

Patient advice sheet

Low Fibre Diet

Who is this leaflet for?

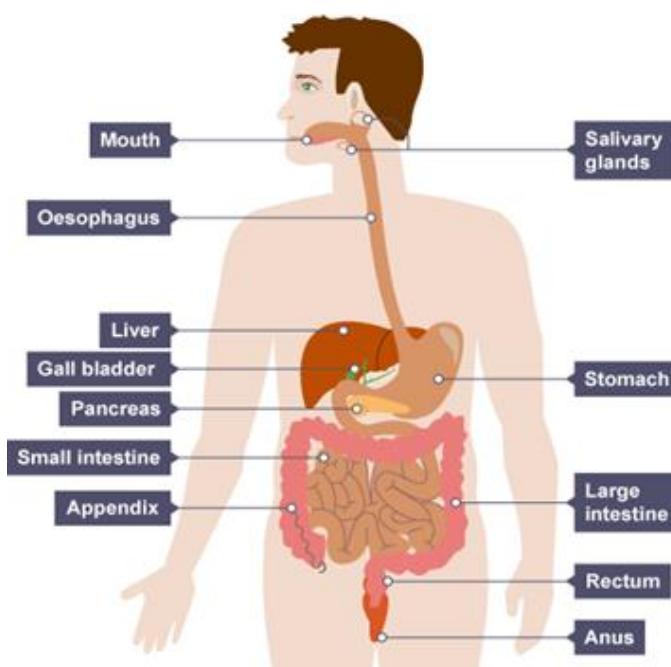
This leaflet is for people who may need to restrict their fibre intake for a medical reason. You will be advised exactly how to do this with the guidance and support of your Dietitian.

You may be advised to follow a low fibre diet:

- before and/or after surgery
- after the insertion of a colonic stent
- if you have bowel adhesions or narrowing of the colon
- during an active flare-up of ulcerative colitis, Crohn's disease or diverticulitis
- if you are suffering from diarrhoea
- if you are experiencing excessive wind and bloating
- if you are experiencing abdominal pain or cramping
- if you have irritable bowel syndrome (IBS)
- if you have a high output ileostomy/colostomy

What is Fibre?

Dietary fibre (also known as roughage) is the part of **food** that cannot be easily digested. Fibre is not digested in our small intestine - it moves into our colon or large intestine where some of it will be broken down. Fibre also helps our stools form a 'bulk' and makes them solid.



Different Types of Fibre:

There are two main types of fibre: **soluble and insoluble fibre**.

Soluble fibre is easily digested in our large intestines/colon and dissolves with water to form a gel. For example:

- porridge oats
- the flesh of fruits e.g. apples, pears, bananas
- root vegetables

Insoluble fibre passes through our body without being broken down or absorbed. For example:

- the skins, pips and seeds of fruit and vegetables
- fibrous fruits and vegetables e.g. rhubarb, celery
- raw or undercooked vegetables
- vegetables that humans are unable to digest e.g. mushrooms, sweetcorn, lettuce and other salad leaves

An example of the two different types of fibre can be seen in a tomato.

Soluble fibre is the fleshy part of the tomato. This will dissolve in the large intestine and helps to add bulk to stools.

Insoluble fibre is the skin and seeds of the tomato. These are the parts that are not possible for your gut to digest.

What is a low fibre diet?

A low fibre diet is one that will help you to reduce the volume and frequency of your stool. It also lengthens the time food passes through your gut.

How long will you need to follow this diet?

These changes are usually only recommended for a short period of time. Your Dietitian will follow your progress and advise you on the next stage of your treatment.

What foods do you need to avoid?

Some foods need to be completely avoided. These include the pips, skins and seeds of fruits and vegetables, wholegrains, pulses and beans, which are not easily digested. The tables on pages 3-7 provide detailed lists.

What fruit and vegetables can you eat?

When you follow a low fibre diet you need to limit how many fruit and vegetables you eat. You must aim to have no more than 1 portion of fruit and 1 portion of vegetables each day. A portion is roughly 80 grams, or the equivalent of a handful. Always choose from the 'foods allowed' lists.

