

# Low Fibre Diet

## Information for patients

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### What is fibre?

Dietary fibre is a part of plants that is not digested or absorbed by the small gut. It can be fully or partially broken down by bacteria in the large bowel. Fibre can help move foods through the gut. There are 2 types of fibre; soluble and insoluble. You can find soluble fibre in foods such as oats, fruit, vegetables, beans and pulses. Insoluble fibre is found in foods such as wholegrains, nuts and seeds.

### Why should I be on a low fibre diet?

Reducing the amount of fibre in your diet may be required if:

- Your bowel is narrowed, or at risk of blockage
- You have diarrhoea or loose stools as a result of disease or treatments
- You have recently had bowel surgery.

Reducing the fibre in your diet should reduce the risk of your bowel becoming blocked, and may help improve symptoms including diarrhoea, wind and bloating. Changing your diet may be challenging, especially if you are used to eating a lot of fruits, vegetables and wholegrains, but remember these changes are important to improve your symptoms.

Depending on the reason you have been recommended a low fibre diet, this may only be required for a short period until your symptoms settle. Low fibre diets are not normally recommended for longer term as fibre has various health benefits. If you are required to be on a low fibre diet longer term, then you may need to be on a multivitamin to ensure that you are meeting all your nutrition needs. The Dietitian can advise you on this.

When you are able to reintroduce foods with fibre you should do this gradually, ideally over a 2 week period. This leaflet can support you with this but please speak with your Doctor or your Dietitian if you have queries regarding this.

## Following a Balanced and Low Fibre Diet

Try to always ensure a balanced diet by including foods from the main food groups highlighted within the table below.

### **Carbohydrates:**

An important energy source. Aim to include one food from this category at each meal and try to eat at regular intervals through the day

<b>Category of Food</b>	<b>Low Fibre</b>	<b>High Fibre</b>
Bread and Flours	White bread and white bread products (rolls, bagels, pitta bread, naan, chapatti)  White flour and white flour products (croissants, white muffins, plain scones)  Foods containing semolina, cornflour, or tapioca	Wholemeal, seeded, granary, rye and high fibre bread and bread products  Wholemeal flour and wholemeal flour products; products containing fruit/nuts/oats/seeds ( fruit cake, flapjacks, bran/fruit scones, teacakes, hot cross buns)
Rice and Pasta	White rice  White pasta (all varieties)  White noodles  Couscous  Gnocchi	Wild or brown rice  Wholewheat pasta  Wholewheat noodles
Crackers and Savoury Biscuits	Crackers, rice cakes and breadsticks	Oatcakes, wholewheat or seeded crackers
Cereals	Puffed rice and corn based cereals (for example rice krispies, corn flakes. Avoid cereals containing fruit and nuts)  Finely milled porridge oats	Bran based cereals (for example all bran, bran flakes)  Wholegrain wheat based cereals (wheat biscuits, shredded wheat)  Muesli and granola  Porridge
Potatoes	White potatoes (without skins – boiled, mashed, roasted, chips)	Potato skins

## **Dairy:**

Needed for healthy bones and teeth. Aim for 3 portions per day. Examples of one portion include one glass of milk, one matchbox size piece of cheese or one pot of yoghurt. If using dairy free alternatives choose calcium enriched options.

<b>Category of Food</b>	<b>Low Fibre</b>	<b>High Fibre</b>
Milk, dairy and dairy substitute products	Milk (skimmed/semi skimmed / whole/ lactose-free)  Coconut milk, soya milk, hazelnut milk, almond milk, rice milk  Cheese / cheese spreads, paneer  Yoghurt, custard, ice cream, ice lollies, milk puddings, crème caramel, kulfi	Oat milk  Cheese with fruit, nuts or oats  Fruit yoghurt or fromage frais with added fruit/nuts/oats/ cereal

## **Protein:**

Important for growth and repair. Try to include in 2-3 meals per day. Consider 2 portions of fish each week, one of which should be an oily fish (e.g. salmon or tuna)

<b>Category of Food</b>	<b>Low Fibre</b>	<b>High Fibre</b>
Meat, fish, eggs, alternatives	Meat and poultry, including bacon and sausages  Fish (except those with small bones)  Eggs  Tofu, seitan, soya mince  Quorn – 50g portion	Fish with small bones ( herrings, sardines)  Pulses including peas, beans, lentils, chickpeas  Dhal, lentil soup

## **Fruit and vegetables:**

For overall good nutritional balance aim for 3-5 portions per day. All fruit and vegetables should be peeled with seeds removed.

