

Low-Fibre Diet for Vegetarians or Vegans

For patients with cancer who have
been told to follow a low-fibre diet

This booklet will give you information about:

- What is a low-fibre diet
- Why you might need to follow a low-fibre diet
- Tips for a low-fibre vegetarian or vegan diet
- Low-fibre foods
- Getting enough protein on a low-fibre vegetarian or vegan diet
- Low-fibre vegetarian and vegan menus
- When you should go back to your normal diet

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What is a low-fibre diet?

Your doctor or dietitian may ask you to follow a low-fibre diet during treatment. **Fibre** is the part of fruits, vegetables, legumes (i.e. dried beans, peas, lentils), and whole grains that your body does not fully digest. It is one of the materials that makes up your stool (poo). A low-fibre diet contains less than 10 to 15 grams of fibre each day.

Why do I need to follow a low-fibre diet?

A low-fibre diet helps your stomach and bowel rest and heal. Your doctor or dietitian may tell you to follow a low-fibre diet if you:

- Have surgery to your digestive system
- Have side effects from radiation or chemotherapy (cancer treatment drugs), e.g. diarrhea

Tips for a low-fibre vegetarian or vegan diet

Eating a low-fibre diet when you are vegetarian or vegan can be hard. Remember that most foods can be ‘low-fibre’ if you eat a small amount of them. Follow these tips to help you stay healthy and get the nutrients you need on a low-fibre diet:

- Limit fibre intake to 10 to 15 grams per day by choosing low-fibre foods from the “Low-fibre foods” chart on the next page
- Choose low-fibre grain products
 - Eat white bread, refined cereals (e.g. Cream of Wheat®), and white rice products
 - Avoid products made with whole grain flour, bran, seeds or nuts
- Choose low-fibre protein foods
 - Eat firm tofu, dairy, high-protein dairy alternatives (e.g. soy milk, pea milk), meat substitutes, and eggs
 - Try vegetarian or vegan protein powders (check the nutrition facts label for fibre – aim for less than 2 to 3 grams of fibre per serving)
 - Try smooth nut butters instead of whole nuts
 - Avoid or limit legumes (dried beans, peas, and lentils) – if you choose to eat legumes, eat ¼ cup or less at one meal

- Eat canned or cooked fruits and vegetables more often. Some raw or cooked fruits and vegetables may cause gas or bloating. If you notice this, try not to eat these foods
- Take off skins, seeds, and membranes of all fruits and vegetables
- Add water to juices (e.g. 2/3 juice and 1/3 water) and choose juices with no pulp
- Keep servings of higher-fibre foods like fruits, vegetables and grains to ½ cup (125 ml) or less per meal or snack

Note: chopping and blending (e.g. making a smoothie) does not change the fibre content of foods

Low-fibre foods (less than 2 grams of fibre per serving)

Type of food	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Eat
Protein	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eggs, smooth peanut butter (1 serving = 2 Tbsp.), tofu, plain dairy products and plain high-protein dairy alternatives (e.g. milk/soy milk, yogurt, cheese), protein powder and meat substitutes (check product label for fibre content – aim for less than 2-3 g of fibre per serving)
Grains 1 serving = ½ cup (125 ml) cereal/rice/pasta or 1 slice bread (or check product label for serving size)	Cereals: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cheerios®, Cornflakes®, Cream of Wheat®, cream of rice, Just Right®, puffed rice, Rice Krispies®, Special K® (or any cold breakfast cereal with less than 2 g of fibre per serving) Breads: Note: Choose products with no seeds and no dried fruit <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Breads (60% whole wheat, oatmeal, white or cracked wheat), white biscuits, white dinner rolls and buns, English muffins, white pita or tortilla, white bagels, white pancakes and waffles Rice and pasta: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • White rice, white pasta, chow mein noodles, rice noodles

