

Low irritant, high fibre diet

Nutrition & Dietetics Department

What is irritant fibre?

Dietary fibre (also known as roughage) is the part of plants that cannot be easily digested. Some of it passes through the body without being absorbed.

Certain types of dietary fibre may be more difficult for your gut to process. This fibre is known as 'irritant'. 'Irritant' fibre is mostly found in foods that contain skins, strings, pips and seeds.

Who is this leaflet for?

Your dietitian may ask you to follow a low irritant, high fibre diet:

- before and/or after bowel surgery
- after the insertion of a colonic stent
- if you have bowel adhesions or narrowing of the colon
- during an active flare-up of ulcerative colitis, Crohn's disease or diverticulitis
- if you are suffering from diarrhoea
- if you are experiencing excessive wind and bloating
- if you have irritable bowel syndrome (IBS)
- if you have a high output ileostomy/colostomy

This diet is usually tried for a 2-4 week period. Your dietitian will follow your progress and advise you on the next stage of your treatment.

What fruit and vegetables can I eat?

Aim to have 5 portions of fruit and/or vegetables every day. Always choose from the 'foods allowed' lists.

Fruit

Foods allowed: unlikely to cause symptoms	Foods to avoid: may aggravate symptoms
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Fruit juice or smoothies (no bits) ■ Bananas ■ Mango, papaya ■ Pineapple (without the core) ■ Melon, watermelon ■ Fruit with the skins removed e.g. peeled apples, pears, peaches, plums, nectarines, apricots ■ Puréed, stewed or cooked fruit (without skins, pips or stones) ■ Tinned fruit ■ Fruit sauces and coulis with pips removed e.g. sieved raspberry coulis, apple sauce 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Fruit juice or smoothies with bits ■ Fruits with skins on e.g. grapes, cherries, blueberries ■ Citrus fruit ■ Coconut ■ Pineapple core ■ Rhubarb ■ Berries and fruits with seeds e.g. strawberries, raspberries, blackberries, kiwi, pomegranate, passion fruit ■ All dried fruit e.g. raisins, cranberries, apricots, prunes, dates

Vegetables

Foods allowed: unlikely to cause symptoms	Foods to avoid: may aggravate symptoms
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Well cooked root vegetables e.g. carrots, parsnips, swede, turnips ■ Butternut or gem squash ■ Pumpkin ■ Peeled marrow, courgette, patty pan ■ Well cooked cabbage, broccoli and cauliflower (no tough stalks) ■ Well cooked spinach ■ Peeled and de-seeded tomato, cucumber, peppers ■ Avocado ■ Smooth vegetable soups ■ Well cooked, softened onions and garlic (as a paste) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ All skins, pips and seeds ■ Tough stalks of vegetables e.g. cauliflower, broccoli ■ Raw vegetables ■ Asparagus ■ Aubergine ■ Brussel sprouts ■ Leeks, spring onions ■ Raw or undercooked onions and garlic ■ Pickled onions, gherkins ■ Sweetcorn ■ Peas, sugar snaps, mangetout ■ Green, french and runner beans, broad beans ■ Mushrooms ■ Spring greens ■ Beetroot ■ Celery ■ Radish ■ Lettuce, rocket, watercress and spinach ■ Whole tomatoes ■ Bean sprouts ■ Pak choi ■ Soup with whole vegetables e.g. minestrone ■ Chicory, fennel ■ Olives

What starchy foods can I eat?

Breads and cereals

Foods allowed: unlikely to cause symptoms	Foods to avoid: may aggravate symptoms
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Rice Krispies®, Cornflakes®, Cocopops®, Frosties®, Cheerios® ■ Special K® (without berries) ■ Ready Brek®, plain porridge ■ White flour, wholemeal flour, cornflour, rice flour, potato flour, chickpea flour, cornmeal ■ White, 50/50, wholemeal bread, rolls, baguettes ■ Seedless rye bread ■ White or brown pitta bread ■ Tortilla wraps ■ Crumpets, plain or cheese scones, scotch pancakes ■ Croissants, brioche ■ Melba toast, crackers, crispbreads (without seeds and grains) ■ Rice cakes ■ Oat cakes ■ Plain bagels ■ Plain muffins (without berries) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Wholemeal, wholegrain and bran cereals e.g. All Bran®, Branflakes®, Weetabix® ■ Cereals containing dried fruit, seeds or nuts e.g. Sultana Bran®, Fruit n Fibre®, Muesli, Crunchy Nut Cornflakes® ■ Special K with berries ■ Oats, porridge with berries ■ Granola ■ Wholegrain flour, granary flour ■ Granary, malted, seeded or multigrain bread ■ Bran ■ Barley, pearl barley, spelt ■ Wholegrain or seeded bagels ■ Muffins with berries or made with wholegrain flour ■ Wholegrain or seeded crackers or crispbreads

Potato, rice and pasta

Foods allowed: unlikely to cause symptoms	Foods to avoid: may aggravate symptoms
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Peeled white or sweet potatoes (boiled, mashed, fried or roasted) ■ Plain hash browns ■ White or wholemeal rice ■ White or wholemeal pasta ■ Yorkshire pudding ■ Pastry ■ Waffles ■ Rice pudding ■ Couscous, bulgar wheat, quinoa, gnocchi, tapioca, sago 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Skins of jacket potatoes ■ Wild rice ■ Hash browns made with onion

What protein foods can I eat?

