



ONCOLOGY NUTRITION

**Low Fibre Food Choices for
 Partial Bowel Obstruction**

This information is to help with changes in your bowel habits. Eating less fibre may help to reduce your symptoms of gas, abdominal cramps, pain or feeling of abdominal fullness and allow you to feel more comfortable.

The amount of fibre you need to avoid will depend on your symptoms and/or degree of bowel obstruction. With mild symptoms, you may need to follow a **Low Fibre Diet** for a short period of time or until your symptoms resolve. With more severe symptoms, you may need to follow a **Minimal Fibre Diet or a Liquid Diet** for a while. (See Chart below)

Report any changes in bowel movements, especially constipation, and the onset of nausea, vomiting, and pain to your Doctor.

Your doctor will suggest changes in fibre content in your diet and the dietitian will help you to choose the best foods to eat and drink.

Mild Symptoms	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Occasional abdominal cramping Excess gas, bloating 	→ some fibre restriction or a low fibre diet (page 2)
Moderate Symptoms	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Persistent, abdominal pain (and cramps) Bloating 	→ minimal fibre diet (page 6)
Severe Symptoms	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Severe abdominal pain and cramps; significant bloating with or without nausea Feeling full quickly; heartburn may also be present 	→ fluid diet (page 6)

Stool Softeners

Stool softeners make it easier for stools to pass through the bowel. They are not laxatives. Stool softeners work best when taken with meals. Here is a daily plan for taking them:

Breakfast:	Take 2 stool softeners
Supper:	Take 2 stool softeners

Here are some names of stool softeners:

- Docusate sodium (100 mg capsules)
- Colace® (100 mg capsules)
- Regulex® (100 mg capsules)
- Colace® syrup (25 ml of syrup=100 mg capsule)

If you have diarrhea after taking stool softeners, decrease the amount taken.

Do NOT take:

- any over the counter medication to regulate bowel movements without your Doctor's approval.
- any products that can increase stool size (such as Metamucil ® and bulk forming agents).

Low Fibre Diet

- **Have very small servings of food at a time.** Large meals can lead to more cramping and discomfort.
- **Eat more often through the day.** As you may only be able to tolerate small amounts at one time, it is important for you to nibble and sip throughout the day to maximize your eating. Try to have 6-7 small snacks a day. This is especially important if you feel full after only eating a small amount of food.
- **Try to drink as much as you can.** Aim for 6-8 cups of liquids per day. Choose more fruit and vegetable juices rather than water for extra calories and nutrients. If you are losing weight, try to choose high calorie, high protein drinks (eg. Milk, milkshakes).
- **Choose a variety of foods** from the Low Fibre Food Choices on pages 3 to 5. This will allow you to get as many nutrients from foods as possible on this limited diet.
- **A multivitamin and mineral supplement may be necessary** if you are unable to eat a variety of foods, if your diet is severely restricted, or if you are eating less than your usual amounts. Check with your nutritionist to see whether you need a multivitamin mineral supplement.
- **Avoid any foods that make your symptoms worse.** Each person has individual tolerances to different foods and some of the foods in the Low Fibre list may not agree with you – you be the judge.

As your symptoms improve, re-introduce foods into your diet one at a time and in small amounts. By doing this, you will be able to identify any foods that do not agree with you.

If you experience more gas, abdominal cramping, colicky pain, nausea and vomiting after re-introducing a food, avoid that food and try it again at a later date.

What Can I Eat on a Low Fibre Diet?

LIMIT		YOU MAY EAT
High Fibre	Medium Fibre	Low Fibre
Vegetables		
Green peas* Snow peas Spinach, cooked Swiss chard	Artichoke heart Bean sprouts Beans* Beets* Bok Choy Broccoli* Brussels sprouts Carrots* Corn, kernel Eggplant Kale, cooked Kohlrabi Parsnips* Potato, with skin Rhubarb Spinach, raw Sweet potato, with skin Turnip* Vegetables, mixed Winter squash*	Alfalfa sprouts Asparagus* Bamboo shoots Cabbage* Cauliflower* Celery Cucumber* Garlic* Lettuce*: any type Mushrooms Onions* Pepper* Potato, whipped Potato, no skin Radish* Tomato Water chestnuts Zucchini
	Limit to ½ cup portions *Common gas forming foods	
Fruit		
Apple, with skin Avocado Blackberries Blueberries Figs/dates Pears Prunes Raspberries	Apple, no skin, 1 medium Kiwi fruit, 1 medium Mango, 1 medium Orange, 1 small Papaya ½ Plum, 3 small Raisins, 2 Tbsp Strawberries, 1 cup Tangerine, 1 medium	Applesauce Apricots Banana Cantaloupe Cherries Grapefruit Grapes Honeydew melon Mandarin orange Peach Pineapple Watermelon
Juice		
Juices containing whole berries	Prune juice	Grape, apple, orange, & grapefruit juices Tomato, carrot, & vegetable-based juices

