

# Low fibre diet

This information has been given to you to help answer some of the questions you may have about following a low fibre diet. If you have any further questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact the nutrition and dietetics department (contact details at the end of this leaflet).

## Why follow a low fibre diet?

A low fibre diet is recommended when people need to avoid foods that may irritate an inflamed bowel or obstruct narrowed parts of the bowel. A low fibre diet may be recommended:

- when experiencing diarrhoea caused by a flare-up of inflammatory bowel disease such as Crohn's disease or ulcerative colitis, or as a result of pelvic radiotherapy or graft-versus-host disease of the gut.
- to ease the passage of stools through the bowel when there is an obstruction or stricture.

The need for a low fibre diet is usually temporary but can sometimes be permanent. However, it is still important to eat as wide a variety of food as possible to ensure good nutrition.

## What is a low fibre diet?

A low fibre diet is made up of foods that are easily digested and absorbed, leaving a minimal residue in the bowel. This should help to improve your bowel symptoms.

The following information explains the types of foods to include and foods to avoid as part of a low fibre diet. It also provides some useful tips to help you follow this eating plan.

Food Type	Foods to include	Foods to avoid
<b>Bread, cereal and nuts</b>	White bread, English muffins, plain scones and bagels, pancakes, white pitta bread, plain naan bread, plain chapatti, poppadoms	Wholemeal, granary, rye bread All fruit/nut breads, including walnut, granary or fruit muffins or scones and pastries with fruit/dried fruit
	Refined breakfast cereal, such as Special K, Cornflakes and Rice Krispies	Wholegrain cereals, such as Weetabix, All Bran, porridge oats, muesli, bran, wheat germ, bulgur wheat
	White rice, pasta, noodles	Brown rice, pasta, couscous
	Corn flour, 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, rye crispbreads, nuts
	Plain crackers	
	Smooth peanut butter	

<b>Food Type</b>	<b>Foods to include</b>	<b>Foods to avoid</b>
<b>Fruit</b>	Tinned or ripe fresh fruit without skin or seeds as advised by dietitian  Fruit juices  Smooth coconut milk	All fruit skins, stalks, seeds and stones  All dried fruit  Smoothies
<b>Desserts</b>	Custard, ice cream, milk puddings  Clear jelly  Plain cakes	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 you have been advised to avoid
<b>Vegetables</b>	Flesh only (no peel, seeds or stalks)  Sieved tomato sauces, including passata and tomato puree  Strained vegetable juices	All vegetable stalks, skins, seeds and peel  Raw vegetables and all other vegetables not listed, including cabbage, curly, kale, celery, cucumber, fennel, leeks, okra, peppers, peas, pumpkin, mature spinach, sprouts, sweetcorn, yam, cassava  Pulses such as baked beans, butter beans, kidney beans, chickpeas and lentils
<b>Milk and milk products</b>	Milk (all types), cream, sour cream, crème fraiche, fromage frais, smooth yoghurt, cheese (any)	Any milk products containing fruits, nuts, seeds or cereals
<b>Meat and alternatives</b>	All meats and fish  Eggs  Tofu	Gristly and fatty meat, tough skin, fish skin and bones
<b>Drinks</b>	Fruit and vegetable juices, milk, water, soft drinks, wheat tea and coffee, herbal tea	Fruit and vegetable juices with pulp, prune juice, caffeine-containing drinks, such as espresso, Red Bull and cola

Food Type	Foods to include	Foods to avoid
Miscellaneous	<p>Smooth or sieved soup.</p> <p>Sugar, honey, golden syrup, custard powder, boiled sweets, toffee, caramel, marshmallows, plain/milk/white chocolate</p> <p>Pepper, salt, herbs and spices in moderation (dried or finely chopped)</p> <p>Gravy, tomato sauce, soy sauce, plain crisps, plain pretzels (without sesame seeds)</p>	<p>Soup with pieces, such as minestrone</p> <p>Jam or marmalade with skin, peel or pips</p> <p>Chocolate with dried fruit, nuts or seeds, coconut</p> <p>Wholegrain mustard, pickles, relish</p> <p>Humous, coleslaw, popcorn, corn chips</p> <p>Seeds, including pumpkin, sunflower and sesame seeds</p>

### Useful Tips:

- Eat small meals at regular intervals (every three to four hours).
- Chew food slowly and thoroughly.
- Avoid food that is too hot or too cold.
- When introducing new foods, introduce only one at a time. This will help you to rule out foods that aggravate your symptoms.
- Avoid large quantities of caffeine or alcohol as these may worsen your symptoms.
- Avoid rich sauces and spicy foods if they worsen your symptoms.
- It is important to maintain a good variety of foods, especially if you follow these guidelines for more than a few weeks.
- Large volumes of milk may not be well tolerated. If so, just use small quantities (in tea and coffee, for example).
- Avoid fizzy drinks if they worsen your symptoms.
- Be cautious with ready meals and pre-prepared pizza and pies as they may contain some of the ingredients known to aggravate your symptoms.
- If eating is difficult, speak to your dietitian about ways to increase your calorie and protein intake to ensure adequate nutrition. Nutritional supplements may be considered. Your dietitian may recommend a multi-vitamin and mineral supplement.

### Suggested meal plan:

#### Breakfast:

- Low fibre cereal (for example Rice Krispies, Cornflakes, Special K) with milk and sugar (if desired)
- White bread or toast with margarine/butter and honey, Marmite or seedless jam.

#### Mid-morning snack:

- Sweet or plain biscuit
- Fruit as allowed or yoghurt (with no fruit or nuts).

**Lunch:**

- Meat, chicken, fish or egg
- White pasta, rice, bread/bread roll, potato (no skin)
- Vegetables as allowed.

**Mid-afternoon snack:**

- Similar to mid-morning snack

**Evening meal:**

- Meat, chicken, fish or egg
- White pasta, rice, bread/bread roll, potato (no skin)
- Vegetables as allowed

**Evening Snack:**

- Similar to mid-morning/mid-afternoon snack. You may wish to make these snacks appropriate for the time of day you will be eating them.

## 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.

**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

**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

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