Meat, fish, poultry, eggs and meat substitutes

Foods allowed: unlikely to cause symptoms	Foods to avoid: may aggravate symptoms
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ All types of fish, meat and meat products i.e. fresh, frozen, tinned ■ Smooth paté or liver sausage ■ Eggs ■ Tofu ■ Quorn ■ Soya mince ■ Corned beef ■ Ham, bacon, gammon 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Skin and bones of fish ■ Convenience items which contain 'irritant' foods e.g. onions, peppers, wholegrains, pulses ■ Coarse paté made with onions

Pulses, nuts and seeds

Foods allowed: unlikely to cause symptoms	Foods to avoid: may aggravate symptoms
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Smooth peanut butter ■ Smooth houmous ■ Ground nuts and nut purées ■ Marzipan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ All varieties of pulses e.g. lentils, chickpeas ■ All varieties of beans e.g. borlotti, cannellini, kidney, soya, baked beans, broad beans ■ All nuts ■ Crunchy peanut butter ■ Houmous with whole chickpeas ■ All seeds e.g. sunflower, pumpkin, sesame, poppy

What dairy foods can I eat?

Foods allowed: unlikely to cause symptoms	Foods to avoid: may aggravate symptoms
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ All types of milk e.g. cow's, goat's, sheep's, soya, rice, oat ■ Cream, crème fraîche ■ Buttermilk ■ All types of cheese (without dried fruit and nuts) ■ Butter, margarine, spread ■ Smooth yoghurt ■ Smooth ice cream and sorbet ■ Custard 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Cheese containing dried fruit or nuts ■ Yoghurt containing whole fruit, nuts, seeds or pips ■ Ice cream and sorbet containing nuts, seeds and whole fruits

What sweet treats can I eat?

Foods allowed: unlikely to cause symptoms	Foods to avoid: may aggravate symptoms
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Cakes made with suitable flour (without dried fruit or nuts) ■ Plain biscuits e.g. Rich Tea, digestives, shortbread ■ Pancakes ■ Jelly (with tinned fruit) ■ Boiled or jelly sweets ■ Chocolate (without nuts, seeds or dried fruit) ■ Toffee ■ Marshmallows 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Cakes made with dried fruit and nuts ■ Hot cross buns, tea cakes, fruit scones ■ Wholegrain biscuits e.g. Hobnobs® ■ Biscuits containing dried fruit e.g. fig rolls, Garibaldi® ■ Cereal bars containing dried fruit and nuts ■ Flapjacks ■ Jelly made with fresh berries ■ Chocolate with nuts, seeds and dried fruit

What savoury treats can I eat?

Foods allowed: unlikely to cause symptoms	Foods to avoid: may aggravate symptoms
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Crisps, tortilla chips ■ Plain bread sticks ■ Cheese straws ■ Mini cheddars or TUC® sandwich biscuits ■ Smooth dips e.g. taramasalata, smooth guacamole 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Nuts ■ Popcorn ■ Bombay Mix ■ Dips that contain whole tomatoes, cucumbers, onions e.g. salsa, tzatziki

What condiments can I eat?

Foods allowed: unlikely to cause symptoms	Foods to avoid: may aggravate symptoms
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Tomato ketchup ■ Smooth mustard ■ Brown sauce ■ Worcester sauce ■ Soya sauce ■ Mayonnaise, salad cream ■ Salt and pepper ■ Dried herbs ■ Powdered spices ■ Gravy ■ Seedless jam or marmalade ■ Lemon curd ■ Honey ■ Golden syrup, maple syrup ■ Marmite®, Vegemite® and Bovril® 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Pickles and relishes ■ Chutneys ■ Wholegrain mustard ■ Stalks and leaves of fresh herbs ■ Jam with seeds ■ Marmalade with peel ■ Salad dressing made with wholegrain mustard

Reference source(s):

- Eswaran S, Muir J, William C (2013) Fibre and functional gastrointestinal disorders. *The American Journal of Gastroenterology* **108**: 718-727
- Gandy J (ed) *Manual of Dietetic Practice* 5th Edition. 2014 Blackwell Publishing
- <http://www.nutrition.org.uk/healthyliving/basics/fibre.html>

Contact details

If you have any questions about the information in this leaflet please contact the Dietetic Department at the address below:

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PALS and Advocacy contact details

Contact details of independent advocacy services can be provided by our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) who are located on the right hand side as you enter the main reception area. PALS are also your first point of contact for health related issues, questions or concerns surrounding RSCH patient services.

Telephone: 01483 402757

Email: rsc-tr.pals@nhs.net

Opening hours: 9.00am–4.00pm, Monday to Friday

If you would like information documents in large print, on tape or in another language or form please contact PALS.

Past review date: August 2016

Future review date: August 2019

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PIN160707–1087

