

Low Residue Diet

Why Low Residue Diet?

A low residue diet is recommended when patients need to avoid foods, which may obstruct narrowed intestinal areas or irritate an inflamed colon.

For example:

- During a flare-up in inflammatory bowel disease (Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis) where the bowel walls are inflamed.
- To reduce friction when there is an obstruction or stricture in the intestines due to cancer.
- As part of the washout procedure for a colonoscopy or other pre-operative preparations.

The duration for a low residue diet depends on the reason for the diet. Hence it can last from a few days prior to surgery/scope to a few weeks during a flare-up of inflammatory bowel disease. For patients with Crohn's disease, it is advisable to be on a diet with moderate residue/fiber intake on a long-term basis to ensure adequate fiber intake for bowel movement.

What is a Low Residue Diet?

This is achieved by limiting the amount of fiber in the diet. Foods that have a high fiber content are wholegrain cereals, whole meal bread/biscuits, nuts, seeds, dried fruits, and skin/stalks of fruits and vegetables. Milk should be consumed in moderation.

Preparation of Fruit and Vegetables:

It is important to maintain a balanced diet even on a low residue diet especially if it is to last a few weeks. Fiber from fruits and vegetables can be reduced by skinning/peeling skins from fruits and vegetables and sieving vegetables after cooking. Alternatively, drink blended fruit and vegetable juices that have been sieved.

Nutritional Oral Supplements:

Consider meal supplements in the form of milk or fruit beverage if eating is difficult. Most of these products are low residue and come in a variety of flavors.

Useful Tips:

1. Eat small meals- take small portions and chew well.
2. Eating frequently at regular intervals, i.e. every 3-4 hours.
3. Eating in a relaxed atmosphere and relaxing after meals may help.
4. Avoid foods with extreme temperatures that is, food that is too hot or too cold.
5. Adding only one new food at a time. This will help you to rule out foods that irritate your bowel. Take your time and experiment gradually.
6. Drink BETWEEN, not WITH meals. Avoid caffeine or Alcohol as these may irritate the lining of the intestinal walls.
7. Avoid foods that are too spicy.

What Foods are Allowed and What to Avoid?

	Foods Allowed	Foods to Avoid
Fruits	All fruit juices. Stewed fruits with sugar and milk. Canned fruits	All raw fruits. Dried apples, dates, apricots, figs, peaches, raisins.
Cereals	All cooked and ready-cooked cereals, except bran or whole wheat cereals.	Bran or whole wheat cereals
Soups	Milk soups, such as asparagus, celery, potato, mushroom, spinach, tomato. Pureed vegetable soup. Skimmed clear broth.	Cream soups. Dried bean or pea soups.
Meats, Poultry, Fish, Eggs and Cheese	At least 8 ounces daily of lean beef, fish or poultry. Two soft boiled eggs daily. Cottage cheese.	All meats except lean beef, and poultry. Fried eggs. All cheese, except cottage cheese.
Vegetables	Pureed or mashed asparagus, beets, eggplant, green beans, potatoes, squash, spinach and tomatoes. Shredded lettuce.	All Raw vegetables. Dried beans and peas

	Foods Allowed	Foods to Avoid
Breads	White bread, toast or	Whole wheat, rye or bran

	corn bread with jam, jelly or small amount of salted butter.	bread, rolls and muffins.
Beverages	Milk, buttermilk, cocoa, tea and decaffeinated coffee.	Coffee, cream, carbonated beverages and alcoholic drinks.
Desserts	Any cooked fruit as listed above. Jell-O, Plain cake. Sherbets. Cornstarch pudding.	Cakes, pies, rich pastries and desserts containing seeds or nuts.
Miscellaneous	Barley, rice, noodles, macaroni, waffles, spaghetti. Honey, jellies and hard candies. Between meals and before retiring- 1 glass of milk. Sugar may be eaten liberally.	Whole grains, seeds and nuts.

Summary:

If a low residue diet is essential for long term, do not overly restrict your diet, as you need good nutrition. Choose your foods selectively and ensure your meals are well balanced. Eating is not only fun, it is very important for your overall health.

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