LIMIT High Fibre	Medium Fibre	YOU MAY EAT Low Fibre
Hot Cereals		
Red River® Sunny Boy®	Oatmeal: 1 cup, cooked or 1 pouch, instant	Cream of Wheat®
Cold Cereals		
All Bran® Bran Buds® Bran Flakes® Corn Bran® Fiber1® Grapenut Flakes® Oat Bran® Oat Squares® Raisin Bran®	Life®, Mini Wheats®, Multigrain Cheerios®, 1 cup Shredded Wheat®, (bite size) 2/3 cup Shredded Wheat®, 1 biscuit	Cheerios® Cornflakes® Just Right® Puffed Wheat® Rice Krispies® Special K® Any cereal with less than 2 grams of fibre per serving
Breads		
Squirley Bread®	Bran muffin, 1 small Nutrigrain Waffle®, 1 Pumpnickel bread, 1 slice Rye bread, 1 slice Whole-wheat bagel, ½ 100% Whole-wheat bread, 1 slice Whole wheat pita bread, ½	Bagel, plain Baking powder biscuit Breads: 60% whole wheat, white, or cracked wheat English muffin Hamburger/hotdog bun Kaiser roll Pita bread, white Plain dinner roll Taco shell Tortilla, white
Pastas		
Whole-wheat pasta		Macaroni Noodles Spaghetti
Grains		
Barley Popcorn	Bran, natural, 1 Tbsp Brown rice, cooked, ½ cup	White rice
Nuts and Seeds		
Almonds Flax seeds (whole) Soynuts Trail Mix	Peanuts, pine nuts, walnuts, coconut, pistachio, hazelnut, macadamia, brazil nuts, ¼ cup Sunflower or sesame seeds, 2 Tbsp Peanut butter, 2 Tbsp	

LIMIT High Fibre	Medium Fibre	YOU MAY EAT Low Fibre
<i>Legumes</i>		
Beans: kidney, black-eyed, navy & lima Peas: chickpeas, split peas Lentils		
<i>Meat, Fish, Poultry, and Eggs</i>		
		Beef, pork Chicken, turkey Eggs Deli meats Fish, seafood
<i>Dairy and Soy-based Products</i>		
Milkshakes made with berries Yogurt with berries or granola	Nutritional supplements with fibre	Carnation Breakfast Anytime® Cheese, any type Chocolate milk Cream soup Hot chocolate Ice-cream Milk, any type: cow, goat, soy, rice Nutritional supplements Puddings: bread, rice, tapioca Sherbet Tofu Yogurt/Yogurt drinks
<i>Other beverages</i>		
		All fruit drinks Café au lait Carbonated fruit drinks Fruit & vegetable juices Gatorade® Ice tea Orange Julius® Ovaltine® Weak tea or coffee

Minimal Fibre Diet

If your symptoms become more frequent and intense, you may need to follow a Minimal Fibre Diet. This is similar to the Low Fibre Diet but excludes more foods, you will **need to avoid all fruits and vegetables**. However, a variety of juices are allowed and encouraged. See page 7 for tips on juicing.

Liquid Diet

If you experience severe symptoms accompanied by occasional vomiting after eating solid foods, you will need to **avoid all solid foods** for a while and follow a Liquid Diet. This diet can be poor in energy and various nutrients. If you need to be on a Liquid diet for more than 5 days, ask your dietitian about nutritional supplement drinks and the need for vitamin/mineral supplements.

