

Low-Fibre Diet

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 diet
- Low-fibre foods
- An example low-fibre menu
- 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, and 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 has 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 diet

- Limit fibre intake to 10 to 15 grams each day by choosing low-fibre foods from the “Low-fibre foods” chart on the next page
- Avoid foods made with whole grain flour, bran, seeds, and nuts
- Limit or avoid dried beans, peas, and lentils
- Eat white bread, white pasta, white rice, and refined cereals (e.g. Cream of Wheat[®])
- Eat tender, ground, or well-cooked meats
- Choose canned or cooked fruits and vegetables more often. Some raw or cooked fruits and vegetables may cause gas or bloating. If you notice this, avoid these foods
- Take off skins, seeds, and membranes of all fruits and vegetables
- Add water to juices (e.g. $\frac{2}{3}$ juice and $\frac{1}{3}$ water) and choose juices with no pulp
- Keep servings of higher-fibre foods like fruits, vegetables and grains to $\frac{1}{2}$ 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	<p>Note: Cook meats until tender</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Beef, chicken, eggs, fish, pork, turkey, seafood, deli meats, smooth peanut butter (1 serving = 2 Tbsp.), tofu, all plain dairy products and plain high-protein dairy alternatives (e.g. milk/soy milk, yogurt, cheese)
<p>Grains</p> <p>1 serving = ½ cup (125 ml) cereal/ rice/pasta or 1 slice bread</p> <p>(or check product label for serving size)</p>	<p>Cereals:</p> <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) <p>Breads:</p> <p>Note: Choose products with no seeds and no dried fruit</p> <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 <p>Rice and pasta:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> White rice, white pasta, chow mein noodles, rice noodles

Type of food	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Eat
<p>Vegetables</p> <p>1 serving = ½ cup (125 ml)</p>	<p>Note: Peel skins, take out seeds, and choose canned or cooked vegetables more often</p> <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, tomato, yellow or green beans, water chestnuts, zucchini
<p>Fruit</p> <p>1 serving = ½ cup (125 ml)</p>	<p>Note: Peel skins, take out seeds, and choose canned or cooked fruit more often</p> <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

Type of food	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Eat
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
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

Example low-fibre menu

Meal	Example menu	Other foods to try
Breakfast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 cup (250 ml) Rice Krispies[®] cereal 1 cup (250 ml) 2% milk 1 boiled egg 1 peeled apple (no skin) 1 cup (250 ml) coffee 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Egg with white toast Cheese omelet Cream of Wheat[®] cooked in milk with a piece of fruit White French toast with a side of yogurt Congee with lean fish, tofu or ground chicken/pork
Morning snack	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 cup (250 ml) tea 1 banana 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Smooth peanut butter and jelly on white toast Smoked salmon on white bun Almond butter on rice cakes Applesauce Peeled apple slices with cheese or smooth peanut butter Canned tuna salad Yogurt drink

Meal	Example menu	Other foods to try
Lunch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 cup (250 ml) chicken noodle soup • 2 soda crackers • Turkey sandwich: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 3 oz. (85 g) turkey ▪ 2 slices tomato (no skin and no seeds) ▪ 2 leaves romaine lettuce ▪ 2 slices white bread ▪ 1 Tbsp. (15 ml) mayonnaise • 1 cup (250 ml) 2% milk 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Egg sandwich on white bread • Butternut squash soup • Tuna melt on white bread • Macaroni and cheese (white pasta) • Pierogies with sour cream • Miso soup with tofu and rice noodles
Afternoon snack	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ½ cup (125 ml) yogurt • ½ cup (125 ml) canned peaches • 1 cup (250 ml) water 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hardboiled egg • Nutrition supplement drink • Banana bread made with no nuts

Meal	Example menu	Other foods to try
Dinner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 oz. (85 g) tender roast beef • ¼ cup (60 ml) gravy • ½ cup (125 ml) mashed potatoes (no skins) • ½ cup (125 ml) cooked green beans • 1 tsp (5 ml) butter 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mushroom and cheese quiche • Tofu with rice and bok choy • Hamburger and mashed potatoes (no skins) • Chicken with white pasta and zucchini
Evening snack	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 cup (250 ml) water • 1 plain cookie 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cheese and soda crackers • Canned fruit with ice cream • Angel food cake • Dessert tofu with fruit • White rice pudding

This example menu has about 10.5 g fibre. Aim for less than 10 to 15 g of fibre each day.

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 fibre more slowly. If a certain food 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 each 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
