



# A guide to...

## Low Fibre Diet *Patient Information*

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## What is fibre?

Dietary fibre (also known as roughage) can be found in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, breakfast cereals, and pulses. There are two types of fibre:

- **Soluble fibre:** dissolves in water to form a gel-like substance, this substance holds water during digestion and softens the stool. It also helps us to feel full for a longer time by slowing down the digesting process.
- **Insoluble fibre:** doesn't dissolve in water and passes through your small intestine without breaking down. It adds bulk to your stool and helps move food quickly through your stomach and intestines, keeping your gut clean.

## What is a low-fibre diet?

A low-fibre diet avoids foods high in insoluble fibre to relieve bowel symptoms. In most cases, a low-fibre diet is required only temporarily, although some people may need to follow it indefinitely. Your doctor or dietitian will follow your progress and advise you on your next step of treatment.

## Why do I need a low-fibre diet?

The general public is usually advised to follow a high-fibre diet. However, fibre (especially insoluble fibre) can further aggravate symptoms in some gastrointestinal conditions.

You may need to follow a low fibre diet if you:

- Have high stoma output
- Have slow gastrointestinal transit
- Have bowel adhesions or narrowing of the colon
- Are experiencing diarrhoea, abdominal pain, excessive wind and bloating
- Are experiencing active flare-ups of Crohn's disease, ulcerative colitis, bowel inflammation, irritable bowel syndrome (IBS), and diverticulitis.

You may also need to follow a low-fibre diet:

- Before and/or after abdominal surgery
- Before colonoscopy or colonography
- After the insertion of a colonic stent

Your diet should continue to be varied and you should include foods from all the food groups. The tables below will give you an idea of what foods you can freely have and which ones you should avoid for the next weeks:

## Starchy foods

	<b>Foods to choose</b>	<b>Foods to avoid</b>
Bread, flour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• White only</li> <li>• bagels, baguettes, bread, brioche, chapatti, croissants, crumpets, naan, pitta, rolls, scones, tortillas wraps</li> <li>• Corn starch, rice flour, potato starch, white flour, cassava flour, yam flour</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wholemeal, wholegrain, granary, rye, seeded</li> <li>• bagels, baguettes, bread, brioche, chapatti, croissants, crumpets, naan, pitta, rolls, scones, tortillas wraps</li> <li>• Malted bread (Soreen®)</li> <li>• Chickpea flour, bran, granary flour, millet flour, wholemeal flour, wholegrain flour, wheat germ</li> </ul>
Crackers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plain: cream crackers, biscuits, bread sticks, crispbread, crisps, melba toast, pretzels</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wholemeal crispbreads and crackers</li> <li>• Ryvita, Hovis biscuits</li> </ul>
Biscuits and cakes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Biscuits, cakes, and pastry made with white flour.</li> <li>• Muffins, sponge cakes, short bread, rich tea, bourbon</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Biscuits, cakes and pastry made with wholemeal flour, oats, seeds, nuts, dried fruits</li> <li>• Danish pastry, digestives, fig rolls, flapjacks, fruit cake, Garibaldi, Hobnobs, mince pies, oat cakes</li> </ul>
Cereals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coco Pops, Cheerios, Cornflakes, Frosties, Rice Krispies, Special K (without berries)</li> <li>• Rice Krispies Cereal Bars, Coco Pops Cereal Bars</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cereal containing dried fruit, seed or nuts</li> <li>• All Bran, Bran flakes, Fruit n Fibre, granola, Muesli, porridge oats, Special K with berries, Sultana Bran, Weetabix</li> <li>• Alpen cereal bars, Nature Valley oat bars, Nutri-Grain Bars</li> </ul>
Rice and pasta	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• White rice</li> <li>• pasta, noodles (egg, instant, ramen, rice vermicelli, udon)</li> <li>• Tapioca, sago, semolina</li> <li>• White couscous</li> <li>• Plain hashbrowns</li> <li>• Yorkshire puddings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brown rice, wholemeal rice</li> <li>• Wholegrain pasta, wholegrain noodles (egg, instant, ramen, rice vermicelli, udon)</li> <li>• Spelt</li> <li>• Wholewheat couscous, pearl barley, quinoa</li> <li>• Hashbrowns with onion</li> </ul>

## Vegetables & Fruits

	Foods to choose	Foods to avoid
Vegetables	<p><b>Flesh only – no seeds, stalks, skin</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Well-cooked root vegetables (carrots, parsnips, swede, beetroot), spinach, cauliflower, broccoli, marrow, aubergine, zucchini, butternut squash, pumpkin</li> <li>Boiled potato, sweet potato, plantain, yam</li> <li>Pepper, cucumber, shredded iceberg</li> <li>Tomato passata, tomato puree</li> <li>Smooth vegetable soup</li> </ul>	<p><b>Avoid vegetables with seeds, stalks, skin</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Asparagus, artichokes Brussel sprouts, celery, corns, kale, okra</li> <li>Beans (French, green, runner, edamame)</li> <li>Leeks, lemongrass, onions, spring onion, shallots, garlic, ginger</li> <li>Pickled onions, gherkins, olive</li> </ul>
Fruits	<p><b>Flesh only – no seeds and skin</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Melon, watermelon, banana (ripe), mango, seedless grapes</li> <li>Peeled/ canned/ stewed apricot, apple, lychee, nectarine, pear</li> <li>Fruit juice (no bits)</li> </ul>	<p><b>Avoid fruits with skin and seeds</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Berries (blueberry, black berry), citrus fruits (grapefruit, mandarin, orange), rhubarb</li> <li>Canned pineapples, prunes</li> <li>Dried fruits</li> <li>Fruit juice with bits, smoothies</li> </ul>

