# Low-Fiber and Residue Restricted Diets

A low-fiber diet restricts foods that contain carbohydrates that are not digested in the small intestine. A diet containing about 10 grams of fiber is considered low-fiber. The diet needs to be individualized to suit patient tolerances and preferences and to avoid unnecessary restrictions. Generally, the foods emphasized in a low-fiber diet have no skins or seeds. They may have been processed to remove bran, germ, or husks. Cooking may not necessarily eliminate the fiber. Cooking may, in fact, enable a greater quantity of fiber to be consumed in a lesser volume. Legumes and nuts are also restricted.

The term low-residue has also been used to describe low-fiber diets, although the two are not the same. Residue refers to any substance that adds to bowel (*colonic*) contents, such as sloughed cells and intestinal germs (*bacteria*) in addition to fiber. Residue-containing foods, prunes and prune juice, milk, and connective tissue from meats may also need to be eliminated. It is important to eliminate these foods during sudden (*acute*) attacks of inflammatory bowel disease, when there is a partial obstruction due to another reason, or when minimal fecal output is desired. When problems are in remission, a more normal diet may be used.

## PURPOSE

- Prevent blockage of a partially obstructed or narrowed gastrointestinal tract.
- Reduce stool weight and volume.
- Slow the movement of waste.

## WHEN IS THIS DIET USED?

- Acute phase of Crohn's disease, ulcerative colitis, regional enteritis, or diverticulitis.
- Narrowing (*stenosis*) of intestinal or esophageal tubes (*lumina*).
- Transitional diet following surgery, injury (*trauma*), or illness.

## ADEQUACY

This diet is nutritionally adequate based on individual food choices according to the Recommended Dietary Allowances of the National Research Council.

## SPECIAL NOTES

In severe cases, it is recommended that residue containing foods, prunes and prune juice, milk, and connective tissue from meats be eliminated.

Check labels, especially on foods from the starch list. Often, dietary fiber content is listed with the nutrition information. Since products are continually introduced or removed from the grocery shelf, this list may not be complete.

| FOOD GROUP | ALLOWED/RECOMMENDED | AVOID/USE SPARINGLY |
|---|---|---|
| STARCHES<br>*6 servings or more daily* | | |
| Breads | White, French, and pita breads, plain rolls, buns, or sweet rolls, doughnuts, waffles, pancakes, bagels. Plain muffins, sweet breads, biscuits, matzoth. Flour. | Bread, rolls, or crackers made with whole-wheat, multigrains, rye, bran seeds, nuts, or coconut. Corn tortillas, table-shells. |
| Crackers | Soda, saltine, or graham crackers. Pretzels, rusks, melba toast, zwieback. | See above. Corn chips, tortilla chips. |

