
Patient Information

Nutrition Management of Diarrhea



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Patient Information

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:

- Your Primary Nurse: _____
- Your Dietitian: _____
- London Regional Cancer Program: 519-685-8600

QUESTIONS TO ASK:

FOOD DIARY

FOODS AND DRINKS	✓ GOOD	✗ BAD	SYMPTOMS: DESCRIBE HOW YOU FELT

Common symptoms of diarrhea include:

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


Ask to speak with a Registered Dietitian to help you with your diet.

Telephone:
519-357-3210 ext. 275







Call your nurse at 519-357-3210 ext. 220 from 7:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. Monday to Friday or on weekends or after hours ask to speak with the Emergency Nurse if:

- ➔ You have 6 or more loose bowel movements daily for one day
- ➔ You can't drink fluids for more than 24 hours



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>

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 **519-357-3210 ext. 275**.

Helpful Hints When Eating Your Food

If your diarrhea is severe ...

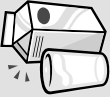


- Eat small, frequent meals and snacks.
- Avoid extremely hot or cold foods.
- Eat foods high in sodium and potassium (talk to your Registered Dietitian for more information).
- Avoid large quantities of candies, chocolate, and sugar. Sugars act as a laxative, which can worsen your diarrhea.
- Chew your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

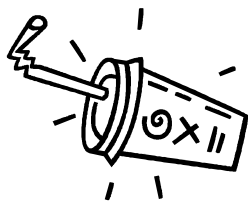
Managing Your Diarrhea: Fluids

	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
