



Irritable Bowel Syndrome Diet

Irritable bowel syndrome (IBS) is a common disorder of the intestines. It can cause cramping, stomach pain, gas, bloating, and changes in bowel habits. Some people with IBS have constipation (difficult or infrequent bowel movements). Others have diarrhea (frequent, loose stools). Some people have both. Eating more or less fiber can help control these symptoms.

High-fiber/Low-fat Diet

If you have constipation, a high-fiber diet can help. Try to eat 20 to 35 grams of fiber each day. Use food labels to tell how many grams of fiber are in foods you eat.

Important Points to Keep in Mind

- The foods that have the most fiber are grains (especially bran), whole-grain breads and cereals, fruits, and vegetables.
- Foods high in soluble fibers (like oats, peas, and beans) have been shown to ease both constipation and diarrhea.
- Read food labels. Look for breads and cereals that list whole-grain or whole-wheat first.
- Put more fiber in meat dishes by adding pinto beans, kidney beans, black-eyed peas, bran, or oatmeal. Look for cooked and ready-to-eat cereals with at least 5 grams of fiber per serving.
- To help reduce gas, try Beano, an over-the-counter, anti-gas pill.
- Drink plenty of fluids — at least 8 cups per day. Water is best, but fruit juice and decaf drinks also are fine.
- Add more fiber to your diet a little at a time. Too much fiber added quickly may cause gas, cramping, bloating, or diarrhea. Be sure to increase your fluid intake at the same time.
- Pay attention to when your symptoms occur. If you can relate these times with certain foods, avoid those foods. Keeping a food diary is sometimes helpful.
- Eat smaller, more frequent meals — for instance 4 or 5 small meals instead of 3 large meals.
- A multi-vitamin and mineral supplement with 100 percent of the U.S. recommended daily intake (RDI) may be helpful. Check with your doctor or dietitian.
- Ask your doctor if a fiber supplement can help you.
- Eat more slowly — take the time to enjoy your food.
- Avoid foods and drinks that have caffeine and alcohol. They may cause diarrhea.

To Increase Fiber in Your Diet and Help Constipation

Choose more fresh fruits and vegetables

- Apples -pears
- Bananas -potatoes
- Blueberries -prunes
- Broccoli -raisins
- Brussels sprouts -spinach
- Cantaloupe -strawberries
- Carrots -sweet potatoes
- Figs -tomatoes
- Oranges -zucchini
- Peaches

Choose more whole-grain breads, pastas, and cereals

- All-Bran -oat bran/bran -oatmeal
- Bran Flakes -pumpkin bread
- Brown rice -raisin bran
- Granola -whole-grain breads

Choose more dried beans, peas, nuts, and seeds (as tolerated):

- Baked beans -split peas
- Lentils -sunflower seeds
- Peanuts -walnuts
- Soy products, such as tofu and TVP (textured -
- Vegetable protein)

Choose more snacks that are high in fiber

- Cereal mix with nuts and seeds
- Fresh fruit
- Fresh vegetables
- Popcorn
- Whole-grain cereal
- Yogurt with bran cereal

Plan more vegetarian meals

- Bean and rice burritos
- Beans and rice
- Hummus and pita bread
- Pasta with vegetables
- Split pea or lentil soup
- Vegetable stir fry

Low-fiber/Low-residue Diet

During a flare-up of IBS, a low-fiber/low-residue diet can help control diarrhea. Certain foods produce loose stools. You should avoid these if diarrhea is a problem. Sometimes changing the number of meals you eat, choosing different foods, and adjusting food temperature can help relieve diarrhea. All of these suggestions may not work for everyone. If there is something you haven't tried, test it to see if it helps you.

Things that may cause diarrhea:

- Bacon -mayonnaise
- Baked beans -MSG
- Beer -NutraSweet
- Broccoli -nuts
- Cauliflower -processed meats
- Chocolate -prune juice
- Coffee, in large -raw fruits
- Quantities
- Corn -raw vegetables
- Dried beans -red wine
- Fatty foods -shellfish
- Fructose -sorbitol/mannitol
- Garlic -soups
- Highly spiced foods -spinach
- Hot beverages -sugar
- Large meals -whole grains
- Licorice

Tips for controlling diarrhea

- Try a low-residue diet. This means more cooked foods, fewer raw fruits and vegetables, and fewer bran-based grains, cereals, and breads.
- Try to limit the fat in your diet. Add less fat to foods, and choose lower-fat versions of foods. You should choose baked foods instead of fried foods. Also, choose low-fat versions of dairy products, such as cottage cheese and yogurt.
- Eat smaller portions.

- Don't skip meals.
- Avoid very hot meals because they tend to cause diarrhea.
- Try to rest after meals. This can help slow the rate at which food passes through the intestines.
- Avoid caffeine because it can cause diarrhea.
- You may want to limit dairy products, or use a lactase supplement or product. You may need a calcium supplement if you are limiting dairy products in your diet.
- Avoid foods that cause gas.
- Drink a lot of liquids, but drink them between meals. Try drinking liquids at room temperature. Best choices are water, broth, non-acidic juices, nectars, and sport drinks.
- Diarrhea may rob the body of electrolytes (sodium and potassium), so make sure that you eat foods high in potassium. Some good choices are:
 - Avocados
 - Bananas (if tolerated)
 - Fish
 - Nectarines
 - Nectars (apricot or peach)
 - Potatoes (boiled or mashed)

Some foods that are known to bind and may relieve diarrhea

- Applesauce -green beans
- Barley -oats/oat bran
- Carrots -pectin
- Grated apples -whipped potatoes
- (no skin)

Other things that may help relieve diarrhea

- Avocados -pears
- Boiled white rice -smooth peanut butter
- Crackers -tapioca
- Cream of rice -tea (weakly brewed)
- Metamucil -toast
- Nectars -yogurt with live cultures

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