

# ERAS Cancer Care Guidelines: Gastrectomy



Surgery may be used to treat stomach (gastric) cancer. A gastrectomy is when part or all of the stomach is removed.

Treatment for any kind of cancer can be scary. You may feel like you don't have control. Or you may see recovery as too difficult. But the Enhanced Recovery After Surgery (ERAS) program will help give you confidence. And it makes the process a bit easier, too.

## What is ERAS?

ERAS is a program to improve surgery quality. The guidelines put the focus on the patient. They encourage and empower you to be an active partner in your care.

The goal is to provide a smoother and safer surgery experience. ERAS can:

- Reduce complications
- Shorten your hospital stay
- Improve your outcome

By achieving these goals, ERAS can also help your lower healthcare costs.

A group of experts called the ERAS Society first developed this approach for colon surgery. The guidelines worked so well that they created guidelines for other procedures, such as gastrectomy. Today, many healthcare providers worldwide use the ERAS approach.

It's important note that ERAS guidelines for stomach cancer use specific steps that might not apply to other cancers.

## What are the ERAS guidelines for gastrectomy?

ERAS guidelines start as soon as you decide to have surgery. They continue after discharge. Some ERAS guidelines are the same for all types of surgery. But other guidelines vary for each kind of surgery. Some of the guidelines for gastrectomy are explained below.

### Focus on nutrition

ERAS notes the importance of nutrition leading up to surgery. This is especially true for people with stomach cancer. Studies have shown that good nutrition helps people with stomach cancer live longer.

At the start of treatment, you may meet with a nutritionist. They will help you learn what types of food you should eat. You may need to change your eating habits before surgery. But, you won't need to stop eating or drinking for very long before surgery.

Your care team will also focus on your nutrition after surgery. Eating soon after surgery helps the stomach recover. It can shorten your hospital stay. Your healthcare team will help you know what you can eat and when.

### Minimally invasive surgery

ERAS advises minimally invasive surgery. This is a type of surgery that uses smaller cuts (incisions) than open surgery. This can give you a quicker recovery, a shorter hospital stay, and fewer complications.

### Early return to activity

Your healthcare team will help you get back on your feet soon after surgery. If this seems stressful, don't worry. Your healthcare team will help you.

## **Drain and tube management**

ERAS notes that nasogastric and nasojejunal tubes should not be used routinely. Early removal of the urinary catheter is advised. They also state to limit the use of abdominal drains if possible. The guidelines say they aren't proven to help the recovery process. They may also make you more uncomfortable.

## **Other guidelines**

There are more ERAS guidelines just for gastrectomy. Ask your healthcare team for more details.

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