

## DIARRHOEA

Diarrhoea occurs when your bowel motions are more frequent than usual and become more liquid. This could be due to:

- Change in lifestyle or diet;
- Medications e.g. antibiotics or medical treatment;
- Bacteria from contaminated food or water or Infection;
- Anxiety;
- Diseases such as irritable bowel syndrome, inflammatory bowel disease

The ideas below may help with your diarrhoea:

### What foods should I eat?

- ✓ Eat small frequent meals based on a wide variety of foods.
- ✓ Some people find limiting fibrous foods helps
  - Try white bread, white rice, white pasta and low fibre cereals such as Rice Bubbles™, Cornflakes™.
  - Peel skin from your fruits.
  - Peel skin and remove stem and stalk from your vegetables. Cook your vegetables well. Include for example boiled peeled potatoes, cooked carrots.
  - Protein foods such as cooked eggs, skinless chicken, lean fish.
- ✓ Adding foods rich in soluble fibre like oatmeal, barley, dried beans, peas and lentils may help with diarrhoea because they thicken and form a gel and slow digestion.
- ✓ Yoghurt that is labelled “probiotic” or “live active culture”. For instance, yoghurt containing *lactobacillus acidophilus* or *lactobacillus bifidus* in Vaalia Low Fat™, Jalna™, Yoplait Original/Lite/Yoplus™, Bornhoffen™, etc.
- ✓ Probiotic supplements that contain Lactobacillus bacteris e.g. Inner Health Plus™, IBS Support™, VSL#3™, etc may also help. For best effect, make sure you buy probiotic pills with at least 1 to 10 billion colony forming units (cfu) of viable bacteria.
- ✓ Drink plenty of fluid (at least 2-3 litres a day) to replace lost fluid e.g. water diluted fruit juices, flat soft drinks, cordials, clear broths.
- ✓ If you have more than 4 watery diarrhoea a day, you will likely lose both electrolytes and water. To replace these losses, you will need to drink “oral rehydration fluid” i.e. Gastrolyte™ or Hydralyte™.
- ✓ If you do not have Gastrolyte™ or Hydralyte™ on hand, you can make your own rehydration fluid as follows:

1 bottle of Powerade™ (300 mL) 300 ml of water 1 tsp of salt
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## What foods should I avoid?

Currently your gut is very sensitive from diarrhoea. Some foods can irritate your gut and make diarrhoea worse. Avoiding the following foods may help.

- Spicy foods.
- Prunes, prune juice.
- Very sugary drinks such as soft drink, chocolate milk
- Alcohol and caffeine (e.g. tea and coffee).
- Very hot or very cold foods or drinks.
- Rough fibrous foods, for example, skin on fruit and vegetables, raw vegetables, nuts, seeds.
- Some people may also find avoiding milk and dairy products for short term helps because lactose (i.e. sugar in cow's and goat's milk) can irritate your sensitive gut. Try lactose-free cow's milk or soy milk instead of regular cow's or goat's milk. Yoghurt and hard cheese are usually OK.

As your diarrhoea settles, gradually return to a normal, well balanced diet. Slowly reintroduced the foods you have been avoiding back to your diet.

IF your diarrhoea does not improve after several days, talk to your doctor. Medication may be required but speak to your doctor before taking any over the counter diarrhoea medications.

**Dietitian:**

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