

# Food Fact - Coping with Diarrhoea

Diarrhoea involves the passing of frequent, loose stools. It may be caused by an infection or by treatment which is irritating your bowel.

Diarrhoea can also be accompanied by loss of appetite, nausea, vomiting, stomach pains, high temperature and dehydration.

Short-term modification of your diet can sometimes help to relieve symptoms.

If your diarrhoea is severe or persists, consult your doctor.

## Fluid

It is very important to maintain a high fluid intake to prevent dehydration.

- Aim for at least 1.5 to 2 litres (3 pints) of fluid per day
- Clear fluids are likely to be better tolerated, e.g. fruit squashes, cordials, tea, decaffeinated coffee, Bovril, clear soups or Oxo

Ready mixed rehydration sachets can be purchased from chemists and added to drinking water. These are useful for replacing lost fluid and salt. Follow the manufacturers' recommendations.

## Try The Following

- Small frequent meals and snacks
- Chew food well and eat slowly
- Relax after meals.
- Choose soft, easily digested foods, e.g. white fish, mashed potatoes, sorbets, jelly, yoghurt, milk puddings, ice creams
- Choose low fibre varieties of food, e.g. white bread, white pasta and rice, plain biscuits and low fibre cereals such as Cornflakes or Rice Krispies

Ensure you maintain good levels of hygiene in case the diarrhoea is infectious, e.g. do not prepare meals for others, wash hands before and after preparing food, wash hands thoroughly after going to the toilet.

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## Avoid The Following

These foods may aggravate your diarrhoea or cause abdominal cramps or excess wind/gas:

- High fibre foods, e.g. wholemeal bread, wholegrain cereals, brown rice and pasta and foods made with wholemeal flour
- Fruit juice
- Nuts and dried fruits
- Uncooked vegetables and fruit
- Beans, lentils and pulses
- Cauliflower, cabbage and onions
- Spicy, fried or very fatty foods, e.g. curries, chillies, cream, pastry, chips, etc.
- Very hot or very cold food and drinks
- Alcohol, strong tea or coffee
- Avoid any food which you know upsets you
- Fatty foods

## Remember

If your diarrhoea is severe or persists, consult your doctor.

Leaflet produced by Western Sussex Hospitals Dietitians. For further information or to provide feedback please contact:

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