Barts Health NHS Trust

Patient information

Low Residue Diet

(Low Fibre Diet)

Nutrition and Dietetic department.

Information for patients

What is a low Residue diet?

A low residue diet, also known as a low fibre diet, is designed to limit fibre intake, typically to no more than 10–15 grams of fibre per day[1]. Foods high in fibre generally contain 6 grams or more of fibre per 100 grams[2].

Dietary fibre is not digested or absorbed in the small intestine. Instead, it passes into the large intestine (colon), where it is either fermented by gut bacteria or excreted. This is a normal part of digestion.

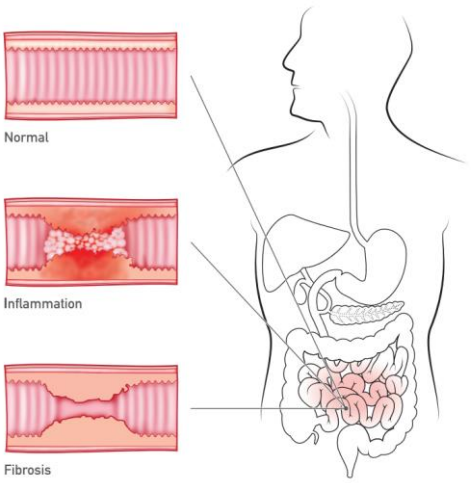
Normally, fibre-containing foods help move food and fluids through your digestive tract. This “roughage” adds bulk to stools and is encouraged in a healthy diet.

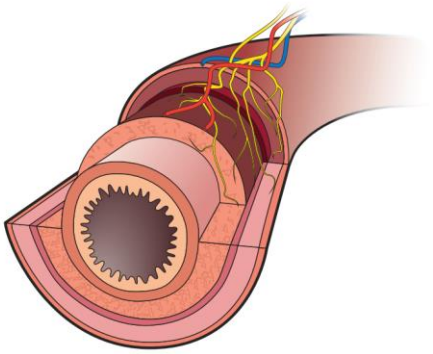
However, in certain medical conditions or before specific procedures, it is advisable to avoid high-fibre foods because they can leave behind undigested material, or “residue,” in the bowel

Low Residue diet

Why follow a low residue diet?

A low residue diet is recommended when you need to avoid foods that may irritate an inflamed bowel or block narrowed sections of the bowel.





It may help prevent blockages, improve gastrointestinal symptoms, or be used when reintroducing food after surgery or after a period on a liquid diet.

Because this diet is restricted, it should only be followed for a short time or as directed by your doctor or dietitian. Prolonged use can negatively affect your gut microbiota and overall nutritional status.

When increasing fibre (residue) again, it's best to do so gradually to allow your bowels to adjust. Also, ensure you drink plenty of fluids with any fibre intake.

[1] Martínez et al., *Nutrients*, 2023.
[2] British Dietetic Association (BDA), *Fibre - Food Fact Sheet*.

The following table shows foods to include and foods to avoid, when following a low residue/fibre diet:

Food type	Foods to include	Foods to avoid
Bread, Cereal and Nuts.	White bread, white English muffins or rolls, plain scones and bagels, pancakes, crumpets, white wraps, white pitta bread, plain naan bread, plain chapatti, poppadoms (white flour), cream crackers, plain biscuits and cake, rice cakes, white pizza bases, dumplings, Yorkshire pudding. Refined breakfast cereals such as: Corn Flakes™, Rice Krispies™, plain Special K™, Coco Pops™, Ready Brek™, Sugar Puffs™, Frosties™. White rice, pasta and noodles (soft and well cooked) Corn flour, white flour, sago, semolina, tapioca Smooth nut or seed butter (almond, peanut, cashew, tahini)	Wholemeal, wholegrain, granary, rye breads Multigrain bagels, rolls, wraps All fruit/nut breads, including walnut, granary or fruit muffins or scones and pastries with fruit/dried fruit, oatcakes, crispbreads, wholemeal crackers, malted fruit bread/cakes. Wholegrain cereals such as: All-Bran™, Weetabix™, muesli, Shredded Wheat™, porridge™ (jumbo oats), Bran Flakes™, cereal bars. Tortilla chips, twiglets™. Brown rice, brown or whole-wheat pasta, wild rice Wholemeal brown or granary flour, gram flour, wheat germ, bulgur wheat, quinoa, pearl barley, wholemeal noodles, whole-wheat couscous Whole nuts and seeds - including pumpkin, sunflower and sesame seeds, crunchy peanut butters, coconut flakes, trail mix, granola bars.
Meat and meat alternatives	Meat (tender cuts with trimmed fat) Poultry (skinless chicken or turkey) Fish (white fish, salmon and tuna) Eggs (all types- boiled, scrambled, peached) Tofu, Quorn™	Gristly and fatty meat, tough skin, fish skin and bones, jerky Tempeh, seitan or textured vegetable protein Legume based meat substitutes (lentil or bean burgers).

