

Tips for Dealing with Diarrhea

This guide has been prepared for your use by registered dietitians. If you have questions or concerns, please call the nearest Aurora facility to contact a dietitian. Please ask your doctor for a referral to a dietitian if you have other diet restrictions or are unable to maintain your weight.

Diarrhea may have several causes. Chemotherapy, radiation therapy to the stomach area, infection, food sensitivity, medications and emotional upset can lead to loose stools.

During diarrhea, food passes quickly through the bowel. The body is not able to get enough vitamins, minerals and water. This may cause dehydration (when your body doesn't have enough water) and increase the risk of infection.

If you have diarrhea:

- Drink plenty of liquids – at least 8 cups every day to replace the water lost.
- Drink room temperature liquids.
- Avoid very hot or very cold foods.
- Limit or avoid foods and beverages that contain caffeine, such as coffee, strong tea, soda and chocolate.
- Limit milk and milk products during cancer treatment if you have bloating, cramping or gas 1 to 3 hours after eating or drinking milk products.
- For milk intolerance, try lactose-reduced dairy products or an over-the-counter enzyme available at pharmacies. Symptoms of intolerance may disappear a few weeks or months after the treatments end or when the bowel heals.
- Eat and drink small amounts of food and liquids through the day instead of three large meals.
- Eat and drink plenty of foods and liquids that contain sodium (salt) and potassium.
- Try these sodium and potassium choices:
 - Bouillon or fat-free broth
 - Bananas
 - Peach and apricot nectar
 - Boiled, baked or mashed potatoes

The main points

- Drink plenty of liquids
- Limit or avoid caffeine
- Eat small meals of low fiber foods
- Eat and drink plenty of high salt and high potassium foods and beverages
- Contact your doctor if the diarrhea is severe or lasts for more than 2 days

Try these low-fiber foods:

- Yogurt
 - White rice or noodles
 - Grape juice
 - Farina or Cream of Wheat
 - Eggs (cooked until whites are solid, not fried)
 - White bread
 - Ripe bananas
 - Pureed cooked vegetables
 - Canned or cooked fruit without skins, such as applesauce
 - Smooth peanut butter
 - Chicken or turkey, skinned
 - Beef, tender or ground
 - Fish
 - Cottage cheese, cream cheese
- Avoiding or eliminating these foods may help:
- Greasy, fatty or fried foods
 - Raw vegetables and fruits
 - High-fiber vegetables, such as broccoli, corn, legumes, cabbage, peas and cauliflower
 - Strong spices, such as hot pepper, curry and Cajun spice mix
- Eat in a relaxed atmosphere.
- Contact your doctor if the diarrhea is severe or lasts for more than 2 days.

For a list of Aurora facilities with a dietitian, please call Aurora Health Care toll free at 888-863-5502.

The information presented is intended for general information and educational purposes. It is not intended to replace the advice of your health care provider. Contact your health care provider if you believe you have a health problem. Aurora Health Care is a not-for-profit health care provider and a national leader in efforts to improve the quality of health care.