

Managing nutritional concerns: Diarrhea

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Diarrhea can be caused by certain cancer treatments. Diarrhea occurs when you are having frequent, loose, soft, or watery bowel movements and can quickly lead to dehydration. When you are dehydrated, your body loses water, nutrition, and electrolytes. If you are experiencing diarrhea, notify your physician. Your physician may advise you to take medications to slow down your diarrhea.¹

Tips for People Experiencing Diarrhea^{2,3}:

- Eat small frequent meals (5-6 times a day) instead of 3 large meals
- Avoid foods high in fiber, greasy, fatty foods, raw vegetables, and caffeine
- Some people who are intolerant to lactose may also need to limit dairy products
- Be sure to stay hydrated. Drink a minimum of 8-10 8 oz glasses of fluid per day, water, clear beverages like broth or juices, Gatorade, or decaffeinated tea
- Applesauce, baked apples, bananas, and oatmeal can help slow diarrhea
- Use wet wipes to gently clean yourself after each bowel movement to prevent irritation, soreness, and bleeding

Always communicate with your doctor or nurse about what you are experiencing. Contact your MD if you are having 4 watery bowel movements in a day, your diarrhea continues for 24 hours, or you have pain, stomach cramping, or bleeding from your rectum.

References:

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2. Elliot, L. Symptom Management of Cancer Therapies in Lesser M, Ledesma N, Bergerson S, Trujillo E, eds. *Oncology Nutrition for Clinical Practice*. Oncology Nutrition Dietetic Practice Group of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics: 2013. pg 116.
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