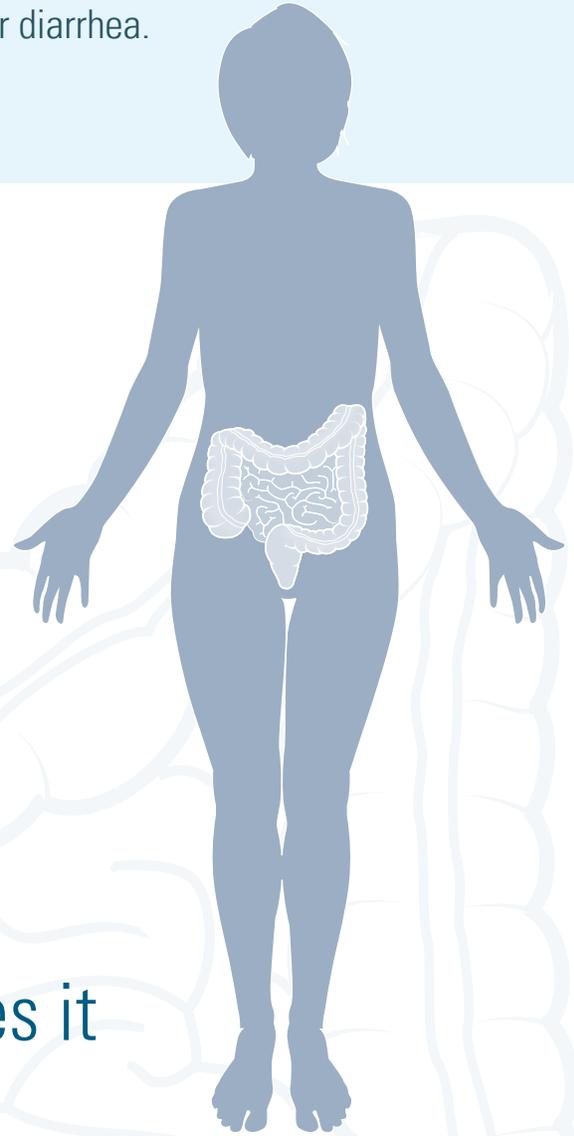


Your body needs good nutrition while you have your cancer treatments.

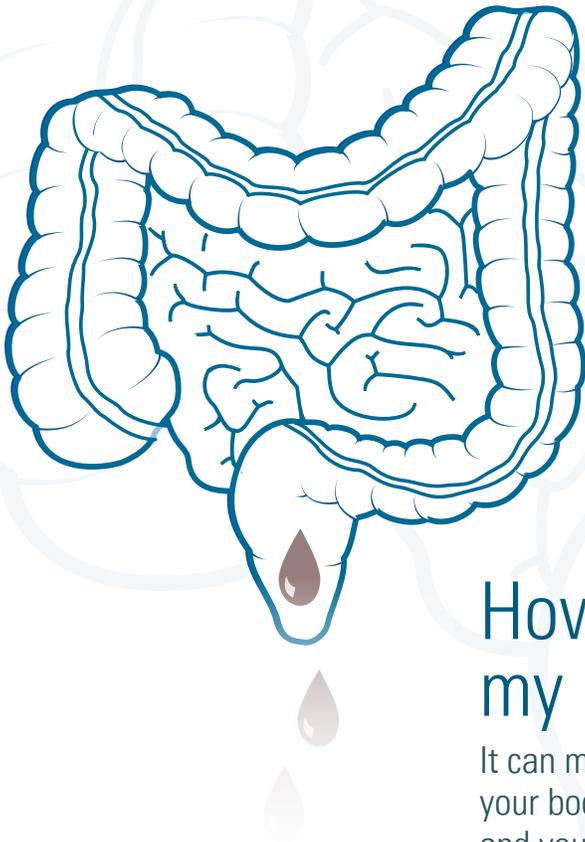
This fact sheet is about how to use nutrition to manage your diarrhea. Remember to listen to what your body is telling you. Together we will find solutions that are right for you.

This fact sheet is about nutrition and diarrhea.



What is diarrhea?

Diarrhea is when you have loose, watery stool (poo) more than 3 times in a day.



Why does it happen?

Cancer treatments can sometimes cause diarrhea or make you more likely to have it. Illness, infection, food poisoning and medications are some of the reasons you may have diarrhea.

How can diarrhea affect my health?

It can make you lose water and electrolytes (salts) that your body needs to work well. This can make you weak and you can lose too much weight. If this happens, you might not be strong enough to get your usual cancer treatments. It can also cause skin irritation. That is why it is very important to manage diarrhea.

How to manage your diarrhea

What to drink:

Drink lots of liquid. Your body needs liquids. If you have diarrhea, you lose water through your loose stool. So, you need to drink more to help make up for the water you lose.

Drink at least 6 to 8 cups (1.5-2.0L) of liquids every day. Drink one extra cup of liquid for every watery stool you have. Drinking extra liquid will not stop the diarrhea but it can help prevent serious problems caused by diarrhea.



