

Diarrhea - Symptom Management

What is Diarrhea?

Diarrhea is an increase in stool frequency, liquidity, or volume. Diarrhea can occur as a result of some types of cancer or cancer treatment. Diarrhea causes dehydration. Dehydration occurs when the body has lost too much fluid and electrolytes. The fluid and electrolytes lost during diarrhea need to be replaced quickly, since the body cannot function properly without them. Below are useful methods to relieve the effects of diarrhea.

Things to Do

- Try the “BRATT” diet for 24-48 hours: **B**ananas, **R**ice, **A**pplesauce, **T**ea (decaffeinated), and **T**oast.
- Eat foods that are low in fiber such as noodles, white rice, Farina[®], Cream of Wheat[®], chicken or turkey without skin.
- Eat probiotic yogurt, as tolerated.
- Eat 5-6 small frequent meals instead of three large meals.
- Eat and drink foods high in salt and potassium (electrolytes), such as fat free broth, bananas, peaches, and boiled or mashed potatoes. Talk to your healthcare team before taking an electrolyte solution, for example Pedialyte[®].
- Drink liquids that are at room temperature.
- Drink extra fluids, 8-10 large glasses of water between meals.
- Keep activity to a minimum after meals.
- Ask your healthcare team for additional information, such as the “low fiber, high protein diet” document.
- **Check with your healthcare team before taking any medicines for diarrhea including over the counter diarrhea relief medicines.**

Things to Avoid

- Greasy, fatty, or fried foods
- Foods high in fiber such as raw fruits or vegetables, whole wheat bread, corn, any fruit or vegetable skins, or seeds
- Nuts
- Dairy products or products high in lactose (except for probiotic yogurt)
- Desserts and candy, including sugar-free cookies and candies
- Strong spices (hot pepper, curry, Cajun)
- Very hot or very cold beverages and foods
- Caffeine (tea, soda, coffee, chocolate)
- Alcohol
- Cigarettes or any other nicotine products

If you are experiencing diarrhea and are unsure about what you can and cannot eat, contact your healthcare team.

Call your healthcare team at 732-235-2465 if you develop any of these symptoms:

- A fever of 100.4° F or higher
- Shaking chills
- Excessive thirst
- Rapid heart rate
- Vomiting
- Dizziness
- Dark urine, or very low amount of urine over a 24-hour period
- Severe weakness
- Lack of energy
- Severe or constant cramping
- Rectal spasms or the sudden urge to have a bowel movement
- Pain while having a bowel movement
- Blood or mucus in your stool








Below is a chart for you to track your symptoms:

Daily Tracker

Day	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
Number of bowel movements (BM)														
Picture that describes how the stools look (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 or 7) – refer to stool chart, next page														
Wake up at night for bowel movement? (Y/N)														
Had an accident overnight? (Y/N)														
Has diarrhea stopped you from doing daily activity? (Y/N)														
How much distress has diarrhea caused you? (0 – 10)*														
serious diarrhea – If you answer YES to any of the following questions call your healthcare team														
Cramping, pain, or gas? (Y/N)														
Rectal spasms or pain? (Y/N)														
Blood or mucus in stool? (Y/N)														
Chills or fever? (Y/N)														
Dizziness or palpitations? (Y/N)														
Thirst, vomiting, or dark urine? (Y/N)														

*Distress scale: 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
 None Extreme

The Bristol Stool Form Scale

Type 1		Separate hard lumps, like nuts (hard to pass)
Type 2		Sausage-shaped but lumpy
Type 3		Like a sausage but with cracks on its surface
Type 4		Like a sausage or snake, smooth and soft
Type 5		Soft blobs with clear-out edges (passed easily)
Type 6		Fluffy pieces with ragged edges, a mushy stool
Type 7		Watery, no solid pieces ENTIRELY LIQUID

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If you are in need of immediate assistance, please call 732-235-2465 and select the option that best meets your needs.