

# Diarrhoea

This information has been given to you to help answer some of the questions you may have regarding foods to eat and avoid if you have diarrhoea. If you have any further questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact the nutrition and dietetics department (contact details given at the end of this leaflet).

## What is diarrhoea and why do I have it?

Diarrhoea is passing loose or watery faeces ('poo') more than three times a day. It affects almost everyone from time to time and can be caused by any illness, infection, medication or treatments that you are having.

Diarrhoea is treated by replacing the fluids, salts and minerals that are lost when you use the toilet frequently. Therefore, it is important to try to eat and drink as much as usual to avoid becoming dehydrated. Below is a useful guide on what to eat and what to avoid if you are suffering a case of diarrhoea:

Food Type	Foods to include	Foods to avoid
Bread, cereal and nuts	White bread, English muffins, plain scones and bagels, pancakes, white pitta breads, plain naan, plain chapatti, poppadoms	Wholemeal, granary, rye bread, all fruit/nut breads (scones, for example), pastries with fruit/dried fruit
	Refined breakfast cereal (for example, Special K, Cornflakes, Rice Krispies)	Wholegrain cereals (such as Weetabix, All Bran, porridge oats, muesli, wheat germ) bulgar wheat
	White rice, pasta, noodles	Brown rice, pasta, couscous
	Cornflour, white flour	Brown, wholemeal or granary flour, wheat germ, pearl barley, quinoa, oatmeal, wholegrain noodles
	Sweet biscuits, such as rich tea	Wholegrain or fruit/nut biscuits, flapjacks, digestives, fruit cake
	Plain crackers	Rye crispbreads, such as Ryvita
	Smooth peanut butter	All nuts

Food Type	Foods to include	Foods to avoid
Vegetables	<p>Flesh only (no peel/skin, seeds or stalks)</p> <p>Sieved tomato sauces (for example, passata)</p> <p>Tomato puree</p> <p>Strained vegetable juices</p>	<p>All vegetable stalks, skins, seeds and peel</p> <p>Raw vegetables and all other vegetables not listed, including cabbage, curly kale, celery, cucumber, fennel, leeks, okra, peppers, peas, pumpkin, mature spinach, sprouts, sweetcorn</p> <p>Yam and cassava</p> <p>Pulses such as baked beans, butter beans, kidney beans, chickpeas and lentils</p>
Fruit	<p>Tinned or ripe, fresh fruit without skin or seeds as advised by dietitian</p> <p>Fruit juices</p> <p>Smooth coconut milk</p>	<p>All fruit skins, stalks, seeds and stones</p> <p>All dried fruit</p> <p>Smoothies</p>
Desserts	<p>Custard, ice cream, milk puddings</p> <p>Clear jelly</p> <p>Plain cakes</p>	<p>Ice cream containing fruit and nuts, cakes, puddings and pies containing any of the following: wholemeal flour, dried fruit, nuts, dried coconut and any fruits as advised to avoid</p>
Milk and milk products	<p>Milk (all types)</p> <p>Cream, sour cream, crème fraiche, fromage frais</p> <p>Smooth yoghurt</p> <p>Any cheese</p>	<p>Any milk products containing fruits, nuts, seeds or cereals</p>

Food Type	Foods to include	Foods to avoid
Meat and alternatives	All meats and fish Eggs Tofu	Gristly and fatty meat, tough skin Fish skin and bones
Beverages	Fruit and vegetable juices Water, soft drinks Weak tea and coffee, herbal tea	Fruit and vegetable juices with pulp Prune juice Drinks containing caffeine, including espresso, Red Bull and cola
Miscellaneous	Smooth or sieved soup Sugar, honey, golden syrup, custard powder Boiled sweets, toffee, caramel, marshmallows, plain/milk/white chocolate Pepper, salt, herbs and spices in moderation (dried or finely chopped) Gravy, tomato sauce, soy sauce, plain crisps, plain pretzels (those without sesame seeds, poppy seeds, and so on)	Soup with pieces (minestrone, for example) Jam or marmalade with skin, peel or pips Chocolate with dried fruit, nuts or seeds, coconut Wholegrain mustard, pickles, relish Hummous, coleslaw, popcorn, cornchips Seeds, including pumpkin, sunflower or sesame seeds

### In summary:

- Eat small, frequent meals and have plenty to drink in between.
- Do not eat high fibre foods.
- Make sure you drink plenty of fluids to replace weight lost through diarrhoea. Aim for at least ten cups per day of water, tea, coffee, soup, Oxo, Bovril, squash or fruit juice.
- It may help to avoid highly spiced foods, alcohol and strong tea or coffee.
- You may find it helpful to have live yoghurt or pro-biotic drinks in your diet to help your bowel return to normal, however, you should discuss this with your dietitian first.
- **If your diarrhoea continues or worsens, contact your hospital doctor or GP, who will assess whether you may need medication.**

## Useful sources of information

### Contact us

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the nutrition and dietetics department on **020 7188 2010** or **020 7188 4128** (Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm). If we are unable to take your call, please leave us a message and we will call you back.

**NHS Choices** – Provides online information and guidance on all aspects of health and healthcare, to help you make choices about your health.

**w:** [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk). See: <http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/diarrhoea/pages/introduction.aspx>

### Pharmacy medicines helpline

For information about any medicines that you have been prescribed at Guy's and St Thomas' hospitals, you can speak to the staff caring for you or call our helpline.

**t:** 020 7188 8748 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday.

**Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)** – To make comments or raise concerns about the Trust's services, please contact PALS. Ask a member of staff to direct you to the PALS office or:

**t:** 020 7188 8801 at St Thomas' **t:** 020 7188 8803 at Guy's **e:** [pals@gstt.nhs.uk](mailto:pals@gstt.nhs.uk)

**Knowledge & Information Centre (KIC)** – For more information about health conditions, support groups and local services, or to search the internet and send emails, please visit the KIC on the Ground Floor, North Wing, St Thomas' Hospital.

**t:** 020 7188 3416

**Language support services** – If you need an interpreter or information about your care in a different language or format, please get in touch using the following contact details.

**t:** 020 7188 8815 **fax:** 020 7188 5953

**NHS Direct** - Offers health information and advice from specially trained nurses over the phone 24 hours a day.

**t:** 0845 4647 **w:** [www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk](http://www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk)

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To join, please call 0848 143 4017, email [members@gstt.nhs.uk](mailto:members@gstt.nhs.uk) or visit [www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk](http://www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk)

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