

A low fibre diet

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- 01392 402093 (for Mid Devon, East Devon and Exeter services)
- 01271 314090 (for North Devon services)
- rduh.pals@nhs.net

What is fibre?

Dietary fibre is found in the indigestible parts of plants and cereals. There are two different types of fibre – soluble and insoluble.

Soluble fibre dissolves easily in water and forms a gel-like substance. Soluble fibre is mainly found in the soft/pulpy parts of fruit and vegetables and can help to slow the speed at which food and fluid travel through your gut. It can also help to soften your stools.

Insoluble fibre does not dissolve in water and is left intact as it moves through the gut. Insoluble fibre is found in things like wholegrains, whole wheat, pips, pith, skin and seeds. This type of fibre gives bulk to your stools and can speed the rate at which things travel through your gut.

This leaflet is mainly referring to insoluble fibre.

Both types of fibre are part of a healthy balanced diet and can help to keep your bowels working properly by making stools soft, bulky and easy to pass.

What is a low fibre diet and why is it needed?

If you are experiencing difficulties with your bowels such as loose stools, you may find it useful to reduce the amount of fibre in your diet to ease your symptoms.

This means avoiding foods highest in fibre such as wholemeal cereals, fruit and vegetables. This can sound quite a limited diet, but the aim of this leaflet is to help you choose appropriate foods.

This diet may be a temporary measure and your doctor or dietitian will advise you when and how to start increasing the fibre back into your diet. However, if you are to follow the diet in the long term, then you may benefit from a multivitamin and mineral supplement. Please check with your doctor or dietitian about this.

Food labelling and fibre

If you are unsure whether a food might be suitable when following a low fibre diet, or it is not included on this list, it can be useful to look at labelling.

- to be classed as a 'source of fibre' a food must contain at least 3g of fibre per 100g of food
- to be classed as a 'high fibre' food, it must contain at least 6g of fibre per 100g.

Therefore, if you have been recommended a low fibre diet, it would be useful to check that foods are less than 3g per 100g of food.

What food and/or drink can I include in my diet and what should I remove/reduce?

✓ FOODS TO INCLUDE	✗ FOODS TO REMOVE / REDUCE
<p>Breads and cereals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • White bread and white bread products: rolls, naan, pitta breads, bagels, French stick, crumpets, chapatti, English muffins, tortilla wraps etc. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Note – some people do find that they struggle to tolerate bread products generally: discuss any symptoms with your Dietitian • Low fibre breakfast cereals: Rice Krispies, Cornflakes, Honey Wheat Puffs and Special K • White / arborio rice • White pasta • Noodles • Couscous • White pizza base • Pastries (without raisins, nuts, fruits suggested to avoid) • White flour, corn flour, white chapatti flour and polenta • Semolina, Tapioca • Cream crackers, breadsticks, white crisp breads and rice cakes 	<p>Breads and cereals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wholemeal, granary, brown and high fibre or seeded white breads, whole meal bread products (such as pittas, naans and wraps etc.), 50/50 breads, fruit breads or bagels • High fibre breakfast cereals: Weetabix, shredded wheat, bran flakes, porridge oats, muesli, Fruit and Fibre or other cereals containing fruit/nuts • Brown/wild rice • Wholemeal pasta • Wholemeal noodles • Quinoa • Wholemeal pizza • Wholemeal pastries • Wholemeal/brown flour, granary flour, rye / spelt / gram flour, soya flour, wheatgerm, brown chapatti flour • Wholemeal crackers, rye or whole meal crisp breads (e.g. Ryvita), oatcakes, or white crackers with added seeds

✓ FOODS TO INCLUDE	✗ FOODS TO REMOVE / REDUCE
<p>Desserts, cakes and biscuits</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plain cakes or puddings such as: Victoria sponge (with seedless jam), treacle pudding, plain scones or pancakes, meringues, iced buns, doughnuts (with seedless jam) • Plain flour crumble with stewed and peeled fruit • Jelly / blancmange, meringue, mousse, custard / rice pudding, ice cream • Plain biscuits: Rich Tea, Morning Coffee, Malted Milk, shortbread, Nice biscuits 	<p>Cakes and biscuits</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cakes and biscuits containing wholegrain, nuts and fruit such as Digestives, Hobnobs, fig rolls, fruit cake, fruit (or wholemeal) scones, fruit tea cakes/hot cross buns and carrot cake • Christmas pudding and mince pies • Milk based puddings with added fruits or nuts and chia puddings • Dried fruit and coconut, nuts
<p>Fruit (up to 2 portions per day)</p> <p>Stew & puree fruit where possible; all fruits must be de-seeded and skinned. Some people tolerate fruits best when blended in a food processor:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apples • Fresh apricots • Banana • Cantaloupe, honeydew, watermelon • Nectarine, peach • Papaya • Mango • Plums • Oranges • Fruit cocktail (tinned) • Fruit juices without pulp, strained 	<p>Fruit</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Berries (some people may be able to tolerate strawberries) • Any dried fruit, or fruit where seeds / skin cannot be removed • Figs, Prunes, Dates • Coconut • Redcurrants, blackcurrants

