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About your low fibre or low residue diet

***Information for
patients and carers***

Dietetic Department

You have been given this leaflet to help answer some of your questions about following a low fibre and/or low residue diet. If you have any further questions, please contact your dietitian.

Why have I been asked to follow a low fibre diet?

You may have tummy pain or bloating due to:

- A narrowed section or blocked part of the bowel.
- Adhesions restricting the flow through your bowel.

Or you may have diarrhoea caused by:

- A bug or infection
- A flare up of inflammatory bowel disease (such as Crohn's disease or ulcerative colitis).
- Bowel inflammation or irritation as result of radiotherapy to your pelvic area.

The need for a low fibre diet can be temporary or permanent; however it's still important to eat a wide variety of foods to make sure that you are well-nourished.

What is a low fibre diet?

A low fibre diet is made up of foods that you can digest and absorb easily, leaving minimal waste products or fibre (roughage) in the bowel. A low fibre diet may help reduce your bowel symptoms or reduce the chance of a blockage by limiting the volume or quantity of foodstuffs going into your bowel

The tables on the following pages explain the types of foods to include and foods to avoid as part of a low fibre or low residue diet.

We have included useful tips to make following this diet easier.

	Foods allowed	Foods to avoid
Starchy foods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • White bread and rolls • White flour and cornflour • White pasta • White rice • Cous cous • Pastry (white flour) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wholemeal or granary bread or flour • Wholemeal pasta • Brown rice • Pearl barley • Quinoa • Bread with added nuts
Breakfast cereals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cornflakes • Rice crispies • Coco pops 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All wholemeal cereals (such as branflakes, wheat bisks, shredded wheat, Cheerios etc) • Porridge and muesli • All cereals or breakfast items containing dried nuts and fruit
Dairy (See page 9 about low residue diet limit to two servings a day maximum)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Milk • Yogurts (smooth) • Cheddar cheese • Soft cheeses • Butter • Cream 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any yogurts, ice cream and cheese containing fruit or nut pieces

	Foods allowed	Foods to avoid
Vegetables <i>1 to 2 portions daily</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peeled, well-cooked, very soft or easily-mashed vegetables • Freshly cooked potatoes (not skins) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raw vegetables or salad • Baked beans • Split peas and lentils in casseroles or soups • Peas, sweetcorn • Celery or mushrooms even cooked in soups • Seeds, pips, tough skins • Potato skins
Fruit <i>1 to 2 portions daily</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tinned peeled peaches, plums, apples or pears • Ripe bananas • Stewed fruit • Clear fruit juice • Fruit juice with no pulp 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All dried fruit • Fresh fruit with pips, skin and pulp • Citrus fruit • Pineapple • Berries • Prunes • Fruit smoothies • Fruit juices with pulp or bits

	Foods allowed	Foods to avoid
Meat, fish and eggs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All tender meat, fish and poultry • All eggs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tough, gristly meat. • Fat or rind • Quiches or pies containing vegetables, nuts or seeds
Nuts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid all, including coconut and almonds
Desserts and sweets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sponge cakes or cupcakes (made with white flour) • Custard • Ice cream • Jelly • Semolina, rice pudding • Chocolate • Seedless jam • Rich tea biscuit • Cream crackers • Shortbread • Pancake • Plain scones 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wholemeal/high fibre cakes and biscuits • Fruit cake and mincemeat pies • Chocolate, toffee and fudge with dried fruit or nuts • Marmalade with peel and jam with chunks of fruit or seeds • Popcorn • Marzipan • Digestive biscuits • Flapjacks • Oatcakes • Cereal bars

	Foods allowed	Foods to avoid
Fats	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All okay in moderation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None to avoid
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear soups • Sugar, honey and syrup • Ice cream, jelly • Spices, pepper • Stock cubes • Smooth condiments (such as tomato ketchup, smooth mustard) • Tea, coffee, squash 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lentil, vegetable and mushroom soups • Pickles and chutneys • Horseradish sauce • Tomato relish

Useful tips

- Eat small meals at regular intervals (every 3 to 4 hours)
- Chew food slowly and thoroughly
- Avoid large quantities of caffeine or alcohol as these may make your symptoms worse.
- Rich spicy foods may make your symptoms worse.
- It's important to eat a wide variety of foods, especially if you follow these guidelines for more than a few weeks
- You may not tolerate large volumes of milk. If you don't, try using small quantities of milk in tea and coffee or use lactose-free dairy products
- Avoid fizzy drinks if these worsen your symptoms
- Be cautious with ready meals and pre-prepared pizza and pies as they may contain some of the ingredients that make your symptoms worse.
- If eating is difficult, speak to your dietitian about ways to increase your calorie and protein intake to make sure you are well-nourished.
- If medical staff or your dietitian suggest trying new foods, introduce only one at a time as this will help rule out foods that may make your symptoms worse.

Some useful tips that others have found helpful

- If you miss onions in your meals try adding onion powder, celery salt or add a whole onion (remove before eating) while the food is cooking to enhance the flavor.
- Passata can be useful in casseroles and stews as an alternative to tinned or fresh tomatoes.
- Eating out and takeaways: try a small amount of tender meat and sauce with some white rice or potato.
- Try to work out an alternative for a food you really miss. For example instead of peanuts, try a thin spread of smooth peanut butter on a low fibre cracker.
- You may find that you don't have to restrict high calorie foods if your appetite is reduced so you can enjoy foods like cream cakes, ice cream and chocolate.

What about a low residue diet - is it different?

Yes, but only slightly different and sometimes a low fibre diet may be enough. Check with medical staff or your dietitian if you are unsure.

Sometimes the terms low residue and low fibre are used interchangeably.

A low residue diet is more restrictive than a low fibre diet. As well as the guidance in this leaflet, you should also:

- limit dairy products to a maximum of 2 small servings a day or try lactose-free dairy products.
- avoid fruits and vegetables of any kind.
- avoid all caffeine.

Contact details

Dietitians

Nutrition and Dietetics

Rosehill House

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 01224 552935

(please leave a message on our voicemail and we'll get back to you as soon as we can).

This leaflet is also available in large print.

Other formats and languages can be supplied on request. Please call Quality Development on 01224 554149 for a copy. Ask for leaflet 1852.

Feedback from the public helped us to develop this leaflet. If you have any comments on how we can improve it, please call 01224 554149 to let us know.