



Tips and Recipes to Ease Diarrhea

Nutrition and Food Services Healthy Teaching Kitchen



VA



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

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My VA Contact Information

VA Medical Center Location Name and Address:

Oncology Contact(s):

Dietitian(s):



Tips for Managing Diarrhea

Diarrhea is a common symptom in people receiving cancer treatment. It occurs when foods and liquids in the intestines are not absorbed well by the body. This results in loose watery stools, often with stomach cramps. Diarrhea can lead to dehydration and weight loss, and can also cause a break in your treatment.

Here are some tips to help reduce diarrhea and its side effects:

Adjust Eating When You are Having Diarrhea

- Aim to eat 5 or 6 small meals each day, instead of 2 or 3 large meals.
- **Try eating these foods:** White rice, plain white bread or toast, crackers, oatmeal, grits, applesauce, bananas, potatoes without skin, eggs cooked with little fat, peanut butter, lean meats, and lowfat yogurt or cheese if tolerated (some people experience temporary lactose-intolerance)
- **Limit these foods:** Whole grains (e.g. whole-wheat bread, brown rice), raw vegetables, dried fruit, nuts and seeds, fried or greasy foods, spicy foods, sugar-sweetened beverages, desserts, juice, milk, sugar substitutes, sugar-free products containing sorbitol, alcohol, and caffeine

Replace Lost Fluids

One of the most common complications of diarrhea is dehydration. To replace the fluid lost in diarrhea:

- Drink plenty of fluids throughout the day. Most people need at least 8 cups (64 ounces) per day, plus any fluids that you are losing. The color of your urine is typically light yellow to clear when you are well-hydrated. For a personalized fluid goal, talk to your dietitian.
- Choose non-caffeinated fluids such as water, broth, gelatin desserts, fruit or vegetable juice, popsicles, soups, and herbal tea. Avoid caffeine (e.g. coffee, tea, soda, energy drinks) as this can increase water loss through urine.
- Sip fluids slowly throughout the day, and try not to drink too much too quickly. Drinking liquids at room temperature fluids can also be helpful.
- Limit or avoid beverages containing large amounts of added sugar or high-fructose corn syrup (e.g. soda, some fruit juices, energy drinks).
- If you have severe diarrhea (>4 liquid stools per day) drinking an electrolyte-containing beverage may be needed.



Simple Bread Pudding

Prep: 5 minutes | Cook: 45 minutes | Inactive: 10 minutes | Total: 60 minutes

Yield: 6 servings | Serving Size: 1 cup

Ingredients

2 cups reduced-fat (2%) milk

2 tablespoons butter

1 teaspoon vanilla extract

½ cup sugar-based sweetener (e.g. sugar, honey, maple syrup)

Pinch salt

Nonstick cooking spray

½ loaf challah bread, cut into 2-inch cubes (about 5-6 cups)

2 eggs, beaten

Directions

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F.
2. Add the milk, butter, vanilla, sweetener, and salt to a small saucepan and place over low. Once the butter has melted, remove the pot from the heat and set aside to cool.
3. Spray an 8-by-8-inch baking dish with cooking spray.
4. Add the bread cubes to the prepared baking dish.
5. Add the eggs to the cooled milk mixture and whisk to combine.
6. Pour the milk-egg mixture over the bread cubes in the baking dish.
7. Bake until the center is no longer liquid, about 35-45 minutes.
8. Let the bread pudding sit in the pan to cool slightly, about 5-10 minutes, then serve warm.

Recipe Notes

- This bread pudding will stay fresh in the refrigerator for up to 3 days.

Nutrition Facts Per Serving: Calories: 315 | Total Fat: 11 g | Saturated Fat: 4.5 g
Sodium: 370 mg | Total Carbohydrate: 44 g | Dietary Fiber: 1 g | Protein: 11 g

Adapted from [Cooking.NYTimes.com](https://cooking.nytimes.com) | Submitted by Robin LaCroix, RD, CSO
For more recipes, please visit www.nutrition.va.gov

Ginger-Rice Soup

Prep: 5 minutes | Cook: 60 minutes | Total: 65 minutes

Yield: 4 servings | Serving Size: 1½ cups

Ingredients

1 cup uncooked long-grain white rice

7 cups chicken or vegetable broth

1-inch piece fresh ginger, peeled and sliced thin

Optional garnishes: Sliced scallions (green onions), toasted sesame oil, soy sauce

Directions

1. In a large saucepan or other large pot, add the rice, broth, and ginger.
2. Bring to a boil over high heat, then reduce the heat to a simmer.
3. Cook until the soup thickens, about 1 hour, stirring occasionally to keep the rice from sticking to the bottom of the pan.
4. Serve warm, topping with scallions, sesame oil, or soy sauce as desired.

Recipe Notes

- Add a protein food (e.g. cooked chicken, baked tofu) and a cooked vegetable (e.g. carrots, bell peppers) to make this a meal.
- Try substituting bone broth for the chicken or vegetable broth. Bone broth provides additional nutrients and protein.

