

Dietetic Department

Do You Have Diarrhoea?

People who are unwell may sometimes suffer from diarrhoea. This can be a side effect of certain medical treatments rather than caused by what you eat. Altering your eating habits for a short time while you have symptoms may help.

Try some of the following:

- Drink plenty of fluids. It is important to replace lost fluids. Aim for at least 8 – 10 cups or 2 litres of fluid a day.
- Reduce your intake of caffeine and alcohol.
- Avoid foods that may irritate your bowels such as greasy, rich or spicy foods.
- You may find it helpful to cut down on your fibre intake until your diarrhoea settles. Fibre is found in wholegrain cereals and wholegrain bread, dried fruit, raw vegetables and salads, skins and pips on fruit and vegetables, beans, pulses and nuts.
- Try eating smaller meals more often, including light foods such as white fish, chicken, or well cooked eggs with white rice, pasta or potatoes without the skin.
- Try white bread, and low fibre cereals such as Cornflakes, Ready Brek or Rice Krispies instead. Have peeled or tinned fruit. Try cooked vegetables such as broccoli or cauliflower tips and peeled root vegetables such as carrots.
- If your diet continues to be very limited because of all the foods you are cutting out, ask to be referred to a dietitian.
- Remember that diet is only one of the things that might help this problem. Talk to your doctor or your specialist nurse for advice on medication to help with diarrhoea, and when taking medication, follow the instructions given.