Fruit

Foods allowed Limit to 1 portion per day	Foods to avoid
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apples (peeled) • Apricots (fresh, peeled) • Bananas • Mango • Melon • Nectarines (peeled) • Papaya • Pears (Peeled) • Peaches (peeled) • Plums (peeled) • Watermelon (no pips) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blackberries • Blackcurrants • Blueberries • Cherries • Clementines • Coconut • Cranberries (fresh and dried) • Dates • Dried apricots • Figs • Grapefruit • Grapes • Kiwi • Mandarins • Oranges • Passion fruit • Pineapple • Pomegranate • Prunes • Raisins • Raspberries • Redcurrants • Rhubarb • Satsumas • Strawberries • Sultanas

Vegetables

Foods allowed Limit to 1 portion per day	Foods to avoid
<p>All vegetables need to be well cooked</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aubergine (peeled and deseeded) • Avocado • Broccoli (no stalks) • Butternut squash • Cabbage (white or green) • Carrots • Cauliflower (no stalks) • Celeriac • Chilli purée • Courgette (peeled) • Cucumber (peeled and deseeded) • Daikon (Asian radish) • Garlic purée • Gem squash • Ginger purée • Horseradish purée • Lemongrass purée • Marrow (peeled) • Onion (well-cooked) • Parsnips • Patty pan (peeled) • Peppers (peeled and deseeded) • Pumpkin • Shallots (well-cooked) • Spinach (well cooked) • Swede • Tomato passata • Tomatoes (peeled and deseeded) • Turnips • Smooth vegetable soups (made with allowed vegetables) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asparagus • Baby corn • Bean sprouts • Beetroot • Bok Choi • Broad beans • Brussel sprouts • Beans (French, green, runner) • Celery • Chicory • Chilli (fresh) • Coleslaw • Edamame • Fennel • Garlic (whole, raw or undercooked) • Gherkins • Ginger • Globe artichokes • Jerusalem artichokes • Kohlrabi • Leeks • Lemongrass • Lettuce • Mangetout • Mushrooms • Okra • Olives • Onions (whole, raw or undercooked) • Pak choi • Peas • Pickled onions • Radish • Rocket • Salad leaves • Shallots (whole, raw or undercooked) • Soya beans • Spinach (raw) • Spring greens

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spring onions • Sugar snap peas • Sweetcorn • Tomatoes (whole, with skins and pips) • Watercress <p>Other</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All skins, pips and seeds • Tough stalks of vegetables e.g. cauliflower, broccoli • Raw vegetables • Soup with whole vegetables e.g. minestrone
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What starchy foods can you eat?

Cereals, Bread & Flour

Foods allowed	Foods to avoid
<p>Breakfast Cereals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coco pops® • Cheerios® • Cornflakes® • Frosties® • Porridge (plain) • Ready Brek® • Rice Krispies® • Special K® (without berries) <p>Breads etc.</p> <p>White only</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bagels (plain) • Brioche • Cheese scones • Crackers (without seeds and grains) • Crispbreads • Croissants • Crumpets (plain) • Melba toast • Muffins (plain, without berries) • Oat cakes • Rice cakes 	<p>Breakfast Cereals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cereals containing dried fruit, seeds or nuts • All Bran® • Bran flakes® • Crunchy Nut Cornflakes® • Fruit n Fibre® • Granola • Muesli • Oats (raw) • Porridge with berries • Special K with berries • Sultana Bran® • Wholemeal, wholegrain and bran cereals • Weetabix® <p>Breads etc.</p> <p>Wholemeal, wholegrain, granary, rye, seeded</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bagels • Crackers (wholegrain) • Crispbreads (wholegrain or seeded)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scotch pancakes (plain) • White bread, rolls, baguettes • White pitta bread • White tortilla wraps <p>Flour:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chickpea flour • Cornflour • Cornmeal • Rice flour • Potato flour • White Flour • Cassava (Garri) flour • Yam flour 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Granary bread, rolls, baguettes, pitta bread, wraps • Malted bread (Soreen®) • Muffins (with berries or made with wholegrain flour) • Multigrain bread • Rye bread • Seeded bread • Wholegrain bread, rolls, baguettes, pitta bread, wraps • Wholemeal bread, rolls, baguettes, pitta bread, wraps <p>Flour:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bran • Granary flour • Wholemeal flour • Wholegrain flour
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Potato, Rice and Pasta

Foods allowed	Foods to avoid
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Buckwheat • Hash browns (plain) • Jacket potato (no skins) • Millet • Noodles (egg, rice, vermicelli, udon) • Pastry (made with white flour) • Plantain (peeled) • Potatoes peeled white or sweet (boiled, mashed, fried or roasted) • Rice pudding • Tapioca, sago, semolina • Waffles • White couscous • White pasta • White rice (long grain, basmati) • Yams (peeled) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Barley • Brown pasta • Brown rice • Hash browns (made with onion) • Pastry (made with wholemeal flour) • Pearl barley • Skins of jacket potatoes • Spelt • Wholemeal couscous • Wholemeal pasta • Wholemeal rice • Whole wheat couscous • Wild rice

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yorkshire pudding (made with white flour) 	
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What protein foods can you eat?

