Exercises That Facilitate Stomach-Emptying

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The paretic stomach may be described as a flaccid bag, deprived of the rhythmic muscular squeezing present in a stomach that is properly “wired” to the vagus nerve. Any activity that rhythmically compresses the stomach can crudely replicate the normal effect. You may perhaps have observed how a brisk walk can relieve that bloated feeling.

A patient of mine learned a trick from her yoga instructor that eliminated the erratic blood sugar swings caused by her moderate gastroparesis. The trick is to pull in your belly as far as you can, then push it out all the way. Repeat this with a regular rhythm as many times as you can, immediately after each meal. Over a period of weeks or months, your abdominal muscles will become stronger and stronger, permitting progressively more repetitions before you tire. Eventually shoot for 100 reps. This should require less than 4 minutes of your time — a small price to pay for an improvement in your blood sugar profiles.

Another patient discovered an exercise that I call the “back flex.” Sit or stand while bending backward as far as you can. Then bend forward, about the same amount. Repeat this about 20 times.

Although these exercises may sound excessively simple, even silly, their potential benefit to you if you suffer from gastroparesis can be significant.

Chewing Gum Can Make a Big Difference

The act of chewing produces saliva, which not only contains digestive enzymes but also stimulates muscular activity in the stomach and tends to relax the pylorus. Trident “sugarless” gum contains only 1 gram of sugar per piece and so will have very little effect upon your blood sugar. Chewing gum for 1 hour after meals is probably the most effective treatment of gastroparesis outside of major dietary changes.

The above was abstracted from Dr. Bernstein’s book “Diabetes Solution”.
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