



DIARRHEA

The following information will help you manage the effects you may experience from your cancer treatment. Your treatment team will provide you with any additional information you need. Please ask them any questions you may have.

Eat a low-fiber, low fat and high protein diet. Include foods such as:

- Cottage cheese, cream cheese, mild processed cheese
- Eggs (scrambled or boiled)
- Boiled low-fat milk, yogurt, buttermilk
- Broth, bouillon, consommé
- Fish, poultry and ground beef which is baked, broiled or roasted until tender
- Pudding, custard, tapioca, gelatin
- Cooked cereals (cream of wheat, cream of rice)
- Bananas, applesauce, peeled apples (apples contain pectin, an antidiarrheal agent), avocados
- White bread, toast or crackers made with refined flour
- Macaroni, noodles, white rice

- Baked, boiled or mashed potatoes
- Smooth peanut butter
- Cooked, mild vegetables (asparagus tips, beets, green and wax beans, carrots, peas, spinach, squash)
- Cream soups made from these vegetables

Eliminate foods and beverages that may be irritating or stimulating to the gastrointestinal tract, such as:

- Whole-grain bread and cereal
- Nuts, seeds, coconut
- Fried, greasy foods (pork)
- Fresh and dried fruits and fruit juices not listed above
- Raw vegetables
- Rich pastries
- Popcorn, potato chips, pretzels
- Strong spices and herbs (chili powder, licorice, pepper, curry, garlic)
- Horseradish, olives, pickles relishes
- Gas-forming foods such as broccoli, onions, cabbage
- Foods and beverages containing caffeine (chocolate, coffee, tea, caffeinated soft drinks)
- Carbonated beverages
- Alcoholic beverages (liquor, beer and wine)
- Tobacco products

If you develop diarrhea, tell your doctor, radiation therapists or dietitian and keep a record of the number, amount and character of bowel movements.

Diarrhea may cause you to feel weak or fatigued – rest when you are tired.

If you feel weak or tired, or if your laboratory results indicate a low potassium level, include foods high in potassium in your diet (baked potatoes, halibut, asparagus tips and bananas). If diarrhea persists, you may need to take a potassium supplement, but it is better to get the potassium you need from your diet because potassium supplements can cause gastrointestinal discomfort.

Drink at least three quarters of fluids each day. Liquids may include: water, bouillon, fruit-ade, sports drinks, weak tepid tea, gelatin and caffeine-free beverages with the carbonation eliminated (carbonation may aggravate diarrhea).

Eat small, frequent meals and sip liquids slowly.

Avoid extremely hot or cold foods as extremes in temperature may aggravate diarrhea. Foods served warm or at room temperature are more easily tolerated.

If you cannot lactose, avoid milk and milk products (alone or in cooking or baking) such as cheese, ice cream and sour cream. Instant coffee, cocoa and chocolate should also be avoided since these foods contain lactose. The following foods are usually tolerated:

- Buttermilk and yogurt
- Processed cheese
- Lactose-free dairy substitutes (non-dairy creamers, non-dairy whipped toppings)
- Lact-Aid, a tablet containing lactase which will digest the lactose in milk within 24 hours, making it lactose-free
- Lactose-free nutritional supplements (Ensure, Boost)

Use nutritional supplements to increase your protein and calorie intake.

Add nutmeg to foods – it may decrease the motility of the gastrointestinal tract.

Stick to a liquid diet if the diarrhea becomes severe and continue as long as necessary, gradually adding the suggested low-fiber foods.

AFTER HOURS

If you need immediate emergency medical attention, please dial 911 or go to the nearest emergency room. All other medical attention outside of the Center's regular office hours (8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday – Friday) will be answered by our telephone answering service who will have a doctor from Mary Bird Perkins Cancer Center return your call.

TELEPHONE:

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