Meat, fish, poultry, eggs

Foods allowed	Foods to avoid
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All types of fish, meat and meat products (fresh, frozen, tinned) • Eggs • Quorn products • Smooth paté or liver sausage • Soya mince • Tofu 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coarse paté made with onions • Convenience items which contain whole grains and vegetables e.g. onions, peppers • Skin and bones of fish

Pulses, nuts and seeds

Foods allowed Limit to 25g per day	Foods to avoid
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ground nuts • Ground seeds • Marzipan • Smooth peanut butter and other nut butters • Smooth houmous 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All beans (black, borlotti, cannellini, kidney, soya, baked beans, broad beans) • All pulses (lentils, yellow split peas) • All seeds e.g. sunflower, pumpkin, sesame, poppy, chia • All whole nuts • Chickpeas • Crunchy nut butters • Houmous with whole chickpeas

What dairy foods can you eat?

Foods allowed	Foods to avoid
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Butter, margarine, spread • Buttermilk • Cheese (without dried fruit and nuts) • Cream, crème fraîche 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cheese (with nuts, seeds or dried fruits) • Ice cream and sorbet (with nuts, seeds, pips or whole fruit)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Custard • Milk (almond, cow's, goat's, oat, rice, sheep's, soya) • Yoghurt (natural, smooth) • Ice cream and sorbet (no nuts and seeds) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yoghurt (with nuts, seeds, or whole fruit)
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What sweet treats can you eat?

Foods allowed	Foods to avoid
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Boiled or jelly sweets • Biscuits (rich tea, custard creams, malted milk, bourbon creams, Nice®, ginger nuts, shortbread) • Cakes made with white flour (without dried fruit or nuts) • Chocolate (without dried fruit and nuts) • Jelly or milk jelly (without fruit) • Marshmallows • Pancakes • Scones (plain) • Toffee, fudge 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Biscuits containing dried fruit (fig rolls, Garibaldi®) • Cakes made with dried fruit and nuts • Cereal bars containing dried fruit and nuts • Chocolate with nuts, seeds and dried fruit • Flapjacks • Fruit scones • Hot cross buns • Jelly made with fruit • Nougat • Tea cakes • Wholegrain biscuits (Hobnobs®, Digestives)

What savoury treats can you eat?

Foods allowed	Foods to avoid
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cheese biscuits (mini cheddars, Ritz®, TUC® sandwich biscuits) • Cheese scones • Cheese straws • Crisps, tortilla chips • Plain bread sticks • Smooth dips (taramasalata, smooth guacamole) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bombay Mix • Dips that contain whole tomatoes, cucumbers, onions (salsa, tzatziki) • Nuts • Popcorn

What condiments can you eat?

Foods allowed	Foods to avoid
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Barbecue sauce• Bovril®• Brown sauce• Dried herbs• Ginger, garlic, lemongrass, chilli, horseradish purée• Golden syrup• Gravy (no onions)• Honey• Lemon curd• Maple syrup• Marmite®• Mayonnaise• Nutella®, hazelnut spread• Powdered spices• Salad cream• Salt and pepper• Seedless jam or marmalade• Smooth nut butters (almond, hazelnut, peanut)• Smooth chutneys• Smooth mustard• Soy sauce• Tabasco® sauce• Tomato ketchup• Treacle• Worcester sauce• Vegemite®	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Chutney (with fruit)• Jam with seeds• Marmalade with peel• Pickles & relishes• Salad dressing made with wholegrain mustard• Stalks and leaves of fresh herbs• Wholegrain mustard

What can you eat for breakfast?

- Avocado on white toast
- Eggs: omelette, scrambled, poached or boiled with white toast
- Cereal e.g. corn flakes, Rice Krispies®
- Ready Brek® or plain porridge
- Natural yoghurt and fruit (from the allowed list - one portion per day)
- Smooth yoghurt, fromage frais, Petit Filou®, Skyr® yoghurt, Coconut collaborative® natural yoghurt
- Glass of fruit juice (no bits)
- Milkshake (made with one portion of 'allowed' fruit only)

What can you eat for your main meal?

