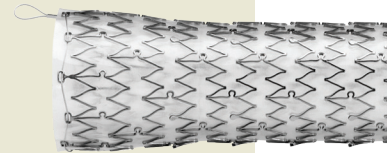
Most patients with an esophageal stent experience pain or discomfort for the first few days after placement. Pain medications from your doctor can help you to relieve this discomfort. Pain after this time period is unusual. If you develop new or worsening pain, call your doctor.

### SIGNS YOU SHOULD CALL YOUR DOCTOR RIGHT AWAY

Most patients with an esophageal stent notice that they feel better, and can eat better, compared to how they felt before stent placement. Rarely, severe complications can develop.

If you develop any of the following signs or symptoms, call your doctor right away:

- Pain that is new, severe, or does not improve with pain medicine
- Vomiting red blood
- Dark or black stools
- Feeling like food is stuck in your esophagus or in your stent
- Spitting up saliva or undigested food



Implant Date \_\_\_\_\_

Implant Size \_\_\_\_\_

Implant Location \_\_\_\_\_

Physician \_\_\_\_\_

Hospital \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Information \_\_\_\_\_

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Merit Medical Systems, Inc.  
1600 West Merit Parkway  
South Jordan, Utah 84095  
1.801.253.1600  
1.800.35.MERIT

Merit Medical Europe, Middle East, & Africa (EMEA)  
Amerikalaan 42, 6199 AE Maastricht-Airport  
The Netherlands  
+31 43 358 82 22

Merit Medical Ireland Ltd.  
Parkmore Business Park West  
Galway, Ireland  
+353 (0) 91 703 733