Lancashire Teaching Hospitals
NHS Foundation Trust

Information for patients and carers

Dietary Information for patients undergoing Radiotherapy to the Pelvis

This leaflet provides information to patients needing to modify their diet; to ease side effects and manage bowel movements, diarrhoea or wind.

It is important to eat well and **maintain** your weight whilst undergoing Radiotherapy.

Please **do not** modify your diet or take medication for your bowels without discussing it with a radiographer/review team or consultant.

Guidance on Reducing Gas in the Bowel:

Everyone has gas in their gut, it is normal. Most of it comes from the air that we swallow when we are eating and drinking and some of it comes from certain types of foods and drinks. Too much gas trapped in the gut can cause your bowels to expand. This can make the organs in your gut move to a different position than when your treatment was planned. This makes it more difficult to deliver your treatment accurately.

The following information can help you to minimise the build-up of gas in your gut and help to increase the accuracy of your treatment. It can also help to minimise the risk of any long-term bowel side effects from your treatment.

Steps you can take

- Aim to eat small meals at regular intervals
- Avoid fasting and long gaps between meals
- Eat slowly and chew food well
- Avoid talking a lot while you are eating
- Chew with your mouth closed
- Sip drinks rather than gulping
- Drink from a glass. Do not use a straw or drink from a bottle/can/pop-top drink container
- Avoid chewing gum or sucking on hard lollies
- Avoid fizzy drinks (e.g. soft drinks or beer) or leave fizzy drinks until they are ‘flat’ before drinking them
- Try not to drink large amounts of fluids with your meals
- If you smoke, try to stop as side effects can be worse
- Avoid hot drinks, have them lukewarm instead. Air is swallowed when you sip on hot drinks
- Peppermint oil capsules (available to buy over the counter or on prescription), peppermint tea, cardamom and ginger are natural remedies to help alleviate wind
- Live yogurts like probiotics - there is some evidence that probiotics may help with wind during radiotherapy. However, if you are having chemotherapy as well, ask to speak to a dietitian or doctor who may be able to advise on this
- Avoid/limit artificial sweeteners (sorbitol, mannitol, xylitol, aspartame) and sugar free sweets.

Guidance for easing constipation:

- Increase the fibre within the diet such as fruits, vegetables, and cereals
- Drink plenty of fluids and avoid alcohol
- Add some wheat bran, oats, or linseed to your diet

Guidance for easing loose stools:

- Drink enough fluids to help replace the fluids lost from diarrhoea. Aim for at least 10-12 cups/glasses of fluid daily (water or diluted squash)
- Avoid alcohol and caffeine
- Cut down spicy foods like chilli, cayenne, jalapeno, mustard and black pepper
- When you have diarrhoea, choosing foods like white bread, rice puffs, cornflakes, boiled rice, rice noodles, boiled potatoes, chicken, fish, eggs, softly cooked vegetables and canned fruits might help to maintain nutrition. Eating 5-6 small meals might be easier than having three big meals
- Eat more soluble fibre, a type of fibre that can help thicken the consistency of stools e.g., white rice, apples and pears without skin, apple sauce, oatmeal, smooth peanut butter and ripe banana
- Limit foods high in insoluble fibre (roughage) which increase stool volume e.g. wholegrain cereals, wholemeal bread, bran, nuts, seeds, raw vegetables and fruits with skin until diarrhoea settles
- If your diarrhoea does not settle, speak to your radiographer/ review team member or doctor who will consider prescribing tablets/fybogel sachets to help control it. It is important to manage diarrhoea during treatment to avoid weight loss and treatment interruptions.

The following table shows foods you can include and foods to avoid, when following a low fibre diet.

Food Type	Foods to include	Foods to avoid
Bread, cereal and nuts	White bread, English muffins, plain scones and bagels, pancakes, white pitta bread, plain naan bread, plain chapatti, poppadom's – white flour Refined breakfast cereals such as: Corn Flakes, Rice Krispies, Special K White rice, pasta and noodles Corn flour, white flour Sweet plain biscuits such as rich tea, gingernuts or short bread Plain sponge cake made with white flour Plain crackers such as cream crackers Smooth peanut butter	Wholemeal, granary, rye bread All fruit/nut breads, including walnut, granary or fruit muffins or scones or pastries with fruit/dried fruit Wholegrain cereals such as: All-bran, Weetabix, muesli, Shredded Wheat Brown rice, brown pasta, couscous, semolina, polenta Wholemeal brown or granary flour, Gram flour, wheat germ, quinoa, pearl barley, oatmeal, wholemeal noodles Digestive biscuits, Hobnobs, health bars, flapjacks, nut biscuits, biscuits or cakes made using oats, dried fruit or dried coconut Fruit cake, teacakes with raisins Whole nuts, seeds, including pumpkin, sunflower and sesame seeds

