




The Clatterbridge
Cancer Centre
NHS Foundation Trust

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Low residue diet information

Rehabilitation and Support

A guide for patients and carers

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What is a low residue diet?

A low residue diet contains foods that are easy to digest. On a low residue diet it is necessary to avoid foods with high fibre content.

There is no indication that following a low residue diet is beneficial to control treatment side effects for individuals having their pelvic area treated with radiotherapy. Evidence suggests continuing with your usual, or current fibre intake is beneficial.

Why have I been advised to follow a low residue diet?

- If your bowel is obstructed, or you are at risk of bowel obstruction - avoid foods that may irritate an inflamed bowel, or obstruct narrowed parts of the bowel.
- Sometimes due to side effects from treatment such as surgery, chemotherapy or immunotherapy a low residue diet is indicated – check with your doctor.

How long do I need to follow this diet for?

A low residue diet is often temporary, however can sometimes be for the longer term depending on your condition & symptoms. Please check with your doctor/dietitian about how long you should follow this diet for.

If you follow the diet for more than one week and have a limited amount of fruit and vegetables you will need to take a supplement of vitamins and minerals e.g. 'one-a-day' or 'complete A-Z' available from chemists and larger supermarkets. Try to include a source of calcium at each meal e.g. milk, yoghurt, cheese, white bread, tinned fish

If you have diabetes you can still follow a low residue diet but make sure you eat meals and snacks containing low fibre starchy foods such as white bread, white rice and cereals etc. at each mealtime.



Food type	Choose	Avoid
Bread, Cereal & Grain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • White bread & white flour • White pasta • White rice, noodles, cous cous • Corn flour • White cereals e.g. Corn Flakes[®], Rice Krispies[®], Special K[®], Frosted Flakes[®] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wholemeal/seeded/granary/brown bread, fruit loaf, wholemeal crackers. • Wholemeal flour, wholemeal pasta • Brown rice • Bran & bran cereals e.g. Bran Flakes[®] • Oats & porridge • Wholegrain cereals e.g. Shredded Wheat[®], Cheerio's[®]; • Cereal containing added fruit, nuts including muesli.
Meat, Fish, Cheese, Eggs, Alternatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ham, pork, beef, lamb, poultry (tender from cooking) • Fish (no bones) • Eggs (cooked all ways) • Cheese, plain cottage cheese, cream cheese • Quorn[®] & tofu 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tough/grisly meats e.g. stewing steak, sausages, meat pies • Skin and bones of fish • Cheese containing fruit/vegetables/nuts • Pulses e.g. kidney beans, baked beans, chickpeas & hummus • Lentils and split peas e.g. mushy peas

<p>Biscuits, Cakes & Puddings</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • White flour biscuits e.g Rich Tea[®], shortbread, Nice[®], malted milk, custard creams • Plain sponge cakes e.g madeira/Victoria sponge, mini chocolate rolls, lemon slices • Milk puddings, custard, clear jelly, rice pudding, meringue, ice cream, yoghurt (no bits) • Angel Delight[®] / instant whip 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wholemeal biscuits e.g Digestive[®] • Biscuits & cake with added fruit & nuts e.g fig rolls, scones, fruit cake • Fruit pies, fruit crumble • Yoghurt with bits in • Ice cream containing fruit or nuts
<p>Fruit (2-3 serving's max.)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tinned/stewed/fresh (ensure ripe) without skin or seeds e.g apple, pear, peach, plum, apricot, nectarine, melon, banana 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All skins/peel/pips/pith e.g blackberries, strawberries, blueberries, raspberries, citrus fruits (oranges, grapefruit, tangerine), grapes, kiwi, pineapple, mango • All dried fruit e.g dates, apricots, raisins, prunes



Vegetables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure these are peeled and very well cooked (so that they are soft and easily mashed) • Carrot, turnip, swede, parsnip, asparagus tips, cauliflower florets, skinless peppers, avocado, tomato puree/passata 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All skin/seeds/peel/ stalks: Broccoli, cabbage, brussels sprouts, spinach, celery, peas, sweetcorn, mushrooms, onions, leeks • Salad vegetables e.g. cucumber, lettuce, tomatoes, radish
Nuts & Seeds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smooth peanut butter 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All nuts and seeds including those added to baked goods, chocolate and sweets
Preserves	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Honey, syrup, seedless jam, rind less marmalade, lemon curd, treacle 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jam or marmalade containing pips/seeds/peels
Fats, Oils & Sauces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Butter, margarine, oil, cream • Plain sauces e.g. cheese sauce, tomato sauce, mayonnaise, gravy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chutneys and pickles, any sauce containing skins/nuts e.g. cranberry, black bean

Miscellaneous

- Clear soups, sieved soups, Bovril®
- Tea, coffee
- Squash
- Smooth fruit juice
- Milk and milky drinks
- Boiled sweets, chocolates, mints
- Potato crisps and snacks that melt in the mouth e.g. Skips®, Quavers®, Wotsits®, Pringles®
- Soups containing seeds/skin/pulses/ lentils e.g. lentil soup, scotch broth
- Fruit juice with bits in, smoothies
- Sweets or chocolates containing fruits/nuts
- Popcorn, Bombay mix, tropical mix

Meal plan example

Breakfast: Rice Krispies®/Corn Flakes® with milk, white toast & butter, smooth fruit juice.

Snack Meal: Scrambled egg on white toast / turkey sandwich, yoghurt, peeled apple, squash.

Main Meal: Meat / fish / Quorn mince / tofu / cheese dish. Served with peeled potatoes / white pasta / white rice / cous cous, and allowed vegetables e.g. peeled carrots, turnip.

Desert: Milk pudding / stewed peeled pears and custard.

Snacks: Biscuits from the allowed list, smooth yoghurt, crisps, sweets or chocolate (no nuts or dried fruit), cake, milk based drink e.g. milky coffee or a milkshake with no skin, seeds or pips from fruit.



Re-introduction of fibre/residue foods

Your dietitian/doctor will guide you on how and when to re-introduce fibre/residue into your diet.

Remember that you should re-introduce fibre gradually back into your diet. The aim is to identify a level of fibre that you can manage.

Limit foods that you have not been able to manage previously.

When having more fibre in your diet you may need to increase your fluid intake. Aim for 8-10 cups of fluid a day.

When introducing new foods, include one at a time, in small amounts (one third of your normal portion), building up gradually.

Week 1

Try replacing white bread with wholemeal bread

Week 2

Try a higher fibre breakfast cereal such as Weetabix®, Shredded Wheat® or Bran Flakes®.

Week 3

Try fruit and vegetables from the “avoid” list (no dried fruit).

Five portions of fruit and vegetables (not including potatoes) are recommended long term for a healthy diet.

Week 4

Try eating the skins on fruit and vegetables such as apples, pears or potatoes.

Week 5

If you are still symptom free, try including any other foods from the original “avoid” list, including dried fruit.

If a food causes any symptoms of discomfort, exclude it from your diet, but you can try it again at a later date. Some people will tolerate residue better than others. Discuss with your doctor/dietitian if you are unsure or concerned.

Constipation

Some people need medication to prevent constipation whilst on a low residue diet. You may find that as dietary sources of fibre are re-introduced you can reduce, or even stop these medications. Always check with your doctor/dietitian before doing so.



How we produce our information

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