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| Cereals | Cooked cereals: cornmeal, farina, cream cereals.<br>Dry cereals: refined corn, wheat, rice, and oat cereals (check label). | Cereals containing whole-grains, multigrains, bran, coconut, nuts, or raisins. Cooked or dry oatmeal. Coarse wheat cereals, granola. Cereals advertised as "high fiber." |
| Potatoes/Pasta/Rice | Potatoes prepared any way without skins, refined macaroni, spaghetti, noodles, refined rice. | Potato skins. Whole-grain pasta, wild or brown rice. Popcorn. |
| VEGETABLES<br>*2 to 3 servings or more daily* | Strained tomato and vegetable juices. **Fresh:** tender lettuce, cucumber, cabbage, spinach, bean sprouts. **Cooked, canned:** asparagus, bean sprouts, cut green or wax beans, cauliflower, pumpkin, beets, mushrooms, olives, spinach, yellow squash, tomato, tomato sauce (no seeds), zucchini (peeled), turnips. Canned sweet potatoes. Small amounts of celery, onion, radish, and green pepper may be used. Keep servings limited to 1/2 cup. | **Fresh, cooked, or canned:** artichokes, baked beans, beet greens, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, French-style green beans, corn, kale, legumes, peas, sweet potatoes. **Cooked:** green or red cabbage, spinach. Avoid large servings of any vegetables. |
| FRUIT<br>*2 to 3 servings or more daily* | All fruit juices except prune juice. **Cooked or canned:** apricots applesauce, cantaloupe, cherries, grapefruit, grapes, kiwi, mandarin oranges, peaches, pears, fruit cocktail, pineapple, plums, watermelon. **Fresh:** banana, grapes, cantaloupe, avocado, cherries, pineapple, grapefruit, kiwi, nectarines, peaches, oranges, blueberries, plums. Keep servings limited to 1/2 cup or 1 piece. | **Fresh:** apple with or without skin, apricots, mango, pears, raspberries, strawberries. Prune juice, stewed or dried prunes. Dried fruits, raisins, dates. Avoid large servings of all fresh fruits. |
| MEAT AND MEAT SUBSTITUTES<br>*2 servings or more (4 to 6 total daily)* | Ground or well-cooked tender beef, ham, veal, lamb, pork, or poultry. Eggs, plain cheese. Fish, oysters, shrimp, lobster, other seafood. Liver, organ meats. | Tough, fibrous meats with gristle. Peanut butter, smooth or chunky. Cheese with seeds, nuts, or other foods not allowed. Nuts, seeds, legumes, dried peas, beans, lentils. |
| MILK<br>*2 cups or equivalent daily* | All milk products except those not allowed. Milk and milk product consumption should be minimal when low residue is desired. | Yogurt that contains nuts or seeds. |
| SOUPS AND COMBINATION FOODS | Bouillon, broth, or cream soups made from allowed foods. Any strained soup. Casseroles or mixed dishes made with allowed foods. | Soups made from vegetables that are not allowed or that contain other foods not allowed. |

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| DESSERTS AND SWEETS<br>*In moderation* | 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. | Desserts, cookies, or candies that contain nuts, peanut butter, or dried fruits. Jams, preserves with seeds, marmalade. |
| FATS AND OILS<br>*In moderation* | Margarine, butter, cream, mayonnaise, salad oils, plain salad dressings made from allowed foods. Plain gravy, crisp bacon without rind. | Seeds, nuts, olives. Avocados. |
| BEVERAGES | All, except those listed to avoid. | Fruit juices with high pulp, prune juice. |
| CONDIMENTS/ MISCELLANEOUS | 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. | Coconut, pickles. |

A serving is equal to:
1/2 cup for fruits, vegetables, and cooked cereals or
1 piece for foods such as a piece of bread, 1 orange, or 1 apple.

For dry cereals and crackers, use serving sizes listed on the label.

## SAMPLE MEAL PLAN

The following menu is provided as a sample. Your daily menu plans will vary. Be sure to include a minimum of the following each day in order to provide essential nutrients for the adult:

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| Starch/Bread/Cereal Group | 6 servings |
| Fruit/Vegetable Group | 5 servings |
| Meat/Meat Substitute Group | 2 servings |
| Milk/Milk Substitute Group | 2 servings |

Combination foods may count as full or partial servings from various food groups. Fats, desserts, and sweets may be added to the meal plan after the requirements for essential nutrients are met.

## SAMPLE MENU

| Breakfast | **Lunch** | **Supper** |
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| 1/2 cup orange juice | 1/2 cup chicken noodle soup | 3 ounces baked chicken |
| 1 boiled egg | 2 to 3 ounces sliced roast beef | 1/2 cup scalloped potatoes |
| 1 slice white toast | 2 slices seedless rye bread | 1/2 cup cooked beets |
| Margarine | Mayonnaise | White dinner roll |
| 3/4 cup cornflakes | 1/2 cup tomato juice | Margarine |
| 1 cup milk | 1 small banana | 1/2 cup canned peaches |

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|---|---|---|
| Beverage | Beverage | Beverage |

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