Type of food	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Eat
Vegetables 1 serving = ½ cup (125 ml)	Note: Peel skins, take out seeds, and choose canned or cooked vegetables more often <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alfalfa sprouts, asparagus, bamboo shoots, bean sprouts, beets, bok choy, cabbage, cauliflower, celery, cucumbers, lettuce (any type), potato, mushrooms, peppers, onion, radish, raw spinach, summer squash, tomatoes, yellow or green beans, water chestnuts, zucchini
Fruit 1 serving = ½ cup (125 ml)	Note: Peel skins, take out seeds, and choose canned or cooked fruit more often <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Applesauce, fresh apricots, banana, cantaloupe, grapefruit, grapes, honeydew melon, mandarin orange, mango, peach, apple, pineapple, watermelon, star fruit, canned fruit cocktail
Drinks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coffee, tea, carbonated drinks, fruit and vegetable juices, café au lait, Gatorade®, ice tea, Orange Julius®, Ovaltine®, hot chocolate
Condiments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Butter, margarine, oils, salad dressing, ketchup, gravy, jelly

Type of food	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Eat
Dessert Check product label for serving size	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plain cake or cookies, sherbet, Jell-O®, frozen yogurt, ice milk or ice cream, pudding, custard, hard candy, marshmallows

Getting enough protein on a low-fibre vegetarian or vegan diet

Getting enough protein is important to help your body stay strong, heal, and recover. A dietitian can help you determine how much protein you need each day.

Use the next chart to choose lower-fibre protein foods. Other foods not listed may contain low amounts of fibre. Remember to read all food labels. Aim for 10 to 15 grams of fibre each day from all foods (not just protein foods).

Food	Serving size
Plant-based protein	
Pea protein (Naked Pea®)	2 scoops (65 ml)
Soy beverage	1 cup (250 ml)
Pea milk	1 cup (250 ml)
Firm tofu	¾ cup (150 g)
Tempeh	¼ cup (50 g) *note the small serving size
Smooth peanut butter	2 Tbsp. (30 ml)
Smooth cashew butter	2 Tbsp. (30 ml)
Smooth almond butter	2 Tbsp. (30 ml)
Lentils	¼ cup (60 ml) *note the small serving size
Chickpeas	¼ cup (60 ml) *note the small serving size
Black beans	¼ cup (60 ml) *note the small serving size
Hemp hearts	¼ cup (60 ml)
White naan bread	1 small (90 g)

Protein (grams)	Fibre (grams)
27	0
8	1.4
8	1
12	0.5
10	2.3
7	2.5
6	0.5
7	3.5
5	2
4	2
4	4
13	2
9	2

Food	Serving size
White pasta, cooked	½ cup (125 ml)
Egg noodles, cooked	½ cup (125 ml)
Brown rice, cooked	½ cup (125 ml)
White rice, cooked	½ cup (125 ml)
Quinoa, cooked	½ cup (125 ml)
Dairy and eggs	
Greek yogurt	1 cup (250 ml)
Cottage cheese	½ cup (125 ml)
Cheddar, mozzarella cheese	1 ½ oz. (42 g)
Goat cheese	1 ½ oz. (42 g)
2% milk	1 cup (250 ml)
Kefir	1 cup (250 ml)
Eggs	2 large
Egg whites	¼ cup (60 ml)

Protein (grams)	Fibre (grams)
4	1
4	1
2	2
2	0.5
4	3
Dairy and eggs	
20	0
12	0
12	0
11	0
9	0
8	0
12	0
6	0

Low-fibre vegetarian and vegan menus

Vegan This example menu has about 74 g protein and 15.5 g of fibre.	
Time of day	
Breakfast	<p>Tofu scramble:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ¾ cup (150 g) tofu • ½ cup (125 ml) raw spinach • 1 Tbsp. (15 ml) cooking oil <p>1 slice white bread</p> <p>1 cup (250 ml) coffee 1 cup (250 ml) water</p>
Morning snack	<p>Yogurt with fruit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ¾ cup (175 ml) coconut yogurt • ½ banana <p>1 cup (250 ml) tea</p>