## Dairy

	Foods to choose	Foods to avoid
Dairy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All types of milk and cream, sour cream, crème fraiche, cottage cheese</li> <li>All types of milk alternatives (nut milks, soy milk, oat milk)</li> <li>Yoghurt, ice cream, sorbet (without fruits or nuts)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cheese, ice cream, sorbet, yoghurt (with nuts, seeds, whole fruit/dried fruit)</li> </ul>

## Meat, fish, poultry, eggs

	Foods to choose	Foods to avoid
Meat, fish, poultry, eggs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All types of tender and soft chicken, fish, meat</li> <li>Eggs</li> <li>Smooth pâté or liver sausage</li> <li>Tofu</li> <li>Quorn products</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Skin and bones of fish (sardines)</li> <li>Coarse pâté made with onions</li> <li>Convenience items that contain whole grains and vegetables for example, onions, peppers</li> </ul>

## Pulses, nuts, and seeds

	Foods to choose	Foods to avoid
Pulses, nuts, and seeds	Limit daily intake to 25g/day <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Smooth hummus, nut butters</li> <li>• Smooth lentils/chickpea (without skins) puree</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All pulses (soy, lentils, chickpeas, yellow split peas)</li> <li>• All nuts and seeds</li> <li>• Crunchy nut butters</li> <li>• Hummus with whole chickpeas</li> <li>• Plant based protein powders (pea protein, flaxseed protein)</li> </ul>

## Miscellaneous

	Foods to choose	Foods to avoid
Miscellaneous	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seedless jam, marmalade, butter, margarine</li> <li>• Boiled sweets, caramel, chocolate, fudge, honey, marshmallow, sugar, syrup, toffee (without fruits and nuts)</li> <li>• Salt, pepper, herbs, spices in moderation</li> <li>• Gravy, ketchup, salad cream, smooth chutneys, smooth mustard, soy sauce, tamari</li> <li>• Marmite, Bovril, Oxo, Miso</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chutneys</li> <li>• Pickles and relish</li> <li>• Stems and leaves of fresh herbs</li> <li>• Wholegrain mustard</li> </ul>

## Useful tips

- Digestion begins in your mouth, therefore eat in a relaxed atmosphere, and take time to chew your food well.
- Aim for a minimum of 8-10 cups of fluid a day. This can be any liquid including tea, coffee, water, juice, milk, squash, or cold milkshakes.
- Consider taking a multivitamin and mineral tablet daily if you need to follow a low-fibre diet for more than one to two weeks.
- You may also be advised to avoid excessive caffeine, alcohol, fizzy drinks, large amounts of milk, spicy foods, and fatty or gristly meat, as these can worsen gastrointestinal symptoms.
- Some people need medication to prevent constipation whilst on a low-fiber diet. Consult with your doctor if necessary.
- If you notice weight loss, speak to your dietitian about ways to increase your calorie and protein intake to ensure adequate nutrition.

## Reintroduction of foods containing fibre

The dietitian or your doctor will discuss with you when to start reintroducing foods containing fibre and how to do it. This may take up to five weeks. It is advised to:

- Introduce **one food at a time** and monitor symptoms for one to two days before trying the next food.
  - Add foods from the 'avoid list' gradually, one serving\* per day.
  - It may help to keep a '**food and symptoms diary**' over the period of reintroduction, to identify those foods that are not well tolerated.
- ✓ You can start trying boiled potato with the skin on and one tablespoon of other cooked vegetables from the 'avoid list' (cooked celery, kale, leek).
  - ✓ Then, introduce raw fruits and vegetables (apple, pear, peach, tomato, cucumber)
  - ✓ If this is well tolerated, add wholegrain cereal/ pasta/ rice/ bread into one of your main meals and gradually return to a normal diet by introducing the foods from the 'avoid list'
  - ✓ Leave onions, sweet corn, peas, beans, lentils, and any not well-tolerated food until you are fully recovered.
- \* A serving is roughly the amount that fits in the palm of your hand: one large fruit or vegetable like a tomato or apple, a handful of berries, two to three tablespoons of cooked vegetables, beans, pasta, or rice, one to two slices of bread, or a tablespoon of nuts or dried fruit.

## Menu Ideas

### Breakfast

- Low fibre cereal with milk and banana
- Plain yoghurt with tinned peaches
- Scrambled egg with toast (white bread)
- Stewed apple and cinnamon
- White toast with butter and honey or jam

### Meal Ideas

- Beef stew with dumplings and swede
- Butter chicken with white basmati rice/ white naan
- Cheese omelette
- Chicken casserole with potatoes (no skin) and carrots
- Cottage pie
- Grilled salmon with boiled potatoes and roasted butternut squash
- Jacket potato (no skin) with tuna mayo
- Pasta with carbonara sauce and prawns
- White roll/bread with spread and ham/cheese/egg mayo with crisps
- Soy glazed tofu and noodles/rice with steamed carrots

### Puddings and Snacks Ideas

- Skinless stewed apple or pear with custard
- Rice pudding with stewed peach (no skin)
- Cheese and crackers
- Peeled ripe pear
- Biscuits
- Tortilla chips and cheese dip