	Soya mince (Quorn)	
Fruit (max two portions a day) 1 portion = 80g or 1 small banana	Tinned/canned or ripe fresh fruit without skin, pulp or seeds such as apple, ripe banana, pear, peach, plum, nectarines, lychee, melon. Stewed fruit (without skins) Fruit juices (with no pulp or bits) Smooth applesauce no chunks Small amounts of smooth guacamole Fruit jellies, compotes and jams without pips	All fruit with skins, peel, stalks, seeds, pith and stones Rhubarb, berries (strawberries, blueberries, raspberries and blackberries), pineapple, citrus fruit, kiwi, grapes, oranges, mandarins. All dried fruit (figs, prunes, dates, and apricots) Blended smoothies (could contain blended skins and seeds) Jams containing pips

Food type	Foods to include	Foods to avoid
Vegetables **(Well-cooked, peeled and deseeded)**	Root vegetables (peeled and cooked) such as potato, sweet potato, swede, turnip, pumpkin, squash, carrots, marrow, parsnip White potato, peeled Peeled and deseeded tomato, courgette Sieved tomato sauces, including passata and tomato puree Strained/smooth vegetable juices or soups Remove tough skins, stems, husks, cook until soft and easily mashed or pureed	All vegetable with skins, seeds stalks, peel and pips. Most raw vegetables and salad Peas, sweetcorn, celery, mushrooms, green leafy vegetables, spring onions, leeks, olives, cabbage, broccoli stalks, Brussel sprouts, curly kale, okra, leeks, pak choy, onions, leek, lettuce, spinach. Potatoes with skin
Pulses	Pulses are naturally high in fibre**,** especially insoluble fibre, which adds bulk to stools and leaves residue in the bowel. Even when cooked, mashed, or puréed, they still contain fibre and are generally avoided on a low residue diet. Very smooth hummus can be discussed with your dietitian.	Whole beans Lentils (all) Chickpeas Peas Baked beans in tomato sauce (Heinz™) Red kidney beans Soya beans Green beans Black beans Butter beans Split beans

Milk and milk products	Milk (all types), cream, sour cream, crème fraiche, fromage frais, smooth yoghurt, cheese (any including paneer), ice cream, buttermilk, ricotta, mascarpone. Plain sweet or salty Lassi Lactose free milks are suitable	Any milk products containing bits of fruits, nuts, seeds or cereals.
Drinks	Smooth (no pulp, skins, seeds) fruit and vegetable juices, milk, water, soft drinks, herbal tea (Note caffeine containing drinks including tea, coffee, energy drinks and cola can affect the bowel)	Fruit and vegetable juices with pulp, prune juice and smoothies homemade or shop brought