<b>Category of Food</b>	<b>Low Fibre</b>	<b>High Fibre</b>
Vegetables	<p>1-2 heaped tablespoons of the following vegetables:</p> <p>Carrot, turnip, swede, butternut squash, pumpkin, plantain, yam, aubergine, sweet potato, cauliflower (no stalks)</p> <p>1 small beetroot</p> <p>½ avocado</p> <p>2.5cm piece of cucumber or courgette</p> <p>200g passata, tomato puree</p> <p>100ml vegetable juice (no bits)</p>	<p>All vegetable skins, seeds and pips</p> <p>Peppers, onions, cabbage, leeks, celery, okra, green beans, sweetcorn</p> <p>Salad and lettuce</p> <p>Raw vegetables</p> <p>Olives</p> <p>Tomatoes</p>
Fruit	<p>100ml fruit juice (no bits)</p> <p>1-2 heaped tablespoons of the following tinned fruits:</p> <p>Orange, stewed apple, pear, mandarin, peaches, fruit cocktail</p> <p>1 small banana</p>	<p>Fruit juice with bits</p> <p>All fruit skins, seeds and pips</p> <p>Berries and currants, kiwi, passionfruit, rhubarb, pineapple</p> <p>Dried fruit</p> <p>Coconut</p>

## Other foods and drinks

Category of Food	Low Fibre	High Fibre
Biscuits and Cakes	Plain/cream biscuits (e.g. rich tea, custard creams, shortbread)  Sponge cake, pancakes, doughnuts	Wholemeal biscuits (e.g. digestives, oat biscuits)
Soups, sauces and flavourings	“Cream of” tomato, chicken or oxtail soup. Clear soup, oxo drinks, bouillon, consommé  Tomato ketchup, mayonnaise, salad cream, brown sauce  Soy sauce, Worcestershire sauce  Herbs and spices* including onion powder. Whole onion, removed after cooking.  Infused oils, vinegar  Apple sauce, cheese sauce	Vegetable, lentil or mixed bean soups  Chutney and pickles  Miso  Cardamom pods, cinnamon sticks
Miscellaneous	Seedless jam, rindless marmalade, honey, syrup, lemon curd, chocolate spread (without nuts)  Smooth nut butters – 1 tablespoon (15g)  Potato crisps  Butter, cream, oil	Nut butters (peanut, almond, cashew, etc.)  Falafel  Wholegrain crisps, crisps made from lentils/peas/chickpeas  Popcorn, nuts, seeds, bombay mix

## Meal and Snack Ideas

Breakfast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Suitable low fibre cereal with milk and small banana</li> <li>– White toast with seedless jam or honey</li> <li>– Smooth fruit yoghurt (no bits)</li> <li>– Scrambled/boiled eggs on white toast</li> <li>– Bacon sandwich on white bread with ketchup/brown sauce</li> </ul>
Lunch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Cream of chicken/tomato/oxtail soup with white bread/crackers</li> <li>– White bread sandwich/pitta/roll or baked potato (no skin) with choice of filling: Cheese, ham, tuna, egg, prawn, chicken mayonnaise</li> <li>– Sausage roll</li> <li>– Ham/cheese omelette or frittata</li> <li>– Cheese, scrambled egg or spaghetti hoops on white toast</li> </ul>
Evening Meal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Meat, chicken or fish, served with potatoes (no skin) or chips, and *vegetables</li> <li>– Fish pie, cottage pie or shepherd’s pie with *vegetables</li> <li>– Spaghetti Bolognese /lasagne cooked with whole onion removed prior to eating</li> <li>– Pasta with passata, white sauce or cheese sauce with chicken/fish</li> <li>– Curry cooked with meat/chicken/fish and / or *vegetables, with white rice or naan bread</li> <li>– Pizza</li> <li>– Steak pie with potatoes and *vegetables</li> <li>– Chicken or beef or tofu with noodles and stir fry sauce</li> <li>– Chicken and chorizo risotto or jambalaya</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: right;">*1-2 tbsp of well cooked vegetables from low fibre list in table</p>
Puddings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Jelly and ice cream/dairy free ice cream</li> <li>– Rice pudding, custard or semolina</li> <li>– Smooth fruit yoghurt / dairy free yoghurt or mousse</li> <li>– Creme caramel</li> <li>– Plain sponge cake / chocolate cake and cream</li> <li>– Tinned fruit with meringue, custard, cream or ice cream</li> <li>– Cheesecake or torte</li> <li>– Ice lollies</li> </ul>
Snack Ideas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Potato crisps</li> <li>– White crackers and cheese, butter /dairy free spread or pate</li> <li>– Plain scone, pancake or crumpet with butter and jam</li> <li>– Chocolate biscuit / plain biscuit / chocolate bar (no fruit/nuts)</li> <li>– Jelly sweets, boiled sweets, mints</li> </ul>