Vegetarian (lacto) This example menu has about 87 g protein and 12.5 g of fibre.		Vegetarian (lacto-ovo) This example menu has about 107 g protein and 12 g of fibre.	
Time of day			
Breakfast	<p>Tofu scramble:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ½ cup (100 g) tofu • ½ cup (125 ml) mushrooms • 1 Tbsp. (15 ml) cooking oil <p>1 slice white bread</p> <p>1 cup (250 ml) coffee 1 cup (250 ml) water</p>	<p>Omelet:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 large eggs • ½ cup (125 ml) mushrooms • 1 oz. (28 g) cheddar cheese • 2 tsp (10 ml) butter <p>1 cup (250 ml) coffee 1 cup (250 ml) water</p>	
Morning snack	<p>Peanut butter toast:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 slice white bread • 1 Tbsp. (15 ml) peanut butter <p>1 cup (250 ml) tea</p>	<p>Cottage cheese and fruit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ½ cup (125 ml) cottage cheese • ½ cup (125 ml) canned peaches <p>1 cup (250 ml) tea</p>	

Time of day	Vegan
Lunch	<p>Sweet potato quesadilla:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 white tortilla • ¼ cup (60 ml) sweet potato (no skin) • 1 tsp (5 ml) sliced green onion • ¼ cup (50 g) chopped tempeh • 1 oz. (28 g) vegan cheese • 1 Tbsp. (15 ml) cooking oil <p>1 cup (250 ml) pea milk</p>
Afternoon snack	<p>Protein shake:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 scoop (65 ml) pea protein • 1 cup (250 ml) soy beverage

Vegetarian (lacto)	Vegetarian (lacto-ovo)
<p>Tofu broccoli stir fry:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ½ cup (100 g) tofu • ½ cup (125 ml) broccoli • 1 Tbsp. (15 ml) cooking oil • ½ cup (125 ml) cooked white rice <p>1 cup (250 ml) 2% milk</p>	<p>Toast with cheese and tomato:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 slice white bread • 1 ½ oz. (42 g) cheddar cheese • 2 tomato slices, (no skins and no seeds) <p>1 medium peeled apple (no skin) 1 cup (250 ml) 2% milk</p>
<p>Milk and fruit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 cup (250 ml) 2% milk • 1 medium peeled apple (no skin) 	<p>Yogurt and fruit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ½ cup (125 ml) plain Greek yogurt • 1 tsp (5 ml) honey • 1 banana <p>1 cup (250 ml) water</p>

Time of day	Vegan
Dinner	<p>Squash, rice and lentils:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ½ cup (125 ml) butternut squash • ½ cup (125 ml) white rice • ¼ cup (60 ml) lentils • 1 tsp (5 ml) olive oil <p>1 plain cookie 1 cup (250 ml) water</p>
Evening snack	<p>Peanut butter toast:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 slice white bread • 1 Tbsp. (15 ml) smooth peanut butter <p>1 cup (250 ml) water</p>

Vegetarian (lacto)	Vegetarian (lacto-ovo)
<p>Cheese quesadilla:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 white flour tortilla • ¼ cup (60 ml) chopped red pepper • ¼ cup (60 ml) diced tomato (no skin and no seeds) • ½ cup (125 ml) shredded cheese <p>1 plain cookie 1 cup (250 ml) water</p>	<p>Tofu with cauliflower and rice:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ¾ cup (150 g) firm tofu • ½ cup (125 ml) white rice • ½ cup (125 ml) cauliflower • 1 Tbsp. (15 ml) olive oil <p>1 plain cookie 1 cup (250 ml) water</p>
<p>Yogurt and fruit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ½ cup (125 ml) Greek yogurt • ½ banana <p>1 cup (250 ml) water</p>	<p>½ cup (125 ml) ice cream (no nuts or unpeeled fruit)</p> <p>1 cup (250 ml) water</p>

When should I go back to my normal diet?

Check with your doctor or dietitian as you may only need to follow a low-fibre diet for a short period of time.

When you go back to your normal diet, remember to:

- **Add more fibre to your diet slowly.** Add 1 new high fibre food each day in a small amount. If this hurts your stomach, add foods back into your diet more slowly. If a certain foods gives you a loose bowel movement (poo), try it again in 2 to 3 weeks.
- **Drink enough fluids.** Fluids are important to help move fibre through your body. Aim for 9 to 12 cups (2250 – 3000 ml) of fluid per day.

If you are a patient at the Odette Cancer Centre and you have questions about healthy eating or you would like to book an appointment with a registered dietitian, please contact the Nutrition Resource Centre:

T-Wing ground floor, TG-261 (across from the café)
(416) 480-6100 ext. 3438

Notes
