

# High Fibre Diet to Prevent Constipation

**The aim of a high fibre diet is to produce a soft, well-formed stool that can be passed without straining.**

## Fibre and Fluids

Dietary fibre is the indigestible part of cereals, vegetables and fruit. The most effective fibre in the prevention of constipation is the insoluble fibre. They do not dissolve in water, they add bulk to the stool and help the faeces to pass more smoothly and quickly through the gut.

You need to drink plenty of fluids, up to 2 litres per day: water, squash, fruit juice, tea and coffee. It is best for tea and coffee not to be the only source of fluids. Remember, tea and coffee can be a diuretic and a bladder irritant, consider trying the Decaf variety. Gradually increase the amount of whole-grain cereals, fruit and vegetables until your bowel habits have returned to normal. Try to find what works for you and eat it regularly.

## Food Choice for a High Fibre Diet

- Bread- wholemeal, Granary, High fibre white, soft grain. Should contain 2-3g of fibre per slice.
- Breakfast Cereals, use wholegrain cereals. High fibre cereal should contain 5g total fibre per serving.
- Wholemeal flour - plain and self-raising wholemeal flour instead of white or half and half. Extra fluid is needed when cooking with wholemeal flour.
- Whole grain rice and wholemeal pasta - use as an alternative to potatoes and in salads.
- Pulses - add to soups, casseroles, salads.
- Dried fruit and nut - add to breakfast cereals, use in baking and in fruit dishes.
- Fresh fruit, vegetables and salad - aim to have 5 portions per day, where possible eat the skins, pips and membranes as well.
- High fibre snacks - fruit, raw vegetables, dried fruits, nuts, cereal bars, whole-grain crisp bread, oat cakes, pop-corn and muesli bars. It is worth knowing that foods that contain gelatin can cause constipation, eg jelly sweets, marshmallows etc.
- Try to cut down on processed and pre-prepared foods, they mostly have a lower fibre content than their fresh alternatives.

**Getting up and about is very important in getting your bowels back to normal.**

Gentle exercise every day keeps the pelvic and buttock muscles working which aids opening the bowels. Practice Pelvic Floor exercises each day as soon as comfortable to do so.

Even with a high fibre diet the use of laxatives may be needed particularly after an operation. Such as Movicol and Laxido glycerol suppositories can be obtained from a pharmacy or sometimes a large supermarket.

**If you have any comments about this leaflet or the service you have received you can contact :**

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**If you would like this information in another format or language contact the above.**

Potřebujete-li tyto informace v jiném formátu nebo jazyce, obraťte se prosím na výše uvedené oddělení

Jeżeli są Państwo zainteresowani otrzymaniem tych informacji w innym formacie lub wersji językowej, prosimy skontaktować się z nami, korzystając z ww. danych kontaktowych

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