## Checking food labels

As the above table is a guide only and does not include all foods, it may be helpful to read food labels if there are foods you are unsure of. Fibre is not usually found on traffic light labels on the front of food packets – look on the back of the pack for a table listing nutritional information per 100g.

- If a food item has more than (>) 6g fibre per 100g, this food is a high fibre food and should be avoided
- If a food item has less than (<) 3g fibre per 100g, this is a low fibre food and can be included
- Foods with 3-6g fibre per 100g are a source of fibre and should initially be avoided, but may be good foods to include when reintroducing fibre

## Reintroducing fibre back into your diet

If you have been advised to start introducing fibre:

- Reintroduce foods with fibre one at a time
- Introduce a variety of different foods as tolerated to make your diet as balanced as possible
- Start by introducing small amounts of fruit, vegetables or higher fibre cereals
- If you experience pain, wind or bloating after eating any food then make a note and avoid this food for now – you can re-trial it at a later stage
- Try not to restrict your diet for longer than necessary, as it can be harder to get enough vitamins and minerals on a low fibre diet.

## Other points to Consider

### Constipation

You may find that there is a change to your bowels on a low fibre diet and you may become constipated. It is important that you are drinking enough fluids over the day as this may help to ease constipation and is important for your overall health. Good choices of fluids include water, non caffeinated drinks and sugar free drinks.

Your fluid requirements are: .....

If you are concerned about constipation, discuss this with your Doctor or Dietitian.

## Vegetarian and Vegan Diets

Following a low fibre diet can be more restrictive if you also follow a vegetarian or vegan diet. You may find it difficult to find suitable protein sources. Beans and pulses are a good protein source but are high in fibre and should be avoided. Other protein sources that can be included:

- Soya mince or Quorn products in suitable portion sizes (see table)
- Eggs
- Dairy products or calcium enriched dairy free alternatives (avoid oat based products). Soya alternatives are higher in protein so choose these where able
- Smooth peanut/cashew butters in suitable portion sizes (see table)
- Soya and pea protein powders which can be added to sauces or milk.

## Do you have a small appetite?

Feeling unwell or having a small appetite may mean you have been eating less and have lost weight as a result. These are a few ways to increase your nutritional intake on a low fibre diet:

- Include 3 small meals per day and have 2-3 small snacks between meals
- Aim to have a pudding at least once per day
- Use full fat dairy products. You can make fortified milk by adding 2-4 tablespoons of skimmed milk powder to 1 pint of full cream milk. Use this milk on cereals and to make sauces and milky puddings.

You can also add extra calories to your food (food fortification):

- Add milk powder or cream/dairy free cream to soups, sauces and puddings
- Add grated cheese/dairy free cheese to potatoes, sauces, sandwiches or on top of pasta dishes
- Add butter or a dairy free spread to potatoes, low fibre vegetables, scrambled eggs or sandwiches
- Add cream, yoghurt or dairy free alternatives to low fibre fruit or puddings.

## Other Resources for Support

If you would like more information then you may find these useful:

- Crohn's and Colitis UK - <https://www.crohnsandcolitis.org.uk/>
- British Dietetic Association – Food Facts - <https://www.bda.uk.com/food-health/food-facts.html>

Dietitian: .....

Contact number: .....