Food type	Foods to include	Foods to avoid
Snacks	Sweet plain biscuits such as rich tea, ginger nuts, custard creams and Nice biscuits Plain sponge cake made with white flour Plain crackers such as cream crackers Smooth peanut butter	Digestive biscuits™, Hobnobs™, fig rolls, health bars, flapjacks, nut biscuits, biscuits or cakes made using: oats, dried fruit or dried coconut Fruit cake, teacakes with raisins, Ryvita™, whole wheat crispbread, oatcakes Nuts and seeds
Desserts	Custard, ice cream, milk puddings, meringue, Angel Delight™ Clear jelly Plain cakes Vermicelli (seviyan/ plain kulfi)	Ice cream containing fruit and nuts, cakes, puddings and pies containing any of the following: Wholemeal flour, dried fruit, nuts, dried coconut and any fruits you have been advised to avoid Shrikhand, gulab jaman, Halva, all sweets made with nuts/coconut or gram flour
Miscellaneous	Smooth or sieved soup Sugar, honey, golden syrup, lemon curd, jelly jam custard powder, boiled sweets, toffee, caramel, marshmallows, plain/milk/white chocolate Pepper, salt, herbs and spices in moderation (dried or finely chopped) Gravy, tomato sauce, soy sauce, plain crisps, plain pretzels (without sesame seeds)	Soup with pieces, such as minestrone or beans Jam, marmalade, pickle or chutney with skin, peel or pips Chocolate with dried fruit, nuts or seeds, coconut pieces Wholegrain mustard, pickles, relish, chutney, hummus, coleslaw Popcorn, corn chips Bombay mix, Sev, Ghatia

Handy hints

- Eat small meals at regular intervals (every three to four hours).
- Chew food slowly and thoroughly (this supports digestion).
- When introducing new foods, introduce only one at a time and build up slowly. This will help you to rule out foods that aggravate your symptoms.
- Avoid large quantities of caffeine or alcohol as these may worsen your symptoms.
- Avoid rich sauces and spicy foods if they worsen your symptoms.
- It is important to maintain a good variety of foods, especially if you follow these guidelines for more than a few weeks.
- Large volumes of milk may not be well tolerated. If so, just use small quantities (in tea and coffee, for example). Or switch to lactose free milk or plant based milks that are fortified with added calcium.
- Avoid fizzy drinks if they worsen your symptoms.
- Be cautious with ready meals and pre-prepared foods as they may contain some of the ingredients known to aggravate your symptoms.
- If eating is difficult, speak to your dietitian about ways to increase your calorie and protein intake to ensure adequate nutrition. Nutritional supplements may be considered. Your dietitian may recommend a multi-vitamin and mineral supplement.
- Encourage mechanical breakdown of foods including chopping, steaming and chewing.

Suggested meal plan:

Breakfast Options:

30g corn flakes™	0.9g fibre
30 Rice Krispies™	0.9g fibre
30g Ready brek™	2.4g fibre
130ml semi skimmed milk	0g fibre
2 slices of white bread	2.4g fibre
40g seedless fruit jam	0g fibre
Eggs (fried, poached, scrambled)	0g fibre
150ml orange juice (no bits)	0g fibre

Lunch Options:

50g slice white sourdough bread	2.4g fibre
Cheese, eggs, fish, tuna, meat	0g fibre
Blended soup (no bits)	2-6g fibre
Medium size jacket potato without skin	1.5-2g fibre
Jelly, custard, mousse	0g fibre
White bread x2 slices	1g fibre
2 rice cakes	0.6-1g fibre
200ml apple juice no pulp	0g fibre

Dinner Options:

Cheese, eggs, fish, tuna, meat	0g fibre
120g cooked white rice	0.5-1g fibre
130g boiled potato without skin	1.2g fibre
120g cooked white pasta	2g fibre
100g cooked rice noodles	1.5-2g fibre
80g boiled and peeled carrots	2.2g fibre
80g peeled cooked sweet potato	3g fibre
150g mashed white potato (no skin)	2g fibre
Tomato passata per 100g	1g fibre

Snack Options:

1 apple without skin	0.8g fibre
2 rich tea biscuits™	0.7g fibre
Greek or plain yoghurt	0g fibre
Medium size banana	3g fibre
Tablespoon smooth peanut butter	1-1.5g fibre
Tinned peeled peaches 50-80g	0.7-1.1g fibre
Plain cracker	0.5-1g fibre

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Switchboard: 020 3416 5000
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