✓ FOODS TO INCLUDE	X FOODS TO REMOVE / REDUCE
<p>Vegetables</p> <p>Ensure vegetables are peeled, well-cooked and soft/mashable. Try using combinations for soups or shakes (in a food processor):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Courgette • Aubergine • Asparagus tips • Pumpkin • Butternut squash • Carrot • Passata (tomato) • Tinned tomatoes (if seeds are scooped out) • Cucumber • Beetroot • Marrow • Radish • Swede • Potatoes (not skins) 	<p>Vegetables</p> <p>High Fibre:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raw vegetables/salad (whole) • Baked beans • Split peas/lentils, chickpeas, kidney beans, butter beans & other legumes • Raw vegetables and salad vegetables • Pickled vegetables • Peas, sweetcorn, celery • All seeds, pips, tough skins • Potato skins • Tomatoes (with skin/seeds) • Olives <p>The following vegetables are ‘medium fibre’ and/or ‘fermentable’ foods and may be trialled but with caution:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avocado • Bean sprouts, green, French & runner beans • Broccoli & cauliflower florets • Cabbage • Kale • Mangetout • Parsnips • Spinach • Spring greens • Sugar snap peas • Onion, garlic, mushrooms

<p>✓ FOODS TO INCLUDE</p>	<p>✗ FOODS TO REMOVE / REDUCE</p>
<p>Meat, fish and alternatives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All meat • All fish • Tofu • Soya mince (one portion, or around 60g) • Eggs 	<p>Meat, fish and alternatives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quorn products • Split peas / lentils, chickpeas, kidney beans, butter beans & other legumes
<p>Dairy and alternatives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Milk (all types, including dairy free alternatives) • Smooth yoghurts (no bits), this includes probiotics drinks • Cheese (all cheese, including cheddar, paneer, haloumi, cottage cheese) 	<p>Dairy and alternatives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yoghurts with bits of fruit, nuts or muesli • Cheeses with added nuts or fruits, or cheeses with tough / stringy textures e.g. cheese on toast, melted mozzarella. • Some vegan cheeses which are made from nuts / seeds
<p>Drinks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water/squash • Tea / coffee • Tea (including herbal) and coffee • Smooth fruit / vegetable juices, without any pulp. 	<p>Drinks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any containing fruit or nuts • Fruit juices with bits / pulp • Drinks with added fibre • Dietitian to advise on caffeine and alcohol intake, as some conditions may benefit from restricting these.
<p>Miscellaneous</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Boiled sweets, fruit gums, mints, marshmallows, chocolate (no fruit or nuts) • Seedless jam, lemon curd, chocolate spread, smooth peanut butter, honey, sugar, vanilla essence 	<p>Miscellaneous</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All nuts (including chocolate with nuts in) • Fruit / nut mixes, Bombay mix • Jam / preserves with bits in, marmalade with bits, crunchy peanut butter.

✓ FOODS TO INCLUDE	X FOODS TO REMOVE / REDUCE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Salt, pepper, stock cubes, herbs and spices • Soy / fish / oyster sauce, vinegar, gravy, tomato or brown sauce, mayonnaise, smooth mustard. • Butter or spread, yeast extract. • Crisps 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wholegrain mustard, pickles, coleslaw, relish • Popcorn and corn chips • Soups with large chunks of vegetables

Example menu

Please note that diet is very individual and you do not need to follow; this menu, however some people find it useful to be given a few ideas – particularly when beginning the diet.

Breakfast:

- cornflakes or Rice Krispies with a ripe banana
- white toast with butter and seedless jam, shred free marmalade or marmite
- poached eggs on white toast or scrambled eggs with bacon.

Lunch or light meal:

- smooth soups with white bread
- sandwich (white bread) with cheese or tuna
- fish, chicken or other lean meats with rice, pasta or peeled potatoes and vegetables as per the list above.

Evening meal:

- homemade cottage pie made using vegetables in the list above (avoiding peas and onions) with a portion of peeled cooked vegetables
- white pasta with creamy or passata based sauce, with lean meat or suitable alternatives
- chicken risotto made with arborio rice and stock, cream or passata
- meat or fish portion, accompanied by potatoes (no skin) and suitable vegetables.

Desserts:

- sponge pudding with custard (no dried fruit)
- yoghurt with stewed or tinned fruit

- treacle tart with cream or custard
- rice pudding with smooth jam
- chocolate mousse.

Reintroducing fibre into your diet

If you are following this diet for a short period and your symptoms have improved, your dietitian will advise you when it is appropriate to start reintroducing fibre back into your diet.

It is recommended that when you start to reintroduce higher fibre foods into your diet that you do this gradually.

- introduce one food at a time giving it a few days before introducing the next
- if your symptoms start to flare up after introducing a certain food, then cut it out of your diet again and continue with what you know you can tolerate for a few days
- do try reintroducing the food again, to check whether you are able to tolerate it.

If you are experiencing any difficulties or need further advice then please contact your dietitian.

Vitamin and mineral supplements

It is possible to get the required vitamins and minerals whilst on a low fibre diet. However, if there are some of the fruits and vegetables above that you dislike or do not tolerate you may not meet your full nutritional requirements. In these circumstances, or if you need to follow a low fibre diet for a long period of time, it might be useful to take a multivitamin and mineral supplement. Please speak with your medical team or dietitian to advise you on this.

Written information cannot replace personalised recommendations. For further advice please seek a dietetic referral from your consultant or GP.

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Your notes

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- 01392 402093 (for Mid Devon, East Devon and Exeter services)
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- rduh.pals@nhs.net

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