Diet for Diarrhea, Adult

Having frequent, runny stools (*diarrhea*) has many causes. Diarrhea may be caused or worsened by food or drink. Diarrhea may be relieved by changing your diet.

IF YOU ARE NOT TOLERATING SOLID FOODS:

- Drink enough water and fluids to keep your urine clear or pale yellow.
- Avoid sugary drinks and sodas as well as milk-based beverages.
- Avoid beverages containing caffeine and alcohol.
- You may try rehydrating beverages. You can make your own by following this recipe:
  - 1/2 teaspoon table salt.
  - 3/4 teaspoon baking soda.
  - 1/3 teaspoon salt substitute (*potassium chloride*).
  - 1 tablespoon + 1 teaspoon sugar.
  - 1 quart of water.

As your stools become more solid, you can start eating solid foods. Add foods one at a time. If a certain food causes your diarrhea to get worse, avoid that food and try other foods. A low-fiber, low-fat, and lactose-free diet is recommended. Small, frequent meals may be better tolerated.

FOOD GROUP: STARCHES
ALLOWED/RECOMMENDED
White, French, and pita breads, plain rolls, buns, bagels. Plain muffins, matzo. Soda, saltine, or graham crackers. Pretzels, melba toast, zwieback. Cooked cereals made with water: cornmeal, farina, cream cereals. Dry cereals: refined corn, wheat, rice. Potatoes prepared any way without skins, refined macaroni, spaghetti, noodles, refined rice.
AVOID/USE SPARINGLY
Bread, rolls, or crackers made with whole wheat, multi-grains, rye, bran seeds, nuts, or coconut. Corn tortillas or taco shells. Cereals containing whole grains, multi-grains, bran, coconut, nuts, or raisins. Cooked or dry oatmeal. Coarse wheat cereals, granola. Cereals advertised as “high-fiber.” Potato skins. Whole grain pasta, wild or brown rice. Popcorn. Sweet potatoes/yams. Sweet rolls, doughnuts, waffles, pancakes, sweet breads.

FOOD GROUP: VEGETABLES
ALLOWED/RECOMMENDED
Strained tomato and vegetable juices. Most well-cooked and canned vegetables without seeds. **Fresh:** Tender lettuce, cucumber without the skin, cabbage, spinach, bean sprouts.
AVOID/USE SPARINGLY
Fresh, cooked, or canned: Artichokes, baked beans, beet greens, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, corn, kale, legumes, peas, sweet potatoes. **Cooked:** Green or red cabbage, spinach. Avoid large servings of any vegetables, because vegetables shrink when cooked, and they contain more fiber per serving than fresh vegetables.

FOOD GROUP: FRUIT
ALLOWED/RECOMMENDED
All fruit juices except prune juice. **Cooked or canned:** Apricots, applesauce, cantaloupe, cherries, fruit cocktail, grapefruit, grapes, kiwi, mandarin oranges, peaches, pears, plums, watermelon. **Fresh:** Apples without skin, ripe banana, grapes, cantaloupe, cherries, grapefruit, peaches, oranges, plums. Keep servings limited to 1/2 cup or 1 piece.

AVOID/USE SPARINGLY
Fresh: Apple with skin, apricots, mango, pears, raspberries, strawberries. Prune juice, stewed or dried prunes. Dried fruits, raisins, dates. Large servings of all fresh fruits.

FOOD GROUP: MEAT AND MEAT SUBSTITUTES
ALLOWED/RECOMMENDED
Ground or well-cooked tender beef, ham, veal, lamb, pork, or poultry. Eggs, plain cheese. Fish, oysters, shrimp, lobster, other seafoods. Liver, organ meats.
AVOID/USE SPARINGLY
Tough, fibrous meats with gristle. Peanut butter, smooth or chunky. Cheese, nuts, seeds, legumes, dried peas, beans, lentils.

FOOD GROUP: MILK
ALLOWED/RECOMMENDED
Yogurt, lactose-free milk, kefir, drinkable yogurt, buttermilk, soy milk.
AVOID/USE SPARINGLY
Milk, chocolate milk, beverages made with milk, such as milk shakes.

FOOD GROUP: SOUPS
ALLOWED/RECOMMENDED
Bouillon, broth, or soups made from allowed foods. Any strained soup.
AVOID/USE SPARINGLY
Soups made from vegetables that are not allowed, cream or milk-based soups.

FOOD GROUP: DESSERTS AND SWEETS
ALLOWED/RECOMMENDED
Sugar-free gelatin, sugar-free frozen ice pops made without sugar alcohol.
AVOID/USE SPARINGLY
Plain cakes and cookies, pie made with allowed fruit, pudding, custard, cream pie. Gelatin, fruit, ice, sherbet, frozen ice pops. Ice cream, ice milk without nuts. Plain hard candy, honey, jelly, molasses, syrup, sugar, chocolate syrup, gumdrops, marshmallows.

FOOD GROUP: FATS AND OILS
ALLOWED/RECOMMENDED
Avoid any fats and oils.
AVOID/USE SPARINGLY
Seeds, nuts, olives, avocados. Margarine, butter, cream, mayonnaise, salad oils, plain salad dressings made from allowed foods. Plain gravy, crisp bacon without rind.

FOOD GROUP: BEVERAGES
ALLOWED/RECOMMENDED
Water, decaffeinated teas, oral rehydration solutions, sugar-free beverages.
AVOID/USE SPARINGLY
Fruit juices, caffeinated beverages (coffee, tea, soda or pop), alcohol, sports drinks, or lemon-lime soda or pop.

FOOD GROUP: CONDIMENTS/MISCELLANEOUS
ALLOWED/RECOMMENDED
Ketchup, mustard, horseradish, vinegar, cream sauce, cheese sauce, cocoa powder. Spices in moderation: allspice, basil, bay leaves, celery powder or leaves, cinnamon, cumin powder, curry powder, ginger, mace, marjoram, onion or garlic powder, oregano, paprika, parsley flakes, ground pepper, rosemary, sage, savory, tarragon, thyme, turmeric.
AVOID/USE SPARINGLY
Coconut, honey.

- **Weight Monitoring:** Weigh yourself every day. You should weigh yourself in the morning after you urinate and before you eat breakfast. Wear the same amount of clothing when you weigh yourself. Record your weight daily. Bring your recorded weights to your clinic visits. Tell your caregiver right away if you have gained 3 or more pounds in 1 day, 5 pounds in a week or whatever amount you were told to report.

SEEK IMMEDIATE MEDICAL CARE IF:

- You are unable to keep fluids down.
- You start to throw up (*vomit*) or diarrhea keeps coming back (*persistent*).
- Belly (*abdominal*) pain develops, increases, or can be felt in one place (*localizes*).
- You have an oral temperature above 102° F (38.9° C), not controlled by medicine.
- Diarrhea contains blood or mucus.
- You develop excessive weakness, dizziness, fainting, or extreme thirst.

MAKE SURE YOU:

- Understand these instructions.
- Will watch your condition.
- Will get help right away if you are not doing well or get worse.

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