Always limit vegetables to one portion per day and choose from the 'allowed' lists

- Lancashire hotpot
- Cottage pie / shepherd's pie
- Corned beef hash
- Stews and casseroles
- Grilled, roasted, sautéed meat, fish or tofu
- Minced meats e.g. chilli con carne (no beans) or Bolognese
- Macaroni cheese
- Poached / grilled fish (no bones)
- Fish pie, fish mornay
- Tinned fish (tuna, salmon – no bones) with mayonnaise or sauce
- Meat or fish curry (no onions or peppers or vegetables from the 'avoid' lists)

Serve any of the above with mashed potatoes, mashed sweet potatoes, peeled boiled potatoes, polenta, white couscous, quinoa, white rice or white pasta.

What can you eat for a snack meal?

- Eggs - scrambled, poached, fried or boiled
- Omelette with cheese
- Quiche (no onions or products from the avoid lists)
- Soufflés e.g. cheese, salmon
- White toast, crumpets, muffins or pitta bread with:
 - tinned salmon or tuna with mayonnaise
 - smooth houmous
 - avocado
 - cheese
 - boneless sardines or kippers
 - eggs
- Sandwiches made with white bread, baps, bagels with:
 - cold meats e.g. chicken, turkey
 - corned beef
 - paté and pastes ie. salmon, beef, chicken
 - smoked salmon and cream cheese
 - tinned tuna or salmon
 - egg mayonnaise
 - smooth houmous
 - Marmite® or Bovril®
 - smooth nut butters
 - cheese or cream cheese
- Bowl of soup

- Chicken, oxtail, carrot and coriander, butternut squash
- Avoid soups with lots of vegetables or soups that contain beans or lentils
- Add a small portion of noodles or pasta to a smooth soup or broth
- Wontons in clear soup or broth
- Jacket potato (no skin) served with:
 - cheese and butter
 - tuna mayonnaise
 - egg mayonnaise
 - tikka or curry sauce
 - coronation chicken
- White crackers or breadsticks with:
 - dips e.g. sour cream, taramasalata, guacamole
 - tuna, salmon or egg mayonnaise
 - smooth houmous
- Avocado with flaked crab meat or prawns in a cocktail sauce

What can you eat for pudding?

- Milk puddings e.g. plain or chocolate custard, rice pudding, semolina, tapioca
- Sponge pudding or cake with cream, smooth ice cream or custard. e.g. Madeleines, Battenberg, Madeira, Angel Slices, caramel cake bars, mini chocolate rolls, lemon slices
- Blancmange, mousse, fruit fool, trifle (no pips), milk jelly, Angel Delight®, instant whip
- Tinned or stewed fruit with added cream, yoghurt, crème fraîche, custard or ice cream (one portion of fruit per day)
- Fruit crumble (no oats or dried fruit) with added cream, yoghurt, ice cream or custard (one portion of fruit per day)
- Smooth yoghurt, fromage frais, egg custard, crème caramel
- Smooth ice cream, sorbet, frozen yoghurt, Mini Milk®, Mini Magnum®

What snacks can you eat between meals?

- Piece of fruit (only one portion from the allowed fruit per day)
- Plain biscuits e.g. rich tea, Nice®, malted milk, custard creams
- Yoghurt or fromage frais
- Spoonful of smooth nut butter e.g. almond butter, peanut butter
- Portion of cheese
- Glass of milk

What can you drink?

It is important to drink plenty of fluid each day to prevent dehydration. **Try to drink at least 8 glasses of fluid a day.** This can include water, squash, juice, milk, tea and coffee. Always try to choose unsweetened drinks.

How and when should you reintroduce fibre to your diet?

The re-introduction of fibre should be taken slowly and with the advice of the Dietitian who is looking after you. They will advise you when it is safe to start eating more fibre. When you are allowed to relax your diet, always try to start by introducing one food at a time.

References:

- BBC Bitesize: <https://www.bbc.com/bitesize/guides/z9pv34j/revision/1>
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- Eswaran S, Muir J, William C (2013) Fiber and functional gastrointestinal disorders. *The American Journal of Gastroenterology* **108**: 718-727
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Notes and Questions:

Please remember that this leaflet is intended as general information only. We aim to make the information as up to date and accurate as possible, but please note that it is subject to change. Please therefore always check specific advice on any concerns you may have with your doctor.

How can I help reduce healthcare associated infections?

Infection prevention & control is important to the well-being of our patients and for that reason we have infection prevention & control procedures in place. Keeping your hands clean is an effective way of preventing the spread of infections. Please follow our infection prevention and control guidelines when visiting our healthcare sites. Further information is available on our website.

Patient Advice Sheet

If you would like a copy of this information on audiotape, in large print or translated, please call the Patient Advice Liaison Service on 01296 831120 or email bht.pals@nhs.net