Drink different kinds of liquids, not just water. Try juice, herbal tea, sports drinks, soups, oral rehydration solution (e.g. Pedialyte) or even Jell-O. You can drink an oral rehydration solution to make sure you are replacing the salts that you lose with diarrhea. (See recipe below).

Drink most of your liquids in between your meals so you are not too full to eat the food you need.

Try drinks that are lactose-free. Some people find it easier to digest dairy products when the lactose is removed.



Avoid coffee, black or green tea, colas and alcohol. They can make your diarrhea worse.

Recipe for Oral Rehydration Solution:

An oral rehydration solution (ORS) is a drink that helps replace the liquids and some electrolytes that your body loses when you have diarrhea. This helps prevent or treat mild diarrhea. ORS drinks include at least 3 things: a sugar, salt and water.

- 1 cup juice, without pulp
- 3 cups water
- ½ teaspoon salt



You can also buy ready-to-drink oral rehydration solutions (e.g. Pedialyte) in grocery stores or pharmacies.

What to eat:

Change how often you eat. Eat 5 or 6 small meals every day instead of a few big meals. You might not be able to handle a lot of food all at once.

Some foods can help control your diarrhea. Try to eat:

- Starchy foods like white bread, white rice, white pasta, instant oatmeal and processed cereal.
- Cooked foods, not raw foods (for example: cooked vegetables).
- Foods without skins and seeds. Peeled fruits or canned fruit, bananas, and applesauce.
- Potatoes, sweet potatoes, turnips, beets, zucchini, carrots, squash.
- Smooth nut butters, eggs, tofu, poultry, fish and meat.
- Sports drinks, broth, juice without pulp, decaffeinated coffee, ORS.



Some foods can make diarrhea worse. Avoid eating:

- Greasy, fried, spicy or very sweet foods.
- High fiber foods - like whole grain breads, nuts, seeds, beans, or lentils.
- Corn, broccoli, cabbage, onion, garlic, lettuce.
- Strawberries, raspberries, blueberries, grapes.
- Foods that have artificial sweeteners like sorbitol and mannitol, such as candy and gum.
- Coffee, alcohol, carbonated drinks, juice with pulp.



Remember to listen to what your body is telling you. Over time, you will learn to choose foods that are right for you.

Here are some examples of meals you can eat.

Breakfast: Oatmeal with a banana and some decaffeinated tea

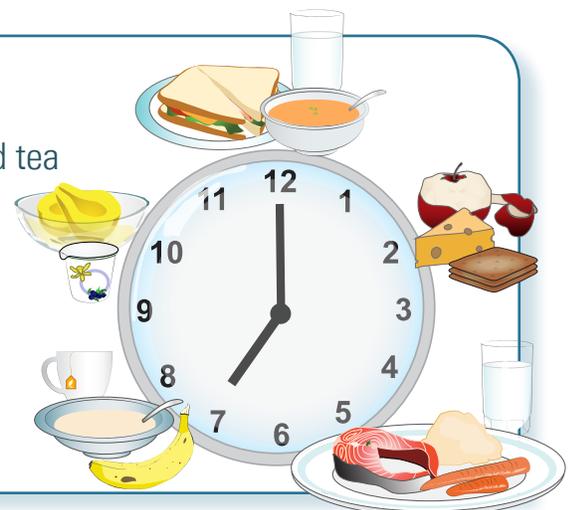
Snack #1: Canned fruit with a yogurt

Lunch: Egg-salad sandwich with a cream of tomato soup

Snack #2: Crackers with cheese

Dinner: White rice, piece of fish and boiled carrots

Snack #3: Bowl of rice cereal with milk



Try to avoid the foods that make your diarrhea worse.

Did you know...

Some medication, even prescription ones, can make your diarrhea worse. Speak with your treating team before taking antacids (like Pepto Bismol), anti-diarrhea medicine (like Immodium), probiotics, or any over-the-counter medications. Your treating team may also prescribe medication to help manage your diarrhea. If so, follow their instructions.



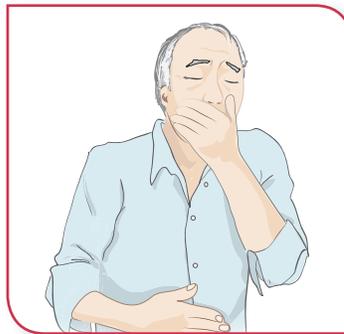
When to get help:



If your diarrhea keeps getting worse no matter what you try or if you have any of the symptoms below, contact your treating team **immediately**.

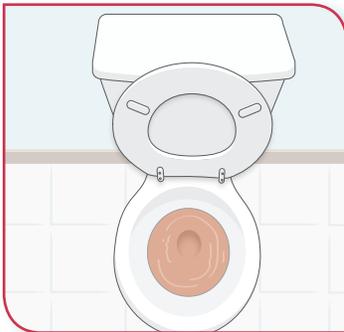


chest pains or unusual heart beats



vomiting as well as diarrhea in the same day

Other serious symptoms are:



very little or very dark pee



cannot eat or are afraid to eat



feeling tired, weak or dizzy



If you need help with your nutrition or in managing your symptoms, please contact your dietitian. If you do not have a dietitian, contact your treating team for a referral.

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