
Radiation Therapy for Prostate Cancer Nutrition

Maintaining a rectum empty of gas and stool is critical to successful radiation therapy for prostate cancer. Gas is typically caused by the digestion or fermentation of undigested food, such as plant fiber or certain sugars (carbohydrates) or by the ingestion of excess gas through eating or drinking. The following tips can help you maintain an empty rectum through the course of your treatment.

- **Eat and drink slowly.** Taking your time can help you swallow less air. Try to make meals relaxed; eating when you are stressed or on the run increases the air you swallow.
- **Avoid carbonated drinks and beer.** They release carbon dioxide gas.
- **Skip the gum and hard candy.** When you chew gum or suck on hard candy, you swallow more often than normal. Part of what you're swallowing is air.
- **Don't smoke.** When you inhale smoke, you also inhale and swallow air.
- **Check your dentures.** Poorly fitting dentures can cause you to swallow excess air when you eat and drink.
- **Get moving.** It may help to take a short walk after eating.
- **Eliminate certain foods.** Common gas-causing foods include beans, peas, lentils, cabbage, onions, broccoli, cauliflower, whole-grain foods, mushrooms, certain fruits, and beer and other carbonated drinks. Try removing one food at a time to see if your gas improves.
- **Read labels.** If dairy products seem to be a problem, you may have some degree of lactose intolerance. Pay attention to what you eat and try low-lactose or lactose-free options. Some indigestible carbohydrates found in sugar-free foods (sorbitol, mannitol and xylitol) also may result in increased gas.
- **Eat fewer fatty foods.** Fat slows digestion, giving food more time to ferment.
- **Temporarily cut back on high-fiber foods.** Fiber has many benefits, but many high-fiber foods are also great gas producers. After a break, slowly add fiber back to your diet.
- **Try an over-the-counter remedy.** Some products such as Lactase Enzymes can help digest lactose. Products containing simethicone haven't been proved to be helpful, but many people feel that these products work. Food enzyme products that contain alpha-galactosidase may decrease the gas produced during the breakdown of some types of beans.

Food Group	Foods to Avoid
Breads, Cereals, Pasta, Grains	Any item that has nuts, seeds or dried fruit in it. Whole grain bread products, whole grain pastas and rice. Whole grain cereals, bran cereals, granolas.
Meats, Poultry, Fish, Dry Beans, Eggs, Nuts	Tough, stringy meats with gristle; dry beans, peas, lentils; chunky peanut butter, nuts, sausages, fatty meats, or fried meats.
Milk and Dairy Products	Yogurt or ice cream with nuts, seeds, granola or berries. Consider eliminating all dairy if you have a hard time maintaining an empty rectum.
Vegetables	Raw vegetables; cooked or raw broccoli, chili peppers, corn, peas, winter squash, Brussel sprouts, cabbage, onions, cauliflower, baked beans, lima beans, artichokes, garlic and sauerkraut.
Fruit	Apples, applesauce, apricots, Asian pears, blackberries, boysenberries, cherries, figs, mangoes, nectarines, peaches, pears, persimmons, plums, prunes, and prune juice, watermelon, all dried fruit.
Fats, Snacks, Sweets, Condiments, Beverages	<p>Beverages: Apple, pear and mango juices; other fruit juices in amounts over 1/2 cup, made with high-fructose corn syrup (HCFS), fortified wines (sherry, port), chamomile tea, fennel tea, chicory-based drinks or coffee substitutes.</p> <p>Spreads and Condiments: Chutneys, hummus, jellies, gravies made with onion, pickle, relish, salad dressing, salsa or sauces made with previously listed ingredients.</p> <p>Sweeteners: Agave nectar, artificial sweeteners (isomalt, mannitol, maltitol, sorbitol, xylitol) honey, corn syrup solids, fructose, fruit juice concentrate, high-fructose corn syrup, and polydextrose.</p> <p>Nuts, seeds, and coconut.</p>