

DIARRHEA

Management of Diarrhea - what to eat and drink

- ❖ Force fluids to replace those lost by diarrhea
 - ❖ Drink a variety of fluids, at least 8-10 glasses a day.
 - ❖ **Water** should be only part of the 8-10 glasses; it does not replace lost minerals.
 - ❖ **Drink slowly**; drink small quantities often.
 - ❖ **Gatorade** is a good source of fluids, and it replaces lost salt and potassium.
 - ❖ **Clear soup or broth** is good. It replaces lost salt.
 - ❖ **Sodas** - let stand until fizz has decreased to prevent gas or bloating.
 - ❖ **AVOID** milk and dairy products. They can make diarrhea worse and should not be eaten for at least a week after the diarrhea has resolved. This is because temporary lactose intolerance can develop with diarrhea.
 - ❖ **AVOID** alcohol and coffee.
 - ❖ **AVOID** very hot or very cold beverages.
 - ❖ **FOODS**: eat small frequent meals.
 - ❖ A good choice of foods for diarrhea:
 - **B**-Bananas - help replace lost nutrients
 - **R**-Rice- easily digested and binding because it is a starch
 - **A**-Applesauce-provides sugars for energy
 - **T**-Toast- easy to tolerate and a starch to cause binding
 - ❖ When these foods are being tolerated , then you may start adding other foods.
 - ❖ Bland low fiber foods
 - ❖ Chicken - white meat without the skin
 - ❖ Scrambled eggs
 - ❖ Crackers, white bread, and pasta noodles without sauce
 - ❖ Canned or cooked fruits without skins
- FOOD THAT CAN MAKE DIARRHEA WORSE:**
- ❖ Fatty, fried, greasy, or spicy foods can cause more problems and discomfort
 - ❖ High fiber foods can be troublesome; bran and some cereals; raw fruits and vegetables
 - ❖ Dried fruits, beans, popcorn, and nuts
 - ❖ Chocolate

DIARRHEA

Why do you get diarrhea?

- ❖ Chemotherapy and radiation often act on cells that are rapidly dividing, including tumor cells.
- ❖ Cells in the lining of the intestines, hair follicles, mouth, and bone marrow are rapidly dividing, so they can become damaged by chemotherapy and radiation.
- ❖ Stress, antibiotics, some foods, and food supplements can cause diarrhea.

Stool softeners and laxatives can also trigger diarrhea.

Importance of therapy related diarrhea

- ❖ Can prevent the intestines from absorbing necessary nutrients and fluids.
- ❖ Can be mildly bothersome or can be severe, or even life threatening.
- ❖ Diarrhea may not go away if untreated: it may get worse.
- ❖ Early notice and treatment will give you the best cancer care and best chance of benefit from chemotherapy.
- ❖ Talk with your nurse or doctor, and he or she will guide your treatment.

When to report diarrhea

- ❖ Please do not be afraid or embarrassed to call your doctor or nurse at any time.
- ❖ If left untreated, the diarrhea may not go away; in fact, it may get worse.
- ❖ Call your doctor or nurse if you notice any of the early signs described below.

EARLY SIGNS

- ❖ Change in normal bowel habits-more stools per day than before chemotherapy OR softer or loose stools
- ❖ Increased cramping or gas, or both
- ❖ Pain or feeling weak

What can happen if diarrhea is ignored?

- ❖ Diarrhea not treated correctly can become serious, even life threatening.
- ❖ Early therapy gives better results and can prevent hospitalization.
- ❖ Hospitalization may be required to restore fluid balance and nutrition.
- ❖ Early treatment can help you to receive the best benefit from your chemotherapy.

Other important changes to report

- ❖ **Dehydration** (fluid loss) caused by loss of water through stools can cause dry mouth, decreased urination or darker, yellower urine, or both; dizziness or feeling light-headed; weakness or fainting.
- ❖ **Electrolyte imbalances**-salt and potassium are not correctly balanced; leg cramps can be an early sign of this problem.
- ❖ **Weight loss**-loss of fluid and nutrients through frequent stools.
- ❖ **Fever**, together with diarrhea, can be a sign of infection. This is serious and needs to be reported immediately. Also report inability to keep body warm, chills, sweating or feeling flushed or hot, and increased body temperature.