

# Diarrhoea

*This dietary advice sheet gives some general information to help you make the recommended changes to your diet. If you need more detailed advice or if you are following a special diet that makes it difficult to make these changes, please ask your doctor to refer you to a registered dietitian.*

Diarrhoea may have several causes including infection, emotional upset, bowel surgery and side-effects of certain medications or treatments.

If you are not managing to eat and drink as much as usual, you could become dehydrated and may feel weak.



The following suggestions may help to prevent this:

- Drink plenty of fluids to replenish what you lose with the diarrhoea. Aim for 8 – 10 cups of fluid per day, such as water, diluted squashes or fruit juices, still drinks, clear soups. Take small sips if you are feeling sick.
- Limit caffeine intake. Instead choose weak teas and coffees, or decaffeinated varieties including fruit or herbal teas.
- Avoid sugar-free drinks, sweets, mints and chewing gum containing mannitol, sorbitol or xylitol.
- Milk should not make diarrhoea worse, but if you feel it does, try taking less.
- Eat small amounts of food throughout the day. Try dry foods such as biscuits or toast.
- Avoid food/drinks that may irritate your gut such as spicy foods or alcohol.



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- It may be helpful to cut down on fat by avoiding fried foods, pastries, rich cakes and fatty meat.
- Foods high in fibre may irritate your bowels whilst having diarrhoea. Try to cut down on high fibre foods:
  - Limit your intake of fruit and vegetables and eat them cooked rather than raw. Fruit juices are low in fibre.
  - Replace wholemeal bread with white bread and opt for white pasta and rice rather than wholemeal varieties.
  - Replace high fibre or bran cereals with Rice Krispies, Corn Flakes or Ready Brek.
  - Replace wholemeal biscuits with plain biscuits made with white flour such as Rich Tea, Custard Creams, Nice or Malted Milk.
  - Avoid nuts, seeds and pulses (baked beans, kidney beans, lentils and chickpeas etc.).



You may need to take a complete multi-vitamin and mineral supplement daily until you return to your full diet. These are available from your local pharmacy and most supermarkets. Speak with a pharmacist if you have any concerns.

When your diarrhoea has resolved you should be able to slowly start introducing the foods you have been avoiding back into your diet.

