Patient Information
Nutrition Management of Diarrhea

Comments, Feedback?
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Nutrition Management of Diarrhea

What is Diarrhea?
Diarrhea is the rapid passage of food and fluids through the intestines causing many bowel movements.

You may have diarrhea if you have:
- Loose or watery stools more than three times in a day.
- If you have a colostomy, and you are emptying the pouch more than three times in a day.
- If you have an ileostomy, and you are emptying the pouch more than six times in a day.

Reasons for having diarrhea:
- Cancer sometimes blocks the intestines, which can cause diarrhea. It is common to alternate between diarrhea and constipation when the intestines are blocked.
- Some chemotherapy and radiation treatments can cause diarrhea. This diarrhea may last for a few weeks after treatments are finished.
- Bacterial and viral infections can cause diarrhea.
- Nutritional supplements, vitamins and some foods may make diarrhea worse.
Common symptoms of diarrhea include:

- Stomach cramps;
- Stomach pain;
- Stomach bloating;
- Dry mouth and tongue;
- Thirst;
- Restless;
- Agitated;
- Passing less urine (passing less water);
- Dark yellow urine;
- Sore skin in the anal area due to frequent bowel movements.

You can make an appointment with a Registered Dietitian to help you with your diet. You do not need a referral.

Telephone: 519-685-8622

Call LRCP’s Telephone Triage Nurse (TTN) or your family doctor if:

► You have 6 or more loose bowel movements daily for one day
► You can’t drink fluids for more than 24 hours

You can reach the TTN Monday to Friday, from 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Call 519-685-8600 and press option ‘3’. After hours, holidays and weekends call the same number and press option ‘2’ to speak with the on-call oncologist.
Managing Your Diarrhea: Food

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Foods to Choose</th>
<th>Foods to Avoid</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White bread, buns, bagels, melba toast, English muffins, breadsticks, pasta, white rice</td>
<td>White grain, high fibre breads</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low sugar, processed cereals like Cheerios™, Cornflakes™, Special K™, Rice Krispies™ or cooked cereals (e.g. porridge, cream of wheat)</td>
<td>High fibre cereals like Bran</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bananas, applesauce, baked apple (no skin), canned fruit</td>
<td>Skins, seed and membranes from fruits and vegetables</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honeydew melon, cantaloupe, watermelon</td>
<td>Berries, rhubarb, grapes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carrots, squash, green and yellow beans, asparagus tips, potato with no skin, sweet potato with no skin</td>
<td>Corn, green peas, turnip, onions, garlic, olives, cabbage, cauliflower, broccoli, brussel sprouts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fat reduced, smooth peanut butter</td>
<td>Beans, lentils, dried peas like chili, baked beans and pea soup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cottage cheese, cheddar cheese, yogurt</td>
<td>Nuts, coconut, dried fruit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lean meat, poultry (without skin)</td>
<td>Highly spiced, high fat processed meets like pepperoni, salami, sausages,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eggs, fish (not fried)</td>
<td>Fried and greasy foods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soda crackers, rice cakes</td>
<td>Popcorn, taco chips</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plain cakes &amp; cookies (Arrowroot™, Social Tea)</td>
<td>Foods high in sugar like candy &amp; cakes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tapioca pudding</td>
<td>Foods and drinks containing Sorbitol (sweetener)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

FOOD DIARY

Instructions for completing your food diary:

- Write down everything that you eat and drink.
- Include brand names whenever possible.

Example: Taco, peppers, hamburg, tomatoes

SYMPTOMS: Normal bowel movements
Moving from Clear Fluids to Solid Foods

1. Drink only clear fluids for 12 to 24 hours. Go to step 2 only when your diarrhea stops.
   If the diarrhea starts again at any time, go back one step.
   For example, if you are at step #4, go back to step #3.
2. Add low fibre, low fat, and starchy foods to your diet.
   Include foods like:
   - soda crackers
   - arrowroot biscuits
   - white breads and toast
   - steamed white rice
   - white potato
   - noodles in broth
3. Add low lactose fluids or soft foods such as Lactaid® / Lacteeze® milk, yogurt, baked custard, lactose free puddings.
4. Add lean meats, poultry or fish cooked without fats.
5. Add low fibre fruits such as canned mandarin oranges, peaches, applesauce and bananas. Add low fibre vegetables such as cooked carrots, cooked green and yellow beans, potatoes and squash.

If the diarrhea continues, you can see a Registered Dietitian. Call the London Regional Cancer Program’s Supportive Care at 519-685-8622 to make an appointment. You do not need a referral.

Helpful Hints When Eating Your Food

If your diarrhea is severe …

- Eat small, frequent meals and snacks.
- Avoid extremely hot or cold foods.
- Eat foods high in sodium and potassium (talk to your Registered Dietitian for more information).
- Avoid large amounts of candy, chocolate, and sugar. Sugars act as a laxative, which can worsen your diarrhea.
- Chew your food with your mouth closed. Talking while you chew, or chewing gum causes you to swallow too much air. This causes more gas and cramps.
- Keep activity to a minimum after meals.
- Rest when you are tired.
- Reduce or stop smoking.

What about…?

If some of your favourite foods are not listed on page 3, write them down and discuss with your nurse or dietitian.

Hamburger and fries

Shepherd’s pie
Managing Your Diarrhea: Fluids

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fluids to Choose</th>
<th>Fluids to Avoid</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>DAIRY</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lactose reduced milk products</td>
<td>Milk, milkshakes, ice cream, sherbet, and pudding. Milk and milk products with lactose may worsen diarrhea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>HOT</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-caffeinated coffees, and herbal teas</td>
<td>Caffeinated beverages like coffee, green tea, tea, and hot cocoa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Flat” non-carbonated pop</td>
<td>Carbonated beverages, caffeinated colas, pop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>COLD DRINKS</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Water, Popsicle, Tang®, Quench®, Kool-Aid® sports drinks like Gatorade®</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strained lemonade, orange, apple, grape, cranberry juice, Resource®, fruit beverages, fruit flavoured</td>
<td>Prune juice &amp; fruit juices with pulp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SOUPS</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broth/bouillon, strained clear soup, consommés</td>
<td>Creamy soups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>OTHER</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jell-O®, Gelatin and Popsicles</td>
<td>Alcoholic beverages like beer, hard liquor, wine</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Helpful Hints When You Are Drinking

If your diarrhea is severe …

- Limit your intake to **clear fluids only**, for 12 to 24 hours. Some good choices include water, clear or strained juices without pulp, and Jell-O®.
- Drink 8 to 10 cups (2000-2500mL) of clear fluids daily.
- If you have an ileostomy, drink an additional 2 cups (500mL) of fluids every day.
- Try warm or room temperature beverages. Avoid very hot and very cold beverages.
- Drink fluids slowly in small amounts (no more than ½ to 1 cup (125-250mL) at a time.
- Avoid drinking through a straw as this will produce more gas in your bowels and make you uncomfortable.
- Clear juice diluted with water may be easier to handle.

**What about…?**

If some of your favourite drinks are not listed on page 5, write them down and discuss with your nurse or dietitian.

*Coca-cola*