

## Chewing Gum and Ileus

As nutrition experts it is our job to advocate for any type of nutrition that will help the patient heal and get home quicker. Ileus can have a significant effect on the amount of time a patient is NPO after surgery. It is estimated that ileus accounts for over \$1 billion in U.S. health care systems. Sham feeding has been shown to activate the cephalic phase of digestion which can lead to stimulated gut motility. Sham feeding is the process of chewing and not swallowing in order to stimulate bowel motility. Chewing gum is a form of sham feeding. Are there ways to decrease the amount of time a patient spends NPO waiting for ileus to subside?

Research findings:

1. 30 minutes, three times a day of sugar free chewing of gum improves bowel movement
  - a. 10 hours to 24 hours earlier till flatus for gum chewers when compared to non gum chewers
  - b. 20 hours to 2.7 days earlier till bowel movement for gum chewers when compared to non gum chewers.
  - c. 1.3 days shorter hospital visits for gum chewers when compared with non gum chewers.
2. Water consumption has been shown to improve bowel motility but is often held for good measures. But patients can tolerate gum chewing as early as the first operative day
3. Generally no adverse effects for sham feeding

Resources:

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