**Nutrition Facts Per Serving: Calories: 200 | Total Fat: 1 g | Saturated Fat: 0 g
Sodium: 1100 mg | Total Carbohydrate: 40 g | Dietary Fiber: 0 g | Protein: 5 g**

Adapted from www.foodandwine.com | Submitted by Robin LaCroix, RD, CSO

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Homemade Hydration Drink

Prep: 5 minutes | Cook: 0 minutes | Total: 5 minutes

Yield: 6 servings | Serving Size: 1 cup

Ingredients

3 cups (24 ounces) drinking-quality water

2 cups (16 ounces) coconut water

1 cup (8 ounces) pineapple juice

2 tablespoons lemon juice

½ teaspoon salt

Directions

1. Add the water, coconut water, pineapple juice, lemon juice, and salt to a large pitcher or other storage container(s) for liquids.
2. Mix well to combine.
3. Serve right away, or chill before serving if desired. This homemade hydration drink will keep in the refrigerator for up to 1 week.

Recipe Notes

- If you prefer more sweetness, increase the amount of pineapple juice or add 1 tablespoon of maple syrup or agave.

Nutrition Facts Per Serving: Calories: 40 | Total Fat: 0 g | Saturated Fat: 0 g
Sodium: 280 mg | Total Carbohydrate: 9 g | Dietary Fiber: 0 g | Protein: 1 g

Adapted from CookForYourLife.org | Submitted by Robin LaCroix, RD, CSO

For more recipes, please visit www.nutrition.va.gov

Avocado Deviled Eggs

Prep: 5 minutes | Cook: 0 minutes | Total: 5 minutes

Yield: 2 servings | Serving Size: 2 egg halves

Ingredients

2 hardboiled eggs, peeled

¼ ripe avocado

Seasoning ideas: salt, ground black pepper, dry mustard, paprika (smoked or regular), cayenne, chives, parsley

Directions

1. Slice the peeled hardboiled eggs in half.
2. Put the yolks in a small bowl and add the avocado.
3. Mash the yolk and avocado together with a fork. The consistency will depend on how ripe your avocado is. If the mixture seems to dry, add a teaspoon of mayonnaise or plain yogurt.
4. Add a pinch to ¼ teaspoon of any desired seasoning(s), to taste.
5. Fill each egg white half with a quarter of the yolk-avocado mixture.

Recipe Notes

- To hard-boil eggs, place the eggs in a medium to large saucepan and cover with water by 1 inch. Bring the water to a boil, then turn off the heat and cover the pot with a lid. Let sit for 12 minutes. Put the eggs in a bowl of ice water to cool. Once cooled, peel if using right away or store unpeeled in the refrigerator for up to 7 days.
- Check avocados for ripeness by pressing gently on the skin. The fruit is ripe when it is soft enough to push into slightly, but not mushy. If the avocado is very soft, it is too ripe and will not be as good. A hard avocado will ripen on the counter, faster in a paper bag if needed.
- If you do not have avocado, 1 tablespoon mayonnaise can be used.

**Nutrition Facts Per Serving: Calories: 115 | Total Fat: 9 g | Saturated Fat: 2.5 g
Sodium: 60 mg | Total Carbohydrate: 2.5 g | Dietary Fiber: 1.5 g | Protein: 6 g**

Submitted by Emily Richters MS, RDN, LDN

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Fresh Banana Pudding

Prep: 5 minutes | Cook: 15 minutes | Total: 20 minutes

Yield: 4 servings | Serving Size: ½ cup

Ingredients

2 ripe bananas (yellow with brown spots),
peeled

1¼ cups milk (dairy or non-dairy)

1 tablespoon sugar-based sweetener (e.g.
sugar, honey, maple syrup)

1 tablespoon cornstarch

Pinch salt

2 egg yolks

¼ teaspoon vanilla extract

4 shortbread cookies, divided (optional)

Directions

1. Mash 1 of the bananas with a fork in a small bowl. Set aside.
2. Slice the remaining 1 banana and set aside.
3. In a medium saucepan, whisk together the milk, sweetener, cornstarch, and salt.
4. Place the saucepan over medium heat.
5. As the milk mixture starts to let off small amounts of steam, whisk in the egg yolks.
6. Bring to a low boil and cook, whisking constantly, until thickened to a pudding, about 10-15 minutes.
7. Remove the pot from the heat. Stir in the mashed banana and vanilla.
8. Divide the pudding between four serving dishes. Top each with a quarter of the sliced banana and 1 shortbread cookie (if using).
9. Serve warm, or chill for at least 1 hour before serving.

Recipe Notes

- If you plan to chill the pudding before serving, wait to add the sliced banana and cookie until you are ready to serve.

**Nutrition Facts Per Serving: Calories: 225 | Total Fat: 9 g | Saturated Fat: 4 g
Sodium: 120 mg | Total Carbohydrate: 32 g | Dietary Fiber: 2 g | Protein: 5 g**

Adapted from CookForYourLife.org | Submitted by Robin LaCroix, RD, CSO

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