Liquid Food Ideas

Clear Fluids	Full Fluids
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All fruit juices • Fruit flavored drinks • Carbonated fruit juices • Resource Fruit Beverage ® (clear fluid nutritional supplement) • Ice tea • Soda pop • Jell-O® • Jell-O® made with juice • Popsicles/ Juicesicles • Clear broth • Bouillon • Consommé • Coffee • Tea • Herbal Tea • Clear hard candy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All dairy beverages such as milk, chocolate milk, buttermilk, goat's milk, plain milkshakes • Ice-cream, frozen yogurt bars, • Sherbet, sorbet, • Plain or flavored soymilk • Soy milk based shakes • Plain or flavored yogurt • Milk puddings, yogurt drinks • Steamed milk, Café au lait • Carnation Instant Breakfast® drink • Ovaltine®, Horlicks®, Postum® • Hot chocolate with marshmallows • Nutritional supplement drinks • Eggnog, custard • Jello made with milk or ice-cream • Fruit nectars, • V-8 juice, tomato juice • Strained cream soups • Cream of wheat, • Cream of rice • Well-cooked oatmeal

What about Juices?

If you need to avoid fruits and vegetables in your diet, choose their juices as a good way of getting their nutrients but without the fibre. You may also choose to take a multi vitamin or mineral supplement.

For commercially prepared juices, be sure to **Read the Labels**

1. Choose juices that state "100% juice". For their nutritional content, orange, grapefruit, and pineapple are good choices and grape and apple are rated as fair choices.
2. Look for 'no added sugar' on the label. Sweeteners such as sugar, glucose-fructose, honey, molasses or corn and other syrups listed early in the ingredient list will usually indicate that there is less 'real' juice in the product.
3. Many products labeled as "drinks", "spritzers", "cocktails", "punches", "blends", "beverages" and "ades" can be heavily diluted with water and many contain added sugar.
4. Choose juices that are fortified with Vitamin C.
5. Carbonated fruit drinks may be tolerated better after they go flat.

Tips on Juicing:

- Some juice machines remove the fibre while others do not. For juice with no fibre, you need a machine that separates the pulp from the liquid. For best results, follow the manufacturer's guidelines.
- Choose vegetables that are rich in color (dark green leaves, carrots, and beets) for more nutrients.
- Clean the vegetables well to remove any dirt or debris.
- Try a variety of vegetables and fruits and experiment with different combinations for a wider range of nutrients and flavors.

Some examples are:

Carrot Juice with Apple

4 large carrots
2 large cored apples

Carrot-Buttermilk Blend

4 large carrots
large tomato
½ cup buttermilk

- Follow manufacturer directions to make the juices.
- Look for more ideas in recipe books on Juicing from your public library.

Recipes

1. High Protein Milk

High Protein Milk can be used to replace regular milk in cream soups, puddings, hot chocolate, on cereals or for drinking.

Skim milk powder	250mL (1 cup)
2% milk	1 litre (4 cups)

Method:

- Combine powdered milk & 2% milk and mix well. Refrigerate until needed.

Variation: For **extra calories**, use whole milk.

Yogurt Smoothie

1 cup plain yogurt
½ cup fresh squeezed orange juice
Honey to taste

Method:

- Combine yogurt and juice in blender. Mix until smooth. Add honey to taste.

Variation: Use any favorite fresh juice.

Juice Cubes

Use any kind of pure, unsweetened fruit juice.
Combine different juices for other appealing flavors.

Suggestions: papaya-pineapple juice/unsweetened grape juice/Orange juice

Method:

- Pour juice into ice cube tray and freeze. Remove the frozen cubes and store in a zip-lock plastic bag in the freezer. Use juice cubes as regular ice cubes in your juice or water or in Julius drinks.

Variation: For additional protein and calories add Resource® fruit beverage to the juice before freezing in the ice cube tray. Crush the cubes into ice-chips and let them melt in your mouth.

General Questions and Answers

1. Does cooking, chopping, canning or blenderizing foods reduce their fibre content?

No, the fibre content of food remains the same whether it is raw or cooked, canned or fresh, whole or blenderized. However, peeling foods and removing seeds **will** reduce the fibre content.

2. Does meat have fibre?

Beef, chicken, pork, lamb, and fish do not have fibre. These foods are rich in calories and protein and may help you to maintain your weight or prevent further weight loss.

3. Do dairy products or eggs have fibre?

No. Dairy products and eggs do not have fibre and are also a good source of protein and calories.

4. How can I eat healthy foods on a Low Fibre Diet?

A high fibre diet is often recommended to the general public however, because of your present bowel symptoms, your body is not able to handle high fibre foods. As a result, at this time, you may need to choose low fibre foods to lessen the symptoms that you are experiencing and make you feel more comfortable. A low fibre diet can still be a healthy diet if you choose a wide variety of foods, along with fruit and vegetables juices.

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This information is not meant to replace the medical counsel of your doctor or individual consultation with a registered dietitian. This information may only be used in its entirety.
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