

Diarrhea Management

What is diarrhea?

Diarrhea is having loose or watery stools three or more times in one day. Diarrhea can be caused by:

- Certain types of cancer
- Treatments: chemotherapy, immunotherapy, radiation, surgery, and bone marrow or stem cell transplant
- Infections, inflammation of the bowels
- Certain medications, including antibiotics and antacids containing magnesium
- Emotional stress or anxiety

Why is it important to manage?

Uncontrolled diarrhea can lead to weakness, dehydration, poor appetite, and weight loss.

Diarrhea Regimen

- Take two Imodium caplets (or the liquid-version equivalent) after your first loose stool. Take one Imodium caplet (or the liquid-version equivalent) after every subsequent loose stool.
- With your doctor's permission, consider using a soluble fiber product such as Citrucel (100% soluble fiber) or Metamucil (70% soluble fiber from psyllium husk). These soluble fiber supplements hold water and help bulk loose stools.
- For chronic diarrhea, try adding a banana flake product such as Banatrol mixed with drinks or soft foods three times daily.

Call your doctor if you have diarrhea and any of the following:

- It continues 24 hours or longer.
- Your stools have an unusual color.
- Symptoms include abdominal pain, blood and mucus in the stool, and/or fever.
- You are on immunotherapy. Immunotherapy-related toxicity requires immediate medical attention.






WHAT TO DO

- Take your antidiarrheal medications as prescribed.
- Drink plenty of mild and room-temperature, clear liquids throughout the day.
- Eat small meals and snacks instead of three large meals a day.
- Drink and eat high-sodium foods and liquids:
 - Broths, soups, sports drinks, crackers, and pretzels
- Drink and eat high-potassium foods and liquids:
 - Fruit nectars, potatoes without skin, and bananas
- Eat foods high in pectin:
 - Applesauce and bananas
- Drink at least one cup of liquid after each loose stool.
- Eat low-fiber foods:
 - White bread, rice, potatoes, and eggs

WHAT TO AVOID

- Avoid greasy, fried, spicy, or very sweet foods.
- Try to limit milk and milk products; you might have trouble digesting them.
- Avoid drinks and foods that can cause gas:
 - Carbonated drinks, vegetables in the cabbage family, and dried beans and peas
- If you do want a carbonated drink, leave it open for 10 minutes or pour it into a glass and stir it to lessen the bubbles.
- Limit sugar-free gums or candies made with sorbitol, xylitol, or mannitol.
- Avoid high-fiber foods:
 - Whole-wheat breads, granola, raw fruits and vegetables, popcorn, and nuts
- Avoid beer, wine, and other drinks with alcohol.
- Avoid caffeinated beverages.

Food List for Managing Diarrhea

TYPE OF FOOD	RECOMMENDED	NOT RECOMMENDED
High-protein foods 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Baked or broiled beef, pork, chicken, liver, turkey, veal, or fish Eggs Low-fat or nonfat milk, cheese, and yogurt (avoid or limit if you have lactose intolerance) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dried peas and beans (lentils, kidney beans, white beans) Nuts and seeds Chunky peanut butters Meats that are spicy, fried, fatty, or gristly
Grain foods 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Items made with refined white flour: breads, muffins, rolls, and pasta Converted or instant rice Refined cereals: farina, cream of wheat, cream of rice, and cornflakes Oatmeal Pancakes and waffles Cornbread Pretzels Graham crackers Saltines 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Whole-grain breads; multigrain breads with nuts and seeds Whole-grain pasta Brown rice and other cooked whole grains Whole-grain cereals Bran High-fiber instant cereals Granola Popcorn Baked goods and snack foods made with whole grains, dried fruit, nuts, seeds, and other high-fiber ingredients
Fruits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Canned or cooked fruit Bananas Applesauce 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fresh, unpeeled fruit Dried fruit
Vegetables 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cooked asparagus tips, beets, carrots, peeled zucchini, mushrooms, celery, green beans, acorn squash Baked potato without skin Tomato paste, tomato puree, tomato sauce 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All other cooked vegetables Raw vegetables
Other foods 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mild clear liquids Broths and soups Sport drinks Jell-O 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Foods made with sugar alcohols (sorbitol, xylitol, or mannitol) Carbonated drinks Foods and drinks with caffeine Alcohol Spicy, fried, greasy, and very sweet foods