Food Type	Foods to include	Foods to avoid
Fruit	Tinned or ripe fresh fruit without skin or seeds, stewed apple (without skin) Fruit juices, smooth coconut milk	All fruit skins, stalks, seeds and stones All dried fruit Smoothies
Vegetables	Flesh only (no peel, seeds or stalks) – well cooked Sieved tomatoes sauces, including passata and tomato puree Strained vegetable juices Mashed potato, jacket potato with skin removed, chips with skin removed	All vegetable stalks, skins, seeds and peel Raw vegetables, skins and pips of all vegetables, all pulses such as baked beans, butter beans and kidney beans, peas, lentils, sweetcorn, spinach Potatoes with skin All curries made with lentils, beans, legumes/pulses
Desserts	Custard, ice cream, milk puddings Clear jelly Plain cakes Vermicelli (seviyan/plain kulfi)	Ice cream containing fruit and nuts, cakes, puddings and pies containing any of the following: wholemeal flour, dried fruit, nuts, dried coconut and any fruits you have been advised to avoid Shrikhand, Gulab jamun, Halva, all sweets made with nuts/coconut or gram flour

Food Type	Foods to include	Foods to avoid
Milk and milk products	Milk (all types), cream, sour cream, crème fraiche, fromage frais, smooth yoghurt, cheese (any including paneer) Plain sweet salty Lassi	Any milk products containing fruits, nuts, seeds or cereals
Meat and meat alternatives	All meat and fish Eggs Tofu	Gristly and fatty meat, tough skin, fish skin and bones Quorn/meat free mince or soya beans
Drinks	Fruit and vegetable juices, milk, water, cordial, decaffeinated tea/coffee, herbal tea	Fruit and vegetable juices with pulp, prune juice, caffeine containing drink, such as espresso, energy drinks and cola, alcohol in excess
Miscellaneous	Smooth or sieved soup Sugar, honey, golden syrup, lemon curd, jelly jam Custard powder, boiled sweets, toffee, caramel, marshmallows, plain/milk/white chocolate Salt, pepper, herbs and spices in moderation (dried or finely chopped) Gravy, tomato sauce, soy sauce, plain pretzels (without sesame seeds)	Soup with pieces, such as minestrone Jam or marmalade with skin peel or pips Chocolate with dried fruit, nuts or seeds, coconut Wholegrain mustard, pickles, relish Hummus, coleslaw, popcorn, corn chips Bombay mix, Sev, Ghatia

- Be cautious with ready meals and pre-prepared foods as they may contain some of the ingredients in the avoidable foods above.
- Avoid rich sauces and spicy foods if they worsen your symptoms
- Do not worry too much about having foods that are low in fat and sugar for the time being
- Large volumes of milk may not be well tolerated. If so, just use small quantities (in tea and coffee for example)
- Some people find that including live yoghurt like probiotics in the diet can help with diarrhoea and gas

Example Meal plan for loose bowels

Breakfast

- Low fibre cereal (e.g. cornflakes) with milk
- White bread/toast with margarine and marmalade/honey etc
- Poached/scrambled egg on white bread/toast

Mid-morning snack

- Decaff coffee/tea
- Plain biscuit
- Fruit from allowed list
- Yoghurt with no nuts or seeds

Lunch

- Meat/chicken/fish or egg with white bread/white pasta/white rice or potato with no skin
- Vegetables as allowed

Mid-afternoon snack

- Like morning snack

Evening meal

- Like lunch time meal

Evening snack

- Rice pudding/jelly/tinned fruit (as allowed)/plain ice cream

Contact details

If you are worried about side effects or need further advice, please contact the Radiotherapy Review Team:

Telephone: 01772 522905
Please leave a message on the answerphone and a member of the team will contact you.

Email: Radiotherapy.ReviewTeam@lthtr.nhs.uk
We aim to get back to you by the next working day.

Alternatively, you can also contact your Breast Care Nursing Team for support and advice.

Should you require further advice or information please contact:
Radiotherapy Reception **(01772) 522900**
Appointments **(01772) 522752**

If you would like to watch a short radiotherapy information video, please scan the QR code.

All our patient information leaflets are available on our website for patients to access and download:
www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk/patient-information-leaflets

Sources of further information

www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk
www.nhs.uk
www.accessable.co.uk
www.patient.co.uk
www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk/veteran-aware
https://bepartofresearch.nihr.ac.uk/

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http://www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk/patient-information-leaflets

Lancashire Teaching Hospitals is a smoke-free site. Smoking is not permitted anywhere on any of our premises, either inside or outside the buildings. Our staff will ask you about your smoking status when you come to hospital and will offer you support and advice about stopping smoking this will include Nicotine Replacement Therapy to help manage

your symptoms of withdrawal and the opportunity to speak to a nurse or advisor from the specialist Tobacco and Alcohol Care Team.

If you want to stop smoking, you can also contact Smokefree Lancashire on Freephone **08081962638**

Please ask a member of staff if you would like help in understanding this information.
This information can be made available in large print, audio, Braille and in other languages.

Our patient information group review our leaflets regularly, if you feel you would like to feedback on this information or join our reading group please contact on email address:
patientexperienceandinvolvem@LTHTR.nhs.uk

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