
Patient Information

Nutrition Management of Diarrhea

Grey Bruce Health Services
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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.
- 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.

CONTACTS:

- _____
- _____
- Grey Bruce Health Services: 519-372-3922
- London Regional Cancer Program: 519-685-8600

QUESTIONS TO ASK:

Managing Your Diarrhea: Food

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

FOOD DIARY

Instructions for Completing Your Food Diary:

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

FOOD DIARY

| FOODS AND DRINKS | ✓ GOOD | ✗ BAD | SYMPTOMS: DESCRIBE HOW YOU FELT |
|--|--------|-------|---------------------------------|
| <i>Example: Taco, peppers, hamburger, tomatoes</i> | ✓ | | <i>Normal bowel movements</i> |
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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 diarrhea continues ask for a referral to see a Registered Dietitian again. To make an appointment with the Registered Dietitian call **519-372-3922**.

Helpful Hints When Eating Your Food

If your diarrhea is severe ...

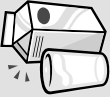


- Eat small, frequent meals and snacks.
- Avoid extremely hot or cold foods.
- Eat foods high in sodium and potassium (talk to your Registered Dietitian for more information).
- Avoid large quantities of candies, chocolate, and sugar. Sugars act as a laxative, which can worsen your diarrhea.
- Chew your 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

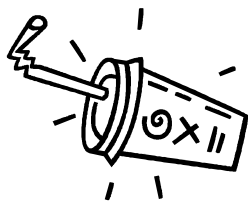
Managing Your Diarrhea: Fluids

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

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
