

Diarrhea has many causes that include radiation, chemotherapy, surgery, infections, or certain medications. Bouts of diarrhea can be brief or persist for long periods of time. Diarrhea occurs when foods and liquids pass through your body too quickly. This prevents the proper absorption of enough nutrients, vitamins, minerals, and water. It is important to manage diarrhea to prevent dehydration and malnutrition.

- **Contact your healthcare team for advice managing diarrhea.**
 - If you have sudden diarrhea, have diarrhea for more than 24 hours, or are experiencing pain, cramping, or blood in your stools, call your healthcare provider immediately.
 - Take medications or supplements only if they are recommended by your healthcare team.
 - Always ask your healthcare team first before taking anti-diarrhea medications.
 - Always talk to your healthcare team or a dietitian before taking any supplements.
- **Stay hydrated to replace fluid losses.**
 - Be sure to drink plenty of clear liquids (water, ginger ale, sports drinks, or electrolyte replacement drinks) for 12 to 24 hours after a sudden bout of diarrhea.
 - Make a homemade electrolyte replacement drink by mixing the following ingredients: ¼ teaspoons salt, 8 teaspoons sugar, 3 tablespoons orange juice concentrate, and 4 cups water.
 - Let carbonated drinks lose their fizz before you drink them.
 - Drinking clear liquids helps the bowels rest and replaces lost fluids.
 - Healthy people need a minimum of 8 cups of liquid per day. You may require more to replace fluids lost with diarrhea.
- **Eat 5 or 6 small meals per day instead of 3 larger meals.**
 - Eating smaller meals may put less stress on your bowels and will make it easier for your body to digest food.
- **Choose foods and drinks carefully.**
 - Very cold foods and very hot foods can make diarrhea worse.
 - If your diarrhea gets worse after eating a certain food, stop eating that food until you recover.

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- **Avoid foods and drinks that can make your diarrhea worse. Choose foods that help manage diarrhea.**

Use this chart to know which foods to choose and avoid.

Food Group	Avoid	Choose
Grains	High fiber, whole grain foods (bran, whole wheat bread, whole wheat pastas, whole grain cereals, whole grain crackers, and brown rice)	Enriched grains that contain less than 2 grams of fiber per serving (white rice, cream of wheat, puffed rice cereal or corn flakes, white bread or toast, white pastas, and white crackers)
Fruits	Raw fruits with skins Dried fruit Juices with pulp, prune juice, apple juice Canned fruit in heavy syrup	Soft fruits without skins (ripe bananas, melons, applesauce) Pulp-free 100% fruit juice Soft canned fruit in its own juice
Vegetables	Raw vegetables Vegetables with skins and seeds Gas-forming vegetables (corn, dark leafy greens, broccoli, cauliflower, cabbage, beans, and peas)	Well-cooked, soft vegetables without seeds or skins Mashed potatoes without skin Strained vegetable juice Lettuce
Dairy	Full-fat dairy products (whole milk, cream, sour cream, ice cream, and cheese)	Low fat and/or lactose-free dairy products (buttermilk, skim and low-fat milk, lactose-free milk, soy milk, yogurt with live active cultures, and low fat (2%) aged cheese)
Proteins	Spicy and high fat meats (fried meats or fried fish, bologna, salami, bacon, and hot dogs) Nuts, seeds, and chunky nut butters	Low fat meats Cooked tender meats Fish Eggs Soy foods Smooth peanut butter
Beverages	Caffeinated or sugary drinks (coffee, tea, soda, energy drinks, alcohol, and drinks that contain sugar alcohols like xylitol or sorbitol)	Caffeine-free drinks (water, decaf coffee, decaf tea, sports drinks, and electrolyte replacement drinks)
Other	Fried, greasy foods Sweets and desserts Spicy foods (pepper, strong spices, hot sauce) Foods and drinks made with sugar alcohols (Sugar alcohols include xylitol and sorbitol and are found in many sugar-free products like candies, gums, and snack bars. Read ingredient lists to look for sugar alcohols.)	

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