

Low fibre eating

Fibre is found in fruits, vegetables, nuts and grains, and it helps to keep your bowels regular. Eating plenty of fibre can also help you to manage diabetes, heart disease and constipation.

Sometimes your GP or specialist might ask you to follow a low fibre eating plan to rest your bowels. This might be because you have had gut surgery, diverticulitis or because your gut has been under stress.

Eating low-fibre foods will mean that you have smaller and less frequent bowel motions. This fact sheet gives some ideas about what foods to choose that are low in fibre.

Following a low fibre eating plan means you may not get enough of some nutrients. Do not follow this way of eating for a long time unless you are advised by your specialist, GP or an Accredited Practising Dietitian.

Which foods should I choose?

It is important to include a variety of foods from the five food groups every day, including different types of grain (cereal) foods, vegetables, fruit, dairy foods, lean meat and meat alternatives.

Food group	Low fibre foods (choose)	High fibre foods (avoid)
Grain (cereal) foods	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• White bread, crumpets or English muffins.• Strained porridge, corn flakes or rice bubbles.• White flour, white rice or white pasta.• Plain cakes, biscuits, scones and muffins made with white flour.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Wholemeal, grain, rye or fruit breads.• High fibre white bread.• Wholegrain, bran and wheat-based cereals or any with fruit, nuts and/or coconut.• Oats and oat bran.• Wholemeal flour, brown rice, high fibre or wholemeal pasta.• Cakes, biscuits, scones and muffins made with wholemeal flour, dried fruit, coconut, nuts or bran.

Food group	Low fibre foods (choose)	High fibre foods (avoid)
Vegetables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peeled and well-cooked vegetables. • Cauliflower or broccoli, without the stalk. • Remove pips, seeds and skins (pumpkin, zucchini, squash, marrow, tomato or cucumber). • Enjoy a variety of asparagus tips, avocado, cabbage, potato, sweet potato, swede, turnip, young zucchini or squash, tomato paste. • Strained vegetable juice. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All raw vegetables. • All other vegetables and salad. • Lentils, legumes, chickpeas and dried beans. • Vegetable juices with pulp.
Fruit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Well-cooked fruit • Peel fruit and remove stalks, seeds, pips • Tinned fruit (except pineapple) • Strained fruit juice • Some examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Paw paw and melons (no seeds) ○ Cherries and seedless grapes ○ Peaches & nectarine (peeled) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fruit with skin, pips or a rough texture • All dried fruits • All berries • Prune juice or juice with pulp • Tinned pineapple • All other fruits not listed in the “Foods to choose” column
Dairy foods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All milks, custard. • White sauce, cheese. • Plain yoghurt. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yoghurt or ice cream with fruit, nuts or coconut.
Lean meat and meat alternatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All lean meats, chicken (no skin), fish. • Eggs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peanut butter, nuts, seeds. • Baked beans, lentils, dried peas and beans.
Other foods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Margarine, oils and salad dressings. • Fish and meat pastes, vegemite, honey, clear jams. • Strained or clear soups. • Ice cream. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jams with skins or seeds. • Popcorn. • Soups with vegetables and/or lentils. • Stir fry dishes. • Casserole or dishes containing foods to be avoided. • Pizza. • Pastries with fruit.

Acknowledgements: DAA Nutrition Manual, 9th Edition, 'Restricted Fibre Diet' 2014.

This general advice was accurate at the time of publication (June 2020).

For more information about nutrition and your individual needs, see your GP